

Practical Approaches to ESL Course Evaluation

Dennis Bricault

North Park University, Chicago

A common institutional practice is the end-of-course evaluation, often in the form of a list of attributes or questions to which students respond with numbers, letters, or words. The evaluation may ask for student input regarding the teacher, the methods of evaluation, or the organization of the course. This end-of-course routine has become so commonplace that it is easy to take for granted that everyone knows the drill and provides relevant and insightful feedback.

The ESL teacher knows this is not always the case. Take, for example, the following statement from the "Instructor Evaluation Form" given to students at the end of every course at North Park

University in Chicago:

Do you (1) strongly disagree, (2) disagree, (3) agree, or (4) strongly agree with the following statements?

a. The instructor communicated with students effectively, presenting concepts and explanations in understandable terms.

Faced with such a task, a low intermediate ESL student may leave the form blank, or even worse, provide responses that are contrary to what s/he intended. In short, the institution's own course evaluation instrument may produce feedback that is scant or inaccurate. ESL instructors therefore need to be proactive in helping students understand how course evaluation works. I would like to describe three approaches I have used to gather information related to course evaluation.

I'll start at the end with the aforementioned course evaluation form. This is often an unavoidable institutional requirement, so it's best to deal with this one first. I attacked this daunting problem as an authentic reading task. We expose our students to all sorts of genres, so why not spend some in-class time getting acquainted with the evaluation form? The one used at North Park contains a plethora of useful, but very academic, terms

(e.g., consultation, adequate, objectives, aware). I developed a two-part vocabulary matching activity with synonyms and antonyms that students completed prior to seeing the form for the first time. After correcting the activity together, I then hand out the evaluation form and have students complete a true-false activity based on tasks they will need to complete when they fill out the form. A few examples might be helpful:

- T / F I need to write my teacher's name on the form. (*true*)
- T / F I need to sign my name to the form. (*false!!*)
- T / F I need to give the form to my teacher when I finish. (*false*)
- T / F I need to write the name of the course on the form. (*true*)

The activities you design will depend on the complexity of the form itself. I added a flowchart to illustrate what students do first, next, and last; this could be turned into a reading/ordering exercise. I also encourage students to talk about the process (and its role in the larger academic scheme) before they are left on their own to complete the form. The entire activity may take no more than 20 minutes, time well spent on a meaningful exercise.

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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:

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

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

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Message From The President / Board News

Kasia Stadnik - Illinois State University



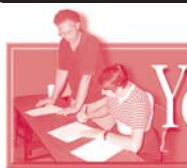
Kasia Stadnik
2006-2007 President

Dear ITBE members:

With the end of the school year so close again, another ITBE year is also approaching its end, which means that very soon, in this spot, you will hear from the new President, Russell Clark. In my last message as President, I would like to express my sincere thank you to all of you who have made this year a good one again for our organization. It was great to see that the efforts that went into the preparation of our Annual Convention were so fruitful—we all enjoyed the many wonderfully educational presentations and the company of all our colleagues who attended the conference; we experienced the generosity of the publishers and exhibitors, as well as the generosity of those members who spent many hours volunteering at the Convention. Very recently, at the spring workshop, we were again treated to

some truly inspiring presentations. Each of those events (as well as all of the other professional activities I participated in as an ITBE Board member this year) has given me an unexpectedly high level of professional and personal satisfaction—not only have I learned a lot about the issues that matter the most to the ITBE members, but I have also developed a very strong sense of belonging to a group of very dedicated people whom I admire, look up to, depend on in all kinds of situations, and also like a lot. If what I just said sounds appealing to you, try to become a part of such a group by either joining one of the SIGs or running for a position on the Board. You will enjoy being able to work with others who have so much to offer. Thank you for a productive year and best wishes for an even better one.

Kasia Stadnik
President, 2006-2007



Your Board At Work

- The Board has approved February 29 and March 1 as the dates for the 2008 ITBE State Convention and Holiday Inn Naperville as the location. Be sure to mark your calendar for this important occasion.

- Several positions on the Board have been vacated or will soon need to be filled. They are Executive Secretary, Editor of the Newsletter, and 2008 Convention Chair. Here are opportunities for energetic, willing members to increase their professional experience and to serve their fellow professionals, not to mention looking good on the resume.

