

ITBE Newsletter

The Challenge of Technology for English Language Teachers*

Carol A. Chapelle

Iowa State University, Ames, IA

Illinois TESOL was the place where I presented my very first conference paper. That was in the winter of 1980—25 years ago. A lot has changed since 1980, but of course some things have remained stable: there are many of the same people around playing an active role in TESOL. But twenty-five years is a long time, and we would expect to find some significant changes in this period.

Then and now

What were the issues of the day in the winter of 1980? If we take a look at the *TESOL Quarterly* that was about to come out that winter, we can see some of them:

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This comes from the Table of Contents of the March 1980 *TESOL Quarterly* (volume 14, number 1). Again, we see some familiar names, and the topics seem perfectly reasonable in view of today's issues, but how might these titles look a bit different today, 25 years later?

In the March 2005 issue of *TESOL Quarterly*, we would not be surprised to see very similar topics, but they might take on a different twist something like this:

Teaching the Learner to Search for Information on the Web

Teaching the Verbs of Authority, Positionality, and Evaluation in NetSpeak

The Development of Linguistic Attitudes and Preferences through Virtual Encounters

ESL Online with Advanced High School Students

Intertextuality Analysis in Second Language Learners' Email: Applications, Problems and Limitations

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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:

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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.

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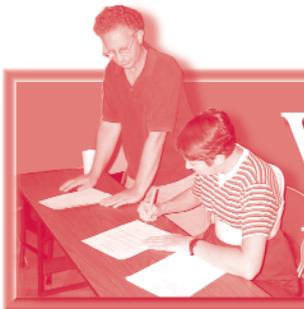
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Your Board At Work

Yasmin A. Ranney (y-ranney@neiu.edu)
1st Vice President, Illinois TESOL•BE
Northeastern Illinois University

The ITBE Executive Board met on Saturday, March 5, 2005 at UIC's Tutorium in Intensive English from 10:00 am to 1:00 pm. Board members present were Paul Angelis, Eric Bohman, Madonna Carr, Jennifer Eick-Magan, Vickie Green, Karen Hilgeman, Matt Huseby, Betsy Kubota, Ruth B. Lambach, Antonio Lollino, Laurie Martin, Christine Park, Yasmin Ranney, Marsha Santelli, and Maja Teref. Minutes from the January 21, 2005, board meeting were approved, new SIG chairs welcomed, and reports of officers heard. ITBE election ballots are in the mail and the following candidates are up for election: Kasia Stadnik, Director of the Intensive English Program at Illinois State University, is running for the office of First Vice President, and Kay Wade, Evanston High

School and Northeastern Illinois University, is running for the office of Second Vice President Elect. The following four members are running for three slots for the office of Member-At-Large: Mary Aquila, Michael Hoag, Kay Maslanka, and Michael Morrison. To all Illinois TESOL-BE members, I strongly urge you to cast your ballot, postmarked on or before April 11, 2005.

At the March 5 meeting, the Board also discussed the possibility of TESOL hosting their annual convention in Chicago in Spring 2009, with the support of Illinois TESOL/BE.

There will be a full Board Meeting on Saturday, May 21st at Wheaton College, Wheaton, Illinois.

Message From The President

Madonna Carr

We are coming to the end of another year in ITBE. It has been my pleasure to serve as this year's president. We have accomplished a lot this year; we held a successful Convention, moved more ITBE services online, and welcomed new faces to the Board and organization. Though we made progress in some areas, ITBE sometimes feels like a living, breathing creature in constant need of care and feeding.

Yasmin Ranney, next year's president, will continue the projects that we started this year. I wish her luck and energy.

I'd like to thank all those who volunteered to make the February ITBE Convention a smooth success. Without the dedication of valuable time from the Board and general membership, we could not hold one of the largest state Conventions in the country. A special thanks to this year's Convention Chair, Paul Angelis, who calmly navigated the waters at Navy Pier. Also thanks to the participants and volunteers from SIU, who made the long trek to Chicago. I've learned a lot as president this year, and I look forward to continuing to work with ITBE in the future. I encourage all of you to do the same.

TESOL Update

Fabiola Ehlers-Zavala, Past President & TESOL Liaison

ITBE participated in the TESOL Affiliate Rebate Program 2003-2005. Consequently, the following 2004 Affiliate Dues are to be paid no later than April 2, 2005, to continue to be in good standing to be considered for further rebates: \$146 (Affiliate dues rate: \$300).

TESOL provided the following breakdown:

Renewed Dual Members	(47 x \$2)
New Dual Members	(15 x \$4)
Affiliate rebate	\$154
2004 Affiliate Dues	\$146

As of March 4, 2005, I submitted the names of ITBE representatives to attend the Affiliate Council Meeting at TESOL. I provided the name of Madonna Carr as the official delegate, and Kasia Stadnik agreed to serve as delegate in the event that is needed.

As Past-President, I will prepare the 2005 affiliate annual report and dues form, and I will turn it in while attending TESOL.

The affiliate leaders' workshop is scheduled for Tuesday, March 29 from 2:30-5:30 p.m.

The affiliate council meeting is scheduled for Thursday, March 31, 2005, from 8:30 to 11:00 am, Marriot River Center, Salon B.

The affiliate editors' workshop is scheduled for Wednesday, March 30, 2005, from 2:00 pm to 3:45 pm, Marriot River Center, Salon B

IMPORTANT:

If our affiliate is in good standing by April 2, 2005, ITBE will receive three complimentary TESOL memberships. "Between April 3 and October 15, affiliates are to select three (3) complimentary members. Only affiliate members who are not current TESOL members will qualify. Complimentary members must complete the TESOL membership application and mail it to the attention of Maramei Patterson (mpatterson@tesol.org) by no later than October 15, 2005. Online membership applications are available on the affiliate leadership area of the TESOL Web site."

TESOL provided us with a TESOL Speaker Request Form for Affiliates: "To invite a TESOL officer, director, or staff member to an affiliate conference or relevant professional development event." If we are interested in this, the request must be submitted to TESOL's Executive Director at excedir@tesol.org by June 1, 2005.

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SIG News

Secondary SIG News

Secondary SIG met on Feb. 18, 2005, during the ITBE Annual Convention. Elections for chair and co-chair were held. Pam Forbes was elected chair and Vickie Green was elected co-chair. It was decided that a session dealing with the changes in recertification should take place at the fall workshop. Pam Forbes will try to find a speaker for this event. She will also ask the speaker to attend the Secondary SIG meeting to answer questions in regards to the changes in the recertification process.

Let us know what you are doing. Send us a description of what projects your students are doing, what is happening at your school, etc. Send all Secondary news and information to Pam Forbes at psforbes@aol.com.

Submitted by: Pam Forbes

Elementary SIG News

Navy Pier Annual SIG Meeting

There were 19 people at the Elementary SIG meeting. Margaret Gigous was elected as the Chairperson. Maritza Perez has decided to step down as chair, but plans to continue to participate in SIG events.

During the meeting, we brainstormed some ideas that members would like to have sponsored by ITBE. Here are a few ideas that were discussed.

1. Writing Contest Everyone was excited about having an elementary writing contest. Margaret had indicated that we need to organize a committee and prepare a proposal for the May Board meeting. The following people expressed an interest in being on the committee: Vicki Huelsmann, Lorezo Nevarez, Marina Nava, Maria Saenz, and Maritza Perez. Do you want to help? Please contact Margaret via the website.

2. Would you like to be a presenter at a future workshop? In order to get more presenters, ITBE needs people to volunteer. If you have had a good speaker come to your district, please let

us know. Have you had any fun lessons this year? Would you like to join a panel and share your ideas?

3. State Standards Members are interested in learning more about teaching to the state standards. They would like practical tips on incorporating the standards into the classroom.

4. ACCESS ACCESS will be coming out soon. Members expressed an interest in having a 2–3 hour workshop in the Chicago area.

5. Advertising We also discussed doing more advertising to promote involvement in Illinois TESOL/BE.

6. ISBE: Teacher Tracker & OTIS Did you know that ISBE has a link on their website to track teacher certification, recertification, and endorsements?

7. Spring Workshop An announcement was made about the Spring Workshop on Saturday, April 16, 2005. It was emphasized that Alan Seaman is the speaker and he will be discussing K-12 issues. Leah Miller will also be talking about ACCESS.

8. We had several raffle winners Kim Ayers received a free one-year membership. *Congratulations, Kim!* The following educators received raffle prizes: Lorenzo Nevarez, Leah Miller, Maria Saenz, Xochitl Munoz, Waciawa Gurdo, and Letecia Villasenor.

Submitted by: Margaret Gigous

ITBE 2005 Election Results

First Vice President:

Kasia Stadnik
Illinois State University

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(cont. from page 1)

Using Objective Methods of Attained Writing Proficiency to Discriminate between Computer Evaluations and Human Ratings
Grammatical Errors and Communication Breakdowns in Chatrooms
Re-evaluating Sentence-Combining Practice in Tutorial CALL

The difference, of course, in these fictional titles is that they focus on issues of English language learning and use through technology. The titles illustrate how technology might fit into an existing agenda in TESOL, but in fact the role of technology is not always so neatly incorporated. Instead, some people see technology as so inherently interesting and important, that they seem to move it to center stage in their view of TESOL. Others seem to be suspicious about the extensive role technology is English language teaching and learning as well as in society as a whole. However, in my view, the challenge today is to find the middle ground somewhere between the two perspectives.

Using English on the Internet

The Internet is a site where English language learners regularly meet through chat rooms, bulletin boards, blogs, and email. Many conduct their social business in a way that mirrors international business today: when the meeting includes speakers of several different languages, English is spoken. This seems to be the case whether the topic is seed corn or a Japanese pop singer such as Ryoko Hirosue. This is what a study by Lam (2000) found when she was studying an adult ESL learner living in the San Francisco area. In the mid-1990s, this learner was completely discouraged with his attempts to learn English. She reports that the learners' development of a Web site focusing on a pop star and the communication that it sparked with similarly interested fans around the world resulted in his communicating regularly in English. Both this language and his confidence developed considerably.

This story would prompt many teachers to want to help other ESL learners to create the same opportunities for themselves that this learner found. How can teachers help to direct learners to opportunities for engaging language use through the new forms of language use on the Internet? This is one of the challenges for ESL teachers today.

Evaluating Opportunities for English Use

> is chinlish good 4 u english???

I would translate this question articulated using the morphosyntax of an Internet chat room as, "Is chat room English good for your English?" This is question that many teachers ask when they think of helping learners to seek out opportunities for English use on the Internet. Crystal (2001) points out the variety of different registers of what he calls Netspeak that one finds on the Internet. Many English teachers may cringe at the thought of their ESL learners being exposed to the registers of Netspeak used particularly in synchronous written communication such as the example above that one might find in a chat room.

In view of the reality that many learners do participate in a variety of Internet communication and that doing so may offer them stimulating experiences, it seems that the challenge is to help them to evaluate the language that they discover across various registers. In other words, never before has metalinguistic reflection and the ability to distinguish among varieties of language use been more important for learners. Teachers need to help learners analyze and evaluate English language experiences of various speech communities on the Internet. Murray's conception of such specialized Netspeak registers as speech communities is useful. She defines a speech community as "a group of people who share linguistic and non-linguistic interaction but whose norms may be evolving or may be the site of struggle (2000, p.399). This idea and its implication for evaluation of Netspeak registers may be useful for helping learners to recognize and evaluate the varieties of language they encounter on the Internet.

Studying English through Technology

Research over the past twenty years along with our own experience as teachers tells us that learners need more than opportunities to participate in communicative events. They need instruction in English, and therefore the challenge for ESL teachers today to help learners to see and use the instruction available to them through technology. Publishers and Internet sources offer a wide range of materials intended for explicit instruction as well as for assisted production and comprehension. Ideally if learners begin using such materials in their ESL classes, as they continue beyond class they should ultimately be able to draw upon the enormous resources of the Internet.

The challenge, then, is to simultaneously move the learners to metacognitive sophistication that takes them to linguistic examples on the Internet as a means of answering their questions. For example, the learner who stops mid-sentence in an e-mail because he doesn't know how to ask for advice about the best course to take should immediately think "Internet," where he can find some ideas such as these from the British National Corpus:

...but there may be no **advice** about running the actual power supply...

They are able to offer professional **advice** on legal matters and housing.

But what **advice** would he pass on to any young person with their sights set ...

there's always **advice** on hand, plus a clinic on Saturday mornings.