For more information, contact Kasia Stadnik, ITBE President, at kstadni@ilstu.edu



2007 ITBE Scholarship's and Awards

Every year Illinois TESOL/BE is proud to award two \$1000 graduate scholarships, one \$500 undergraduate scholarship, and up to 8 Professional Development Awards to deserving members. The opportunity to apply for these awards is one of the benefits of membership, and these awards also enable our organization to play a role in promoting professionalism in the field of ESL and Bilingual Education.

This year, the first \$1,000 graduate scholarship, in honor of Virginia Welninski, was awarded to **Aylin Baris Atilgan**, a student at Northeastern Illinois University. She is working toward her Masters' Degree in Linguistics with a Concentration in ESL. The second \$1000 graduate scholarship, in honor of Laurie Martin, was awarded to **Veronica Rosales**, a graduate student at the University of Illinois, Chicago. She is a Masters' Degree candidate in Linguistics at the University of Illinois, Chicago.

Professional Development awards to attend our annual state convention were also given to Aylin Baris Atilgan and Veronica Rosales, our graduate scholarship recipients. The following also received Professional Development Awards. **Kristina Brazil** is an ESL instructor at Westside Technical Institute and Instituto del Progreso Latino in Chicago and is also a graduate student at Concordia University in

Chicago. **Juliet May** is a graduate student at Wheaton College and an instructor at World Relief in Chicago. **Kerry Urquizo** is an instructor at Heartland Community College in Normal. **Weirong Wang**, who also presented at the convention, is a doctoral candidate at Illinois State University in Curriculum and Instruction and TESOL.

Thank you to our reviewers, to all applicants, and to all of you who encouraged your colleagues to apply. Please continue to do so!

Submitted by Britt Johnson



Adult SIG News

The new chair for Adult SIG is Catherine Swanson of the Albany Park Community Center in Chicago (cswanson@apcc-chgo.org).

Lynn Kendall, past Adult SIG chair, will remain the sponsor of Adult SIG's online discussion group, and as such will provide for its maintenance.

Members who are involved in adult education or who are interested in issues relating to the teaching and learning of adult ESL may opt to join the group by going to <http://groups.google.com/group/ITBE-adult-ed-SIG>. They can also contact Lynn Kendall (lynn.kendall@gmail.com) to indicate their interest and she will arrange an invitation to join the group.

Suggestions for topics of discussions are welcome, whether they be issues, questions, or recommendations for resources to aid in teaching adult ESL.



ITBE Higher Education SIG Survey (Spring 2007)



Higher Education SIG members who did not attend the April 2007 Convention SIG meeting are asked to complete the following survey and mail to:

Arlene de la Paz-Kane, Coordinator, ASHE Program
College Center, C245; 900 W. College Pkwy.
Palos Hills, Illinois, 60465.

Participants may also e-mail responses, identifying them with numbers and letters of corresponding questions such as 1.a . _____. E-mail to: delapaz-kane@morainevalley.edu

Name of ITBE Higher Ed SIG member: _____

Name of college/university: _____

Title/Position of member: _____

Please respond to the following questions with regard to your institution's policies and practices related to academic ESL programming.

1. Placement measures

a. What are your measures for placement for an LEP student interested in accessing college programs?

(Moraine Valley Community College) (MVCC) uses the COMPASS ESL, otherwise known as the Intensive English Language Test, which will place students into the "IEL" Program in 1 of 3 levels for 4 skill areas, taught in independent classes).

b. How is an LEP student assigned to the appropriate test measurement?

(At MVCC, students who indicate that English is their second language at point of general testing registration are advised to seek advice from Multicultural Student Affairs/ASHE Program. They are not, however, prohibited from taking COMPASS, the general college reading and writing placement test for native speakers of English that they may mistakenly have chosen).

c. If an LEP student is appropriately tested and found to need English skill support, is she/he bound by the results of this measurement to enter the academic English skill support program designated for non-native speakers of English (IEL)? What is your institution's policy?

(At MVCC, only international LEP students are bound by a policy to enroll in and complete the IEL program. Residents have free choice whether to enroll in the IEL program or the Developmental program which is designed for non-native English speakers in need of writing and reading skills support. A policy is being investigated to require residents to also comply).