I took her **advice** but, still not a skilled cook, and reluctant to waste time ...

Our little Souls are tortur'd by **Advice**;

HOW TO WRITE A SUCCESSFUL SHORT STORY:

Expert **advice** SPOD ... is an organization offering **advice** on...

... she will be offering **advice** on how you can save cash, starting with ...

the role of the coach is not to hand out **advice** passively but to act as a partner...

It is conceivable that an **advice** session on site is too public, so Stockton

The example shows a subset of the many examples returned from a search that took a second or two, which the learner might draw from in composing the e-mail. It is evident that there is some linguistic work to be done if the learner is to come up with his own message, but the examples provide a starting point for some one who wants to ask advice but cannot remember if *advice* is a noun or verb, and if it is a noun, what verbs can go with it, and what if any prepositions are used with it. In ESL classes, if learners have been working with such data, they will have been learning the strategies that will serve them well for the rest of their lives.

Preparing for Tests

I have heard many teachers and testing researchers complain about the potential unfairness of asking ESL learners to take an English test delivered by computer.

The argument is that the computer might distort learners' performance in a way that unfairly disadvantages those who have little experience using computers.

This is a legitimate concern, but as time goes on, the argument that using technology for an English test represents a departure from the normal becomes more difficult to make. More to the point for many English teachers, however, is that their students will most likely be asked to take tests delivered by computer, and therefore learners need to be prepared in their English classes to do so (Chapelle & Douglas, forthcoming).

The obvious way of accomplishing this preparation is through the routine use of the computer in and out of the classroom. For example, teachers might have learners practice with a variety of type of activities on the computer in order to become used to different interfaces and a variety of ways of interacting with programs. Beyond large-scale assessment, however, the technologies that help to develop instruction are also changing the way that assessment might be used by learners to improve their learning.

Our Evolving Challenges

Technology in English language learning fits well within the theme of the ITBE conference, "Our evolving challenges." English language teachers and learners are continuously challenged by the pervasive use of technology in education and communication. Some like to portray it as the solution to problems and others see as a plot to divert attention to the real aims of education. But the day to day reality for teachers and learners is that technology presents some new challenges. The vision required to meet these challenges comes from a combination of perspectives from technologists, who know how things can work, social pragmatists, who are honest about how things actually do work, and critical analysts, who ask why things work for some people and not for others (Chapelle, 2003). A first step perhaps is to identify some of the challenges as we move closer to working out strategies for making the most of existing technology and perhaps visioning new possibilities, but ultimately TESOL professionals will need to conceptualize and investigate ESL pedagogy in ways that will address these challenges.

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*Plenary Lecture at
Illinois TESOL•BEConvention
February 18-19, 2005

Carol A. Chapelle is Professor of TESL / applies linguistics at Iowa University. Her research explores issues at the intersection of computer technology and applied linguistics. Her publications are numerous and her teaching is extensive and world wide.

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Challenges Met

ITBE Annual Convention, Navy Pier 2005

Paul Angelis

2005 Convention Chair

On February 18 and 19, ITBE held its annual convention with the theme: Our Evolving Challenges. The theme focusing on challenges proved very apt for a number of reasons. First, it has become increasingly difficult to find ideal dates for the convention because of the growing number of conventions, conferences, and workshops in the Chicago area in the January to April period. Second, with no central office to support or manage our convention, designing a system which will allow individuals to register easily and for the convention chair and others handling these details to manage the flow of information with the least amount of stress becomes more difficult each year. And finally, the growing number of issues facing teachers, teacher trainers, and support personnel calls for greater attention to developing a program responding to these needs.

With regard to scheduling, some concerns this year centered on competition with other meetings planned very close to the dates ITBE had booked. Nevertheless, over 600 people registered for our event. More than 100 of these registrations were submitted on-line, an option available for just the first time in ITBE's convention history. Although a clear advantage both for those registering and those processing the registrations, some bugs need to be worked out of the system to make this an even better option in the future. There also continue to be some problems in accommodating individuals coming from schools and/or agencies which are required to submit payments only after invoices are provided. While this can be accounted for in convention registration planning, dealing with such processing submitted well beyond the registration deadline creates confusion and delay. For those caught up in this type of processing, please be assured that ITBE continues to seek solutions which will make this system more efficient for all.

Navy Pier, the site of our conventions for a number of years, continues to receive mixed reactions from attendees. A review of evaluation forms from this year's convention shows some respondents who find

it difficult to get to Navy Pier and some who do not enjoy the "cold, dark atmosphere" there. But these are easily balanced by those who comment on the "charming, clean and spacious" setting found at the Pier. The convention planning teams do consider seriously this feedback and continue to explore options for convention sites which respond best to such desires and needs.

Perhaps the greatest challenge each year is the need to put together an effective and responsible program, combining single and group presentations with demonstrations, workshops and panels and addressing issues of current concern and relevance for those attending. This is especially difficult for ITBE since the mission of our organization relates to and includes language topics at all levels of education and with a statewide focus. We expect to involve the Special Interest Groups (SIGs) in a more direct way to ensure that the convention programs can be as balanced as possible. The publishers' exhibits and demonstrations were well received this year as were the presentations made by the two plenary speakers – Jodi Crandall and Carol Chapelle. It was also rewarding to hear the positive comments each of them made after participating in a number of other convention sessions.

I extend my sincere appreciation to everyone who assisted in making the 2005 convention a successful event. The ITBE membership now includes just under 1000 persons. With such a large pool of professionals throughout Illinois, there are great prospects for continuing our record of successful conventions. Watch for news of the 2006 event and check early and often on ways that you can contribute.

ITBE Annual Convention, Navy Pier 2005



ITBE Awards Scholarships at Convention

Betsy Kubota, Awards Committee Chair

At the ITBE Convention in February, I was pleased to announce the award recipients for this year. Each year educators on the awards committee review applications for the \$1000 graduate and \$500 undergraduate scholarships and select the most outstanding candidates from a pool of talented people. They also help select the winners of the Professional Development awards. We appreciate their hard work, much of which had to be done over the holidays. Thanks to Karen Carrier, Northern Ill University; Peggy Kazkaz, Harper College; and Lydia Omori, Harper College.

This year, the \$1,000 Graduate Scholarship was given in honor of Robert Illwitzer, who was one of the founding members of Illinois TESOL•BE and a Linguistics Professor at Northeastern University. Due to his efforts, our organization found a “home” at Northeastern for many years.

The recipient of the **\$1,000 Graduate Scholarship** this year is **Cheryl Ernst**. Cheryl is a graduate student at Southern Illinois University at Carbondale, where she is working on her PhD in Curriculum and Instruction in the School of Education. Cheryl truly exemplifies the dedication of professionals in our fields of ESL and Bilingual Education. Cheryl has taught ESL to miners in Arizona and business English in Finland and at the University of Alaska in Anchorage. She has been adjunct and full-time, a TA, an instructor, and a teacher trainer. She has presented at numerous conferences including two sessions at the recent ITBE convention, published articles, worked on curriculum development, and been a faculty advisor to international students.

Cheryl is working on a dissertation focusing on Reading and ESL, and plans to with future teachers of ESL and EFL. In addition, she is teaching at the Center for English as a Second Language at Southern Illinois University, where she is especially involved in training International Teaching Assistant.

Cheryl’s goal is to prepare teachers before they join the workforce for the challenges of the classroom today. She wants to help provide them with the tools they will need to be successful with the increasing numbers of non-native speakers in their classrooms. Cheryl clearly has the dedication, motivation, and energy to reach her goals. We are proud to be able to help her in her endeavors by awarding her this scholarship.

The **\$500 Undergraduate Scholarship** is normally given in honor of Jane Curtis. However, as there were no applicants this year, undergraduates in TESOL and Bilingual Education are strongly encouraged to apply in the fall for next year.

Finally, IL TESOL/BE is proud to award 8 **Professional Development Awards**, which made it possible for the recipients to attend this year’s State Convention by covering convention registration fees and one night’s accommodations at the Holiday Inn Chicago City Center, or transportation costs.

One of these scholarships was awarded to **Cheryl Ernst** as part of her graduate scholarship award. The remaining 7 awards were granted to applicants who met the requirements: that is, they are ITBE members, professionals in TESOL or BE or a student enrolled full or part-time, and they submitted all the documents required on time and could demonstrate financial need for

attending this convention.

The award recipients this year are: **Kimberly Ayars**—Teacher’s Aide and graduate student at Lincoln Christian College, Lincoln IL

Richard Brown— Graduate student in TESOL and Secondary Teaching Certificate at Southern Illinois University and presenter at the 2005 ITBE convention

Kyoungsook Kim— Graduate student in TESOL and a TA at Southern Illinois University and presenter at the convention

Pamela Leister— Graduate student in Linguistics and ESL at Northeastern Illinois University and Chicago Public School Teacher

Jacqueline Piersol— Graduate student in Higher Education and TESOL at Southern Illinois University and presenter at the 2005 ITBE convention

Kyaesung Park— Graduate student and International TA in TESOL at Southern Illinois University and presenter at the 2005 ITBE convention

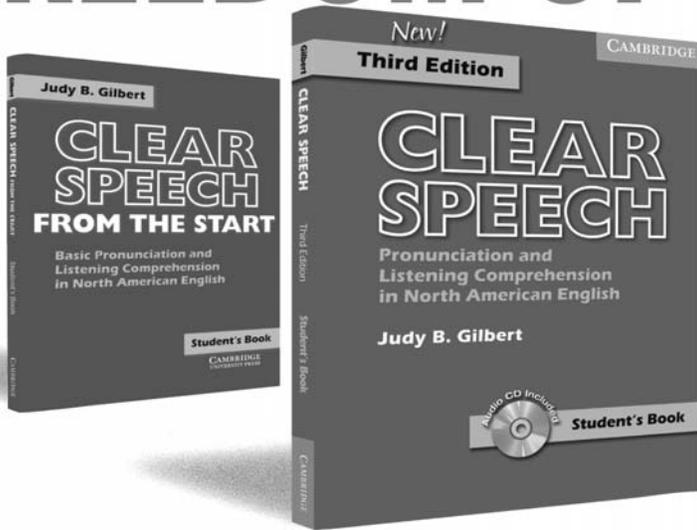
Amy Tabela— Undergraduate student in the Bilingual/Bicultural Program at Illinois State University

On behalf of ITBE, the scholarship committee and the membership, I congratulate all of the award recipients on their achievements. These are the dedicated students and professionals who are helping to enrich our field with their enthusiasm and knowledge and, by turn, will also help our organization grow.

Finally, I would like to remind all of you that the Undergraduate and Graduate Scholarships and the Professional Development Awards will be offered again next year. Look for details on how you can apply for ITBE scholarships in the upcoming ITBE Newsletters, at ITBE workshops, and on-line at www.itbe.org.

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– **Judy B. Gilbert**



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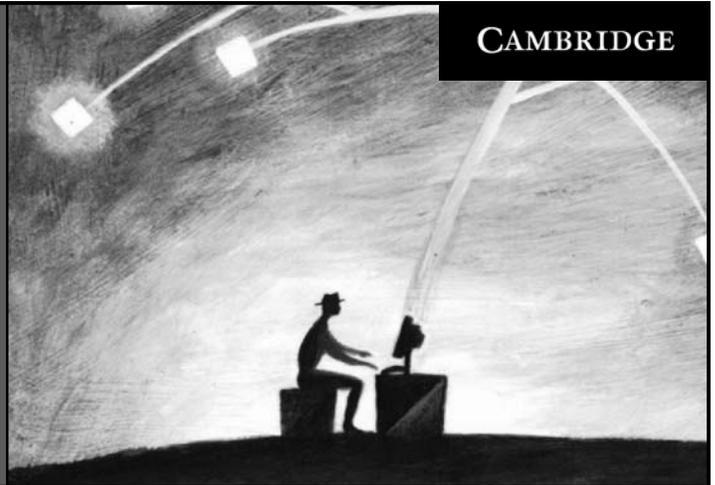
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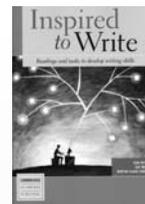
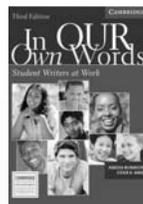
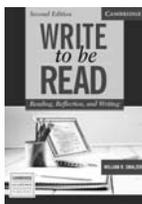
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Member Snapshot

Name: Elizabeth Minicz

Place of Birth and Current

Residence: I was born in Chicago and lived there until I graduated from 8th grade. I have been living in Glendale Heights since 1985. I have a B.A. in English and French from Western Illinois University and a MS.Ed. from Northern Illinois University.