2. Use of technology in the classroom

a. Does your institution offer online or blended classes? _____
(MVCC offers some online IEL classes.)

b. Are instructors using a "course management" system with their classes? _____
Which ones? _____

c. Are instructors using "open-source" resources in their classroom like free programs, software, and applications found on the internet? _____

3. Handling of Generation 1.5 students

a. Are Generation 1.5 students identified by special assessment/analysis at your institution? _____
If yes, please explain: _____

(At MVCC, general information has been provided by interested staff members, but nothing formal is in place).

b. Are you aware of strategies that are employed by instructors, learning centers, or disability services that assist Generation 1.5 students in successful learning practices?

(At MVCC, perhaps IEL program in-class strategies are applied by instructors).

4. Course and program exit criteria

a. What is the exit criteria for your academic ESL program?

(At MVCC, classes at each of the 3 levels of the IEL program must be passed with a “C” or better. Completion of level 3 grammar and writing classes with a “C” or better permits a student to register for COM 101. Completion of level 3 reading class w/ a “C” or better meets college reading requirement. International students must complete level 3 speech, whereas resident students are not required to complete the speech sequence).

5. In-class assessment measures

a. What forms of in-class assessment measures do college “ESL” instructors use?

(At MVCC, the traditional blend of tests, quizzes, and homework are used to produce a final grade in the IEL classes. A pretest given on the first or second day of class verifies student placement but also may promote student to the next skill level if student demonstrates advanced skill achievement).

6. Special programs or activities that act as high school to college “bridges” for high school ESL students

a. Does your institution coordinate with high school ESL counselors/instructors for an arranged activity on the campus to better prepare ESL high school students for college requirements and testing direction?

(MVCC has piloted a program with one high school and plans to add a second high school this spring '07).

b. If you answered yes, please briefly describe the activity

(In spring 2006, MVCC coordinated with other departments to plan an all-day event for ESL high school students where they were tested and participated in workshops which included one to improve their reading strategies and another to familiarize students with library features and functions).

7. College orientation for LEP students

a. What college orientation practices (e.g. college goals assessment; introduction to college service and programs; registration guidelines) does your institution employ for new full-time students? Please describe.

(At MVCC, first-time, full-time students are required to attend a four-hour orientation prior to registering for classes. Also, College 101/Changes, Challenges, Choices 8-week course is a college requirement for all first time, full time students. LEP students who are enrolled in IEL level 3 reading are encouraged to also enroll in College 101; however, if their writing skills remain underdeveloped they are not successful in this class.)

b. What opportunity does a full-time LEP student have to participate in a comprehensive college orientation activity? Please describe.

(At MVCC, full-time IEL program resident students are not required by the IEL program to attend an orientation. However, the ASHE program, which provides student support services for LEP resident students, has invited resident students to semester events in an attempt to better orient them to the college. Unfortunately, poor attendance has been experienced. International students, however, receive a college orientation in a group setting upon arrival to the college).

(continued from page 1)

A second approach to evaluation that I have found beneficial is what I call the “value-added question”:

Where did the real learning take place for you this semester? That is, what “value” did this course add to your knowledge of the language, understanding of the culture, and/or attitudes toward language learning?

Students describe how the course has added to their knowledge of the subject (content, skills), their attitudes toward language learning, and their understanding of the culture (construed as befits the course content), i.e., what has this course added to their cognitive and affective domains? Have they gotten anything more out of the course than just a higher TOEFL score or an understanding of the five-paragraph essay? I have given the value-added question as an extra-credit take-home activity that has yielded some very interesting and informative feedback.

As I see it, the main problem with course evaluations is timing: students are asked for feedback at the end of the course, and teachers usually cannot see the results until after the course is over. The evaluations are *summative* with no chance to redirect the course. At best, the teacher can address problems, complaints, and concerns in the next course. I therefore suggest the use of a *formative* evaluation given at or around the mid-point of the course so that teachers can make changes and respond to concerns raised by the current crop of students. I developed an activity that I give to students about halfway through the course. Students are asked to consider what works, and doesn’t work, both in and outside of class:

Please complete this evaluation anonymously and return it to the teacher.

1. The in-class activities that help me the most in learning how to (write) are:

Are there any in-class activities that you don’t find helpful?

2. The outside activities that help me most in learning how to (write) are:

Are there any outside activities that you don’t find helpful?