Currently Working As: Associate Professor of Nonnative Literacy (ESL) and Co-Chair of the Adult Educational Development (AED) Department at Harper College in Palatine. My department provides English language instruction for adults who have less than nine years of schooling in their native countries and GED preparation classes in three content areas and at three proficiency levels.

Approximately 55 percent of our NNL students have six years or fewer of education so developing literacy skills is a mainstay of our program. When students have completed Level Four of our program (Student Performance Level 6 or SPL 6) they transition to ABE/GED classes or the tuition-based ESL program at the college. I teach two classes at the Police Neighborhood Resource Center in Rolling Meadows, and the remainder of my time is spent on program management. There are about 50 adjuncts in our department and 15 support staff.



Years as an ITBE

Member: I think I first joined the organization in 1976 or 77, but the first conference I

remember attending was at the Blackstone Hotel in Chicago around 1977 or so. I am a little fuzzy on dates after all these years. I was a member-at-large and liaison to IACEA before I moved to Virginia in 1982. I rejoined and was again a member-at-large, then First Vice-President (the last one whose duties included chairing the convention), and President from 1990-91. I co-chaired the conference again in 2000 along with my friend and colleague Catherine Porter. Now my main contribution is to write the News Bites column.

A memorable experience for me:

Yikes. This is really hard because I have been teaching for 35 years now, and there have been so many memorable experiences. Let me relate an "old experience" because it points out how teachers should avoid jumping to conclusions. When I taught a literacy class in the intensive ESL program at Fairfax County Public Schools, I had an amazing student from Viet Nam who really impressed me with her drive and determination to learn to read and write in English at the same time she was teaching

herself to read and write in Vietnamese. She "disappeared" for about a month, as adult students often do, and when she returned to class I saw that her face was quite bruised and she was walking as if in tremendous pain. I concluded that she had not been in class because she had been physically abused. Au contraire. I learned that she was a dancer in a strip club on 14th Street in The District and had cosmetic surgery on her eyes, breasts, and stomach. She was so proud that she lifted her shirt to show the class. Needless to say, the nine Afghans and two elderly Chinese students were gasping in shock. I got to know the student quite well as she loved to give parties and invited the class to her home often. A more recent memorable experience occurred a few weeks ago. I was walking into my building at the college and literally bumped into two former NNL students, brothers who had been in one of my classes about three years ago. They didn't recognize me at first because I have let my hair grow since they were my students. They proudly informed me that they both had passed their GED tests with the exception of the essay, which they were confident they would soon master. One then asked if he could visit my class to tell my students about his experiences. He did, and it was wonderfully motivating and inspirational to hear him encourage students to continue their education in the ABE/GED side of our program. I hope some day soon to read their names at one of the Harper graduation ceremonies.

A regrettable professional experience:

Fortunately, there have been very few over the years and none recently. About five years ago I had a student who came to an

evening class in a very inebriated state. While he was fairly docile, he stank of alcohol so badly the other students started complaining. It took some persuading on my part to convince him to go home because he didn't want to miss anything.

Professional Passions: writing and teaching teachers. Long before I worked at the Adult Learning Resource Center (1989-1996) as a consultant, I began presenting at local and regional conferences. I was fortunate to work in places where professional development was a priority, and I availed myself of every opportunity to develop my knowledge and skills. I continue to plan and conduct staff development workshops at Harper and several times a year for the ALRC. I graduated from writing journal articles to ESL textbooks and have had the good fortune to collaborate with colleagues and friends who are smart, creative, and motivating. The last book I wrote, with Marcia Taylor, was the literacy level for English--No Problem! (New Reader's Press). I love writing News Bites and hope to continue until someone tells me to stop!

Future Plans: : A colleague in my department, Jennifer Bell, and I were recently awarded multicultural fellowships by the Center for Multicultural Learning at Harper. We will develop multicultural "kits" for teachers and conduct a series of professional development workshops. In May we will be attending N-Core, the National Conference on Race and Ethnicity, in New York City, and we are thrilled to be able to participate. I also learned yesterday that my sabbatical leave proposal was approved by Harper's Board of Trustees, and consequently I will be on sabbatical for the fall 2005 semester. Although I will be relieved from teaching and co-chairing, and I won't have to fight rush hour traffic every day, I will still be working. I hope to develop a bilingual orientation DVD for NNL students that includes tips on how to be more successful language learners.

Beyond Work: I love to read and am a member of several Book Clubs. I also like to knit. I knit every day. Also, when weather permits, I enjoy gardening.

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Elizabeth Minicz

Associate Professor, Nonnative Literacy
Harper College

Teaching to the Test: It Makes Perfect Sense

Testing mania has teachers around the country in a grip as strong as Beowulf's. One only hopes that just as Beowulf tore off Grendel's arm, teachers will prevail over testing madness. (Okay, as an English major I long have dreamed of a way to work Beowulf into my writing). What's the point of this? In the January 28, 2005, issue of *The Detroit News*, Doug Guthrie reports on the frustration of teachers in Michigan regarding their inability to access information about student achievement on The Michigan Education Assessment Program (MEAP), kin to IGAP in Illinois. Teachers know who passes or fails and whether or not schools meet state and federal standards, but not the specific questions which students did not answer correctly. Guthrie quotes Christine Geerer, a science teacher at Parcels Middle School in Gross Point Woods, "It's crazy. My department sat down this fall for a development session and we asked, 'What can we learn from MEAP?' and the answer was 'nothing.'" Kip Tull, a parent of an eighth-grader in Royal Oak, has this perspective on testing: "They've lost the focus on the reason for testing. Theoretically, this is a good way to hold school districts accountable for teaching to certain levels, but without detailed feedback, it has lost its purpose."

Until three years ago, teachers in Michigan were able to see individual student test results. Jim Sandy, executive director for the Michigan Business Leaders for Education Excellence, says, "If you teach the kids to read and write well, it doesn't matter what test you put in front of them, they should pass it. How else do you know you are making progress?" How else indeed? Perhaps teachers in Illinois can share their

experiences and opinions with teachers in Michigan. We can call this IGAP meets MEAP meets No Child Left Behind.

Meet the Enforcer (Her last name is not Soprano!)

Margaret Spellings, George Bush's pal from Texas, is the new Secretary of Education. She believes, according to Ben Feller of the Associated Press News Service on February 2, 2005, that testing is the heart of No Child Left Behind. Spellings helped write the federal law when she was Bush's domestic policy chief. Feller reports Spellings said she'll consider reasonable changes in how the law is enforced, but testing will stand as "the linchpin of the whole dog-gone thing."

Spend Money on English Education –or Else!

The Arizona legislature has been ordered by a federal judge to cease its under-funding of English language programs by the end of the 2005 legislative (which could be as early as April 30) session or suffer the consequences of losing federal funding for highway programs. Naturally, legislative leaders have refused to commit themselves to any course of action, so say Chip Scutari and Robbie Sherwood of *The Arizona Republic* in a January 26, 2005, story.

Interestingly enough, the case that provoked the judge's ruling goes back to a 1992 lawsuit, Flores vs. Arizona. In 2000 a federal judge decided that funding to "ensure that students would overcome language barriers" was inadequate. Tim Hogan of the Arizona Center for Law in the Public Interest said Arizona continues to ignore the federal court order revolving around 200,000 students who are dubbed English language learners. Hogan goes on to say, "Five years is long enough for these kids to wait." He continues, "You can't disregard federal law on the one hand and then on the other keep taking all the benefits of federal funding." What do you mean you can't? We do that all the time in Illinois.

The state of Arizona spends about \$354 per child on 200,000 students who are classified as English learners. Hogan's lawsuit is expected to cost the state nearly \$1,200 per student. In addition to \$354 per child, Arizona spends \$4.5 million on teacher training, \$1.5 million for supplies, and \$5.5 million on tutoring for a total of \$80 million a year. Representative Russell Pearce (R) says, "We decide

policy, not Tim Hogan and the courts.” The judge’s ruling could cost Arizona \$400 million in highway funds.

U.S. Senate Declares 2005 “The Year of Languages in the United States”

Natalie Troyer reports in the December 8, 2004, edition of *The Washington Times* on a Roper Poll that concluded nearly half of Americans think there is not enough foreign language instruction in public schools—and 50 per cent attribute this to lack of funding. Thomas Keith Cothrun, president of the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) is quoted in the January 12, 2005 *At Random, On Language* column in the *Chicago Tribune*; enrollment in classes for most foreign languages rose by double digit numbers from 1998-2003 according to the Modern Language Association. He went on to say, “Americans are better realizing what language education brings to a society.” Perhaps.

Troyer also reports in the *Washington Times* article on a 2002 survey by Healthy Companies International that found that American business executives speak on average 1.4 languages, while Dutch executives speak 3.9. Ambassador Jean David Levitte of France says, “Language is the United States’ last barrier, and it comes from ignorance.” I would add to that statement lack of funding. Cothrun also says in the *Tribune*, “Using other languages isn’t anti-American; it’s a core and defining characteristic of a good American citizen.” Oh, yeah.

If you want more information about the monthly focus for the remaining months of the year go to www.yearoflanguages.org.

Is Sign a Foreign Language?

Foreign language avoiders are signing up for American Sign Language classes in colleges around the U.S. “I thought, ‘Cool, you can talk with your hands.’” said Marisol Arzate, a student at Pierce College in Woodland Hills, CA, so reports Stuart Silverstein in the January 18, 2005, edition of the *Los Angeles Times*. He says Arzate has since found that sign is not as easy as she once thought.

The Modern Language Association says, “ASL” has become the fifth most widely studied foreign lan-

guage in college, trailing Spanish, French, German, and Italian.” Stanford, Yale, UC Berkley and UCLA are among the 150 U.S. campuses that have accepted ASL as a foreign language. Some colleges, however, are not persuaded that learning ASL should substitute for a foreign language because ASL doesn’t teach one about another country’s culture. Silverstein says that according to the Modern Language Association’s figures for 2002, enrollment in college ASL classes reached 60,781 (30% in California.)

Ms. Arzate might be surprised to learn that “ASL ‘is not English on the hands,’” according to Carol Neidle, a linguist at Boston University. ASL requires its “speakers” to think in new and different ways, and so it is not easy to learn despite its lack of written literature. On the other hand, Elenna Turner, a counselor at El Camino Real High School in Woodland Hills said, “I used to feel sorry for kids who struggled with Spanish or other spoken languages. That’s not their only option any more.”

Does anyone know how many colleges in Illinois allow students to use ASL to fulfill foreign language requirements?

And Finally, Good-bye to Michel Thomas

For those of you who have never heard of Michel Thomas, his obituary appeared in the January 13, 2005, *Chicago Tribune*. Thomas, a linguist who died at age 90, developed a rapid learning method for teaching foreign languages. He had a number of Hollywood and corporate clients. His method was based on the commonalities of Western languages; for example, English and French have approximately 7,000 cognates, and one simply needs to learn how to pronounce the French cognates correctly. He was once quoted in the *New York Daily News* as saying, “English is French, badly pronounced.” Okay, so this is why we never studied his method in our linguistics class. Actually, his obituary says, “His methods weren’t widely accepted by the educational establishment, but in 1982 he was awarded the gold medal for outstanding achievement in education and teaching by the Academie Francaise. Au revoir, Monsieur Thomas.

FYI I got 19,000 clicks when I googled Mr. Thomas.



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Illinois TESOL•BE Eleventh Annual ESL Student Writing Contest 2004-2005

First Place: Grades 6-8, Alex Nanynets

Algonquin Middle School Sponsored by : Margaret Garlewicz

Celebrating'Christmas

Christmas is one of my favorite holidays. I like celebrating it, especially when all the members of my family are celebrating it with me . I still remember how we use to celebrate one of my favorite Christmas night in Ukraine.

My mom and I, woke up early in the morning . And we started to cook food for Christmas supper . There is a tradition in my country . On the Christmas Eve everybody has to make twelve different kinds of food. So we started making them . I went to the store to buy all the things we needed to cook the food. My grandma helped us to cook the food too. She cooks very good. While my mom and grandma were cooking, I was setting up the table. After setting up the table I had to put some straw under it. That is a tradition . On Christmas everybody is putting some straw under their tables. Then I helped my mom making different kinds of salads. My mom taught me how to make them. So I made them by my self. My mom helped me just a little bit . Then we started to make a cake . It takes a lot of time to make the cake . It takes up to five hours to make it. First we made a cake. Then we put in in the oven. Then we made some cream. And finally , we put the cream on top of the cake.