3. I wish we could spend more time...

4. I wish we could spend less time...

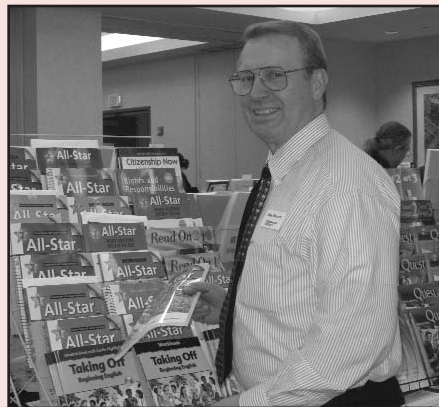
5. Other suggestions/recommendations

The statements can be modified to suit any class. This mid-term approach does have one caveat which I call the “suggestion box syndrome”: if a student makes a suggestion, this creates an expectation that the teacher will follow through. Before I ask students to complete the form, I tell them that I may or may not be able to make any changes to the course (anything that contradicts the syllabus is off-limits) or in-class activities. For example, if a student writes, “I wish we didn’t have homework” or “I wish we could speak in our native languages,” I will not take their suggestions seriously. However, if a student writes, “I wish we could spend more time going over vocabulary at the start of every class,” I might be able to build some warm-up activities into my lesson planning.

Course evaluation can have a positive impact on what we do and how we do it. However, I feel that summative (end-of-course) evaluation instruments do not help me better serve my current students. We also need to spend some in-class time working with evaluation forms required by our institutions so that our second-language students understand what is expected of them. Over the years I have found that a combination of mid-term and end-of-term instruments is more valuable in providing me with timely feedback on my courses.

Dennis Bricault is Associate Professor of Spanish and Director of ESL Programs at North Park University in Chicago. He has taught EFL/ESL in Spain, Hungary, and the U.S. He received his Ph.D from Loyola University, Chicago.

Pictures from the Illinois TESO•BE 33rd Annual Convention on March 9-10, 2007

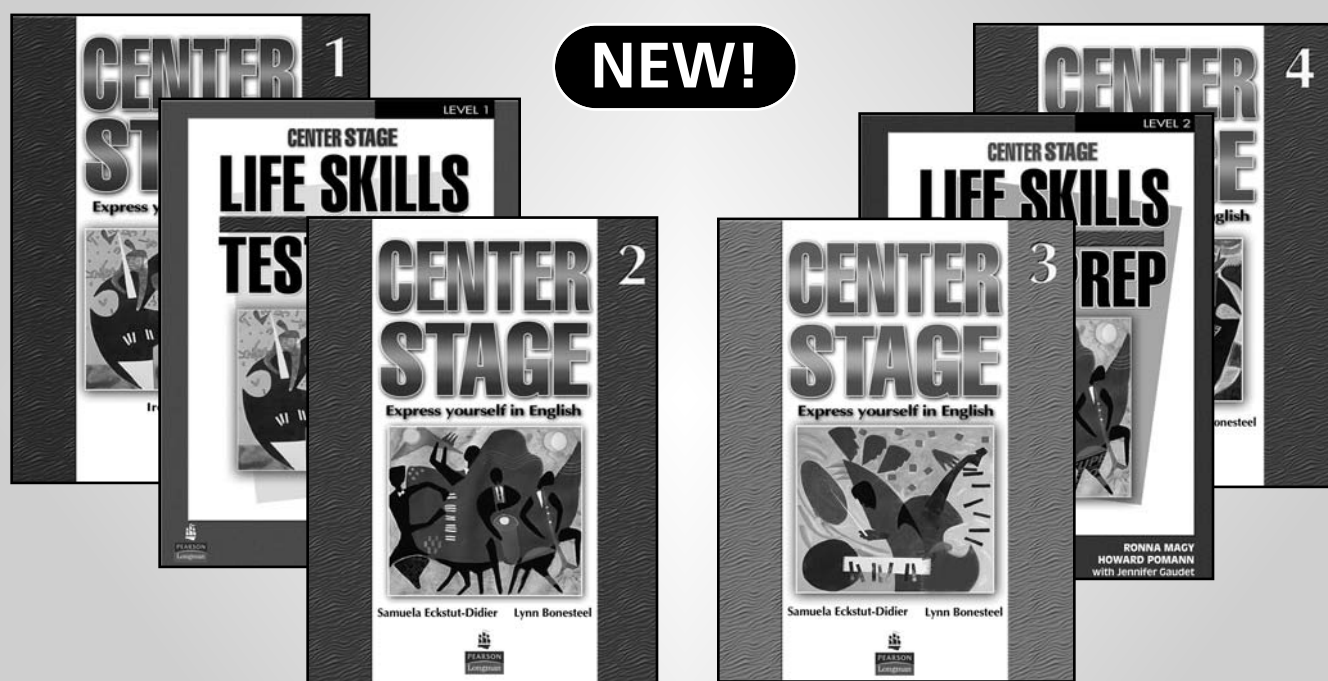


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PEARSON
Longman

Member Snapshot

Name: Dr. Angelyn Balodimas-Bartolomei

Currently working as: Assistant Professor in the School of Education & Coordinator of the ESL Endorsement Program at North Park University. For many years, I have taught ESL for Oakton Community College in the ALL ESL Program. I also served as director and founder of the Aristotle GSL (Greek as a Second Language Program) for sixteen years.



Years as an ITBE Member: Several, however I have served on the Board for the last two years.

Years in education: Nearly three decades. I began

teaching ESL in Greece while I was an international student in the Greek University. Upon my return to the United States, I earned my MA degree in ESL/Linguistics. Four years ago I earned my PhD in Comparative/International Studies & Educational Policy. I have devoted a number of years to teaching ESL.

A Memorable Experience: I have had so many; it is hard for me to single out a specific one. There is nothing more rewarding than to see my students improve and excel in the English language. In my university classes, my biggest reward is when I introduce a concept to my students and they expand on it and take it to a higher level.

A Regrettable Professional Experience: Realizing that I must say goodbye to my students at the end of the year. I become so attached to my students; we are like family.

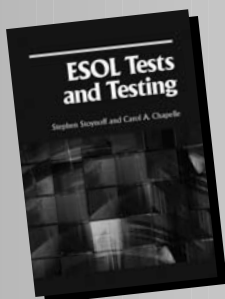
Professional Passions: Learning—there is so much to absorb and learn and not enough time to do it all. My favorite saying is by Michelangelo, “I am still learning.” In addition, I love languages (I have studied five and am fluent and functional in four). I am passionate about ethnicity and culture and I implement so much of this in my teaching and research.

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Stephen Stoyhoff and Carol A. Chapelle, Editors

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Teachers of English to Speakers
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Elizabeth Minicz

Associate Professor/Co-Chair Adult Educational Development Department
Harper College

Last year at this time, newspapers were filled with stories about impending immigration reform. A year later, nothing much has happened other than states and municipalities making their own versions of immigration laws, most smacking of racism and discrimination. Why care about immigration reform? Our jobs depend on it.

Get Along Li'l Doggie

Approximately 10 per cent of the illegal immigrants in the United States reside in Texas. According to Miguel Bustillo in the March 11, 2007, edition of the *Chicago Tribune*, there is a non-partisan push to enact some of the strictest immigration-related laws in the U.S. One such law would not only deny public services to illegal immigrants, but their American-born children as well. This is the first such proposal in the country. Some call this a challenge to the automatic citizenship of children born in the U. S. The 14th Amendment to the Constitution granted birth-right citizenship, and prior challenges have been overruled. Now, reports Bustillo, "... some legal scholars have questioned whether the amendment which redefined national citizenship to include the children of slaves after the Civil War, should cover babies born to foreign parents." There are more than two dozen other proposals in Texas targeting illegal immigrants. Leo Berman, a Republican legislator who wrote the bill to deny services to children of illegal immigrants says his goal is to "... set off a fight in federal courts" writes Bustillo. I guess President Bush no

longer has the influence he used to have in Texas. Interesting to see what happens in the next election.

Violence at the Border

How willing would you be to risk your life to be smuggled across the border from Mexico to the U.S? How much would you pay to a coyote? \$2,000? \$3,000? \$4, 000? Before the U.S. cracked down on illegal border crossing, it was possible to cross without a coyote. Not so anymore, and their prices just keep going up. The number of illegal crossings is down dramatically, but the danger associated with those crossings is escalating, report Michael Martinez and Oscar Avila in a story in the February 18, 2007, *Chicago Tribune*.

Rival gangs of smugglers have attempted to steal each other's human cargo resulting in death for the illegal immigrants and coyotes alike. Turf wars have also developed between drug smugglers and human smugglers. People have long endured horrible conditions and death while attempting to enter the U.S. Last year the Mexican government published a controversial guide to crossing the borders, but I don't recall mention of armed robbers or vigilante murders. There was no price guide for coyotes either.

The Border Patrol is not surprised by the violence. "We knew that this was going to be happening. It's one of the side-effects of securing the border," said spokesman Gustavo Soto of the Border Patrol's Tucson sector. "It's very difficult to say how long this is going to last." Alonzo Pena, a U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement special agent, counted 65 cases between April 2005 and July 2006 in which smugglers fought over illegal immigrants. Extortion, hostage-taking, thefts of rivals' human cargos, and homicide have become politically embarrassing to Arizona's Governor Janet Napolitano. According to Martinez and Avila of the *Chicago Tribune*, the Southern Poverty Law center has Arizona on a watch list because of violence and vigilante activity. Will a fence help or will it raise danger and death to even more disturbing levels?

So You “Wanna” Be a Citizen? Pay Up!

In 1998 the application fee for naturalization was \$95. It's rising again in June from \$400 to \$675—the fourth increase since 2002. Some officials posit that increased fees will not deter people from becoming citizens, but how does one explain that of the 404,000 legal immigrants in Illinois, Wisconsin, and Indiana, only 35,000 did, says Antonio Olivo in an article in the February 23, 2007, edition of the *Chicago Tribune*. Even more surprising to me than the low number of naturalization applications is Olivo's revelation that, “U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (CIS), which handles applications for the federal department of Homeland Security, relies solely on fees to process citizenship requests, keep buildings running, and pay employees.” The General Accounting Office (GAO) recommended a fee increase in 2004 reports. CIS claims that without the fee increases it would take years instead of months to process applications. I am still amazed—no federal funding for the agency that handles naturalization? Has it always been that way? Curious. If anybody cares to do the research, let me know. And by the way, don't confuse CIS with CSI.

Learning Another Language Is Child's Play

I was watching Sesame Street when I learned my first two words in Spanish: abierto/cerrado. Since my children are now in their mid-twenties to early thirties, and I don't have any grandchildren, I confess to being completely out of the loop where bilingual toys are concerned. Now, there are multiple media devoted to teaching foreign languages to children, and toy manufacturers, in particular, have gone bilingual. Ashley Surdin, in an article that appeared in the *Los Angeles Times* on February 12, 2007, writes about how improving technologies have led to bilingual phones, globes, dolls, books, and laptops for children. I had no idea. According to Reyne Rice, a trend specialist with the Toy Industry Association, “There's been a shift in the culture, where speaking two languages is more popular, and now second and even first generation Americans are saying, No, we're proud of our heritage, and we

want our kids to embrace our language.”

The \$22-billion-a year toy industry is not about to miss an opportunity to make money. Surdin says that for the first time, Latinos, who represent 42.7 million people in this country, are the largest and fastest growing minority group in the U.S. With an average four children per household versus 2.3 for the rest of the population, Latinos are a “huge, untapped market,” according to Carlos Conejos, president of Multicultural Associates.

In addition to traditional toymakers such as Mattel, Inc's Fisher-Price, specialty toymakers have also emerged. Language Littles, based in New York, sells 12 bilingual dolls in 10 languages: Mandarin, German, Hebrew, and Greek are among the languages. Martha Barrios sells a line of bilingual books and stuffed toys called Frijolitos. Albondiga, the mariachi dog and Picadillo the armadillo, sell out time after time at book fairs and small shops in Southern California. So watch out, Dora the Explorer, you have some competition, and I have the urge to watch Nickelodeon.

Call for Contributions

**Want to get published?
Want to see your name in print?**

If you are interested in sharing your ideas with your colleagues, send an article for publication in the ITBE Newsletter. Your article could be on any professional topic of interest to the membership – research, teaching, curriculum, assessment, issues and problems in teaching our students in various contexts and of various levels, etc. Your article can be of any length but preferably no longer than 1500 words. Please refer to p.2 in this newsletter for information about submission, or you could contact me at ibrosnahan@yahoo.com

Irene Brosnahan
Editor



Second Annual Elementary Poetry Contest

This year the Elementary SIG held its second annual poetry contest for students in third, fourth, and fifth grades. We were encouraged to have a total of 48 entries. Some of the original entries included pictures and various fonts. No pictures are included in the newsletter and the font's color or size may be different than originally submitted. You will also notice some editing that has been done to modify the original entries. Enjoy the winner's entries on the following pages!

Margaret Gigous and Ruth Becker, Elementary SIG Co-Chairs

THIRD GRADE SUBMISSIONS:

6 Acrostic Poem Entries, 4 Diamante Poem Entries,
1 Open Poem Entry

CATEGORY: ACROSTIC POEM

First Place

Student: Don Hyun (Steven) Yoo,
Sponsoring Teacher: Bob Kang
School: Peterson Elementary School, Chicago

Teacher
Takes Time
Entrance to future
Assures
Cares
Homework
Explains problems
Rare

Second Place

Student: Jalen Garza
Sponsoring Teacher: Miss Welcker
School: Mill Street School, Naperville

Chicago
Christmas trees
High buildings
I saw Chicago Fire Soccer
Cubs
A store
Go Bears
O Burger King and McDonald's* make
people eat
***apostrophe added**

CATEGORY: DIAMANTE POEM

First Place

Student: Ye Chan An
Sponsoring Teacher: Bob Kang
Peterson Elementary School, Chicago

Noodle
hot, spicy
boil, stir, sip
chopsticks, water, oven, bread
bake, twirl, spin
round, triangle
Pizza

Second Place

Student: Jason Kim
Sponsoring Teacher: Bob Kang
Peterson Elementary School, Chicago

Winter/Summer
Winter
Cold, freezing
Snowball fight, ice skate, snowboard
Snowman, ice hockey, beach, sandcastle
Swim, run, play
Hot, sunny
Summer

CATEGORY: OPEN POEM

First Place

Student: Abid Siddiqui
Sponsoring Teacher: Erna Huitema
School: Ellsworth Elementary School, Naperville

Hello Dog, Goodbye Cat
Hello dog good bye cat
Hello rain good bye sun
Hello best friend good bye bully
Hello Ziploc good bye open bag
Hello house good bye hotel

FOURTH GRADE SUBMISSIONS:

14 Acrostic Poem Entries, 1 Diamante Poem Entry
(No award was given), 3 Open Poem Entries, 1 Haiku
Poem Entry (No award was given).

CATEGORY: ACROSTIC POEM

First Place

Student: Vanessa Solis
Sponsoring Teacher: Christine Klink
School: Louise White School, Batavia

SOCCER

I Score lots of goals like Mia Hamm.
laying fOrward* is lots of fun.
I'm Captain for the team.
The Coach is very helpful.
I'm very aggrEssive* when fighting for the ball.
One day I hope to be a pRofessional soccer plaer!!!!
*Edited for spelling.

Second Place

Student: Alexis Cordero
Sponsoring Teacher: Miss Welcker
School: Mill Street School, Naperville

MEXICO

Mexico is a cool country.
Elephants are at the zoo
EXplore different kinds of foods
Iguanas are different colors
Cousins to play with outside
Oranges are good to eat

CATEGORY: OPEN POEM

First Place

Student: Omar Hernandez
Sponsoring Teacher: Miss Welcker
School: Mill Street School, Naperville

Planet Earth

My favorite planet is Earth and this is why...
On Earth there are beautiful oceans and blue beaches.
The trees so tall, the flowers sprout in the spring.
The sky is blue and sunny. The animals travel and
eat.
Birds soar freely in the sky.
Fireworks* bursting in the air.
The sun is very bright up in the sky.
Earth is so beautiful and that makes me happy!
*Changed to a compound word.

Second Place

Student: Ashley Guo
Sponsoring Teacher: Miss Welcker
School: Mill Street School, Naperville

China

Oh China, oh China what a busy
place to live
People are driving and walking
and do other kind of things
It had bunch of traffic on the
road and people going everywhere
By evening, they eat their dinner
and enjoy their family time
By night, they went fast asleep
O China, Oh China what a busy day!

FIFTH GRADE SUBMISSIONS:

11 Acrostic Poem Entries, 3 Diamante Poem Entries
(1 entry qualified for an award), 3 Open Poem
Entries; 1 Haiku Poem Entry.

CATEGORY: ACROSTIC POEM

First Place

Title: "Honduras"
Student: Lilibeth Alvarado
Sponsoring Teacher: Miss Welcker
School: Mill Street School, Naperville

Honduras

House on Principle Street
Ocean seen on vacation
Night smells
Doctor helped when I was sick
Umbrella when it rains and in the sun
Restaurant on special occasions
Animals I loved
student of Spain School

Second