The table was set , the food was almost ready , and the Christmas tree was shining so nice . We bought the Christmas tree before the New Year. It is a tradition to have a Christmas tree in our homes when we are celebrating Christmas and the New Year. We are celebrating the New Year on December thirty first. And we are celebrating the Christmas on January seventh. That is exactly one week after the New Year . I bought a lot of fire crackers before the Christmas . In my village every Thursday people from other cities come to the village to sell things. That where I bought the fire crackers .

We sat down at the table . There is a tradition, before eating we have to pray , and thank God for food He gave us . Then everybody has to eat one piece of garlic . And then we have to eat one piece of bread. And after that, we have to try all twelve different kinds of food that we have made . After the supper we went outside , and we saw a lot of fire crackers blowing up in the sky . It was very beautiful night. It was holly night. And I am sure that this night remembered many people in their hearts . It was one of the best nights ever .

My first Christmas in America was a lot different that it was in Ukraine . Here people don't make twelve different kinds of food . They don't put the straw under the table . Americans are celebrating it on different day. And in Ukraine Santa Clause doesn't come on December twenty fourth, he comes on December eighteenth. And we also have Did Moroz, who is Grandfather Frost. He comes on December thirty first. The only way the Christmas in Ukraine and in America are the same , is in both countries we pray befor eating

Second Place: Grades 6-8, Younsuk Koh

Edison Middle School Sponsored by: Sung -Ae Park

"A School that I Want"

I came from Korea. I came to the U.S.A. six months ago. I'm attending a Middle School in America. So I experienced two kinds of schools. One is a Korean school. Another is an American school. I want to talk about the differences between two schools that I experienced.

First, I noticed that the students in Korea and the students in America have different attitude about their teachers. Korean students always respect their teachers and some students are afraid of them because they sometimes strike the students when they make big trouble with something. On the other hand, many American students treat their teachers like friends. In addition some troublemakers do not obey them. I don't understand why they don't obey teachers. For example, one guy in my science class talk back to a teacher because the teacher gave a warning to him. I can not understand why he acted like that. So I think American students need to learn Korean student's attitude about the teachers.

Second., I think there is a big difference between Korean school and America school. About how to grade the students. In Korea, scores are very important for all the students. It means they (including me) care about their scores very much.

Because only the student with the best score is the best student and the other students become the disappointed about their grade. As a result, many students discouraged because of their scores. By the way, many American students are not interested in the scores of the tests. However, they do care about their efforts. And I think American teachers encourage the students and take their efforts. For example, I did not get perfect scores on social studies and science but our teacher gave other chance to get perfect grade so I did what he said and I got perfect grade in all subjects. So I got all A grades in the first quarter This encouraged me so I try to study harder. In this point. I think American school grade system is better.

Third, there is a difference between Korean and American schools in school programs. For instance, in Korea schools have no band class. However, in America, they have band classes and a music director teach the students.

Actually, I am a member of a school band. I play clarinet in the band. I began to enjoy the music after I cooperate in a band class here. In this way, I suggest that if Korean schools have band class it would be better.

Fourth, I think Korean school and American school are different from their teaching method. In Korea, teachers teach the students about almost everything, and then they memorize it. In America, teachers ask the students to study by themselves. For example, I learned from social studies and science classes here how to use the index for the first time. Before I came here, I did not know even the word 'index'. Therefore, I think American school's teaching method is better.

Third Place: Grades 6-8 Luis Oroasco Algonquin Middle School Sponsored by: Margaret Garlewicz

Holidays in Mexico

In Mexico, people don't celebrate holidays that in the United States are celebrated. Thanksgiving is very important for Americans. In Mexico we don't even celebrate Thanksgiving and as far as I know, some people in Mexico don't know about this holiday. When my family and I were in Mexico we never celebrated it and didn't know about this important holiday.

Now my family thinks that this is an important holiday because we have to thank for the things that we have. Another difference is that in Mexico we don't decorate for Easter like in the United States. American people decorate their houses with bunnies and colorful eggs. In Mexico we call easter "Pascua". In Mexico we have some customs that Americans don't celebrate.

One of our traditions is when we celebrate Cinco de Mayo. In schools teachers teach their students to dance mexican songs, like kinds of mariachi songs. Students have to dance in front of their parents and other people. Another difference is that in Mexico we don't decorate for Easter like American people do. American people decorate with bunnies and colorful eggs. In Mexico we call it Pascua for Easter. In Mexico we celebrate Cinco de Mayo. In schools teachers teach their students to dance for their families. When I was in Mexico I used to do that and it was fun.

Finally, I would like to say that if Korean school and American school get good points from each other, it will be a great school and students can be much satisfied with their school life. This is a school which I want.

First Place: Grades 9-12, Lovely Ugale Roosevelt High School Sponsored by : Maja Teref

It was Saturday, May 1999. I was eight or nine years old when I got chosen as a candidate for princess or queen contest from my hometown in the Philippines. My parents were stunned when the captain of my hometown came by to our house and let me and my parents know that I was chosen as a candidate. At first, I was so finious and argued with my parents because I didn't want to participate. Since they told me a story about my older brother and sister joining the event and they have won queen and king, that finally changed my mind and I wanted to win like them, so I went for it. So it was like an unexpected moment in my life.

One week before the big contest began, my mom and I went to buy my dress for the contest. It was a beautiful pink dress and with a little design on it. Right after buying my dress, my mom went to search for a

boy who was willing to escort me and walk with me down the aisle. And so my mom found someone, who was one of my far away cousins. Everyday before the contest, my partner and I would have a rehearsal on how to walk down the aisle. We weren't the only ones rehearsing, but we were with the other candidates too. While we were marching around, I was very excited and happy and I thought I was really marching in front of a lot of people.

One more day just before the big contest, I was really seared and nervous. I didn't have a clue about what to think or do. I was crying and wanting my mom to cancel the contest. It was either cancel it or look for another girl to replace me. My mom had a very hard time convincing me to rejoin the contest. She kept repeating the story about what had happen to my bother and sister when they were the same age as me. She told me about all the people that were counting on me to win the contest. The last thing she told me is that there was a young girl who was counting on me, a girl who was very sick, and it would really mean a lot to her and might have a chance to make her feel better if I only rjoin and win the contest. The words I will never forget from my mom was, " You don't have clue on how important this contest in to other people who loves you".

The big contest had finally begun! I was inside my dressing room changing and I could hear the audience yelling out my name. They had a very hard feeling I was going to win the contest. I was very disappointed because the one who convinced me to rejoin the contest, who was my mom, wasn't there to support me, or would have even the one who put my dress on. Luckily, two of my aunts were there to dress me up, put my make up on, and fix my hair. I kept gazing at the window, wishing and expecting desperately for my mom to arrive for my big night, but sadly, she didn't show up. I felt really blue and upset. I just had to thank my aunts who were trying to support me on that moment, tying to make me feel better, and telling me that my mom will show up somehow. Their words made me feel better a little. While I was waiting for my partner, my brother came inside my dressing room and wished me luck. It made me sad again when he said it because I also wanted my mom to wish me good luck before my big night. The host called out our name to march down through the stage. On our way to the stage, I was getting nervous and started to shake. My partner told me to just relax and told me everything was going to be okay. We finally got on the stage, but we had to sit there for a couple of minutes and wait for the results from the judges. While waiting, the audience, which were so called "my fans" were yelling out my name. They obviously sounded very excited. I was looking all over at the audience to see if my mom had made it since the result was almost out, but all I could see was my brother and cousins. There was no sight of my mom. The result is finally out, and still no sight of my mom. The host called out the result " first princess goes to Lovely Ugale". when I heard my name as only a princess, I couldn't believe what my ears heard. I was happy, sad, and very disappointed at the same time. I was happy because I was chosen at least a princess, and sad because my mom didn't show up and could have watch me as her daughter win as the princess, and very disappointed because I didn't think I was going to be a princess. I mean I thought I was going to be the queen. The other thing is that the audience was also expecting me to win as the queen. They were very disappointed as well. My mom would have been disappointed too if she came, but it's just so sad she didn't. It was time for someone to put my sash on, instead of my mom would have came up and done it, my brother was the one who did it instead since he was the only one from my family who came and watch me. We were both ftuious at my mom. We didn't have a clue why she didn't show up. Well on that night, I was known as Princess Lovely.

In conclusion. that night was one of the most memorable and also an unexpected event in my life. I was very proud to be the princess in my hometown.

Second Place: Grades 9-12, Hoang Lee

Roosevelt High School

Sponsored by : Maja Teref

A Vietnamese Wedding I Will Always Remember

I will never forget the wedding of my cousin that I had a chance to go to when I was in Vietnam. It was about two years ago in May. It was also the first time I really knew and understood about the traditions and beauty of a Vietnamese wedding.

My cousin's wedding was held at his house where I lived when I was a child. My mom wanted to get to his house one day before the wedding so she could help my aunt prepare food for the wedding. In the afternoon when we got there, my aunt came out to meet us. We were so glad to see each other again even though it'd been only six months since the last time we met. I always feel happy every time I go back to this place where I was born and grew up. After I talked to my aunt, I went to look for my cousin. My cousin saw me, and he came to talk to me with a big smile. He seemed very happy. He is a very nice man. He used to give me candy and toys when I was little. He was twentythree years old that year and his future wife was two years younger than him. I wanted to see how the bride looked but he told me that I had to wait until the following day to see her. He explained to me that traditions as Vietnamese and Chinese, there are something that called 'restrictions', like what to do and what not to do. The couple that will be married cannot see each other the day before their wedding. After that he left to help my uncle and other people make a wedding gate and I watched and helped my mom while she was cooking prepare the food.

At night after my mom and I ate dinner with my aunt's family, we came to the room for us to rest. That was the time for my uncle and my aunt to talk to my cousin about what he should do for his new family and they gave him the blessing. My mom told me that for a woman, the night before the wedding, the bride's mother would comb her hair to bless her best luck instead. Every comb has a special meaning. I cannot remember all the meanings but I know the most important meaning is the third comb, which represents the bringing of joy and luck into her and her husband's new home.

In the morning next day, my cousin's family and my mom, I and some relatives went to the bride's house bringing a lot of gifts in "qua" (red tray) and wrapped in red papers. The gifts were chosen very carefully by my aunt. They are betel leaves, areca nuts, wine, fruits, cakes and tea ... The number of "qua" was an odd number. Those who hold these trays are all dressed in traditional dress, Ao Dai. My cousin was a groom so he had to wear Ao Dai too. His dress was blue and looked very neat. My uncle introduced him and themselves and asked permission for his son to marry the bride while I stood outside and watched because I wasn't old enough to join the traditions. After that the bride then followed her parents out. She wore beautiful red Ao dai with match headdress known as "khan dong". She looked very pretty. When they came out of the house and the firework was immediately fired to celebrate them. Next they walked back to the groom's house since it was very near.

The wedding ceremony started in front of the altar. The bride and the groom would kneel down and pray, asking their ancestors' permission to be married, also asking for blessing on their family to be. The couple then turned around and bowed down to their parents to say thank for raising and protecting them since birth. Then they stood up and bowed their head to each other. My mom told me that means to show their gratitude and respect toward their future husband or wife. After that my cousin took a piece of ginger and rubbed it in salt, and both he and the bride ate a little of it to signify their love. Then they exchanged their wedding rings. My aunt, the bride's mom her sisters and brothers gave the bride golden bracelets, earrings and necklaces. The ceremony was ended with a round applause.

After all that traditions, the foods were served. I really liked the wedding food. It was so delicious and all made by my aunts, my mom in a traditional and special way. I remember there were a lot of my favorite foods such as roasted duck, Vietnamese spring rolls with dipping sauce, crab soup, fish, egg rolls and many more. Pears and almond raisin flan for dessert were tasty. The groom and the bride ate for a little bit and then they and their parents went to each table to say thank to their guests. The guests in return, gave them gift or envelopes containing money along with their blessing. That was a wonderful wedding. The past can be forgotten, but not in a Vietnamese wedding. The way Vietnamese people celebrate weddings is very interesting to me. I like the traditional dresses, the traditions and everything in a Vietnamese wedding. It is somehow very special and precious. Today some Vietnamese don't like to celebrate their wedding with their own traditions. But most of Vietnamese people and I still think that celebrating a wedding with our own culture is the best way because wedding is the most memorable and unforgettable celebrations in life.

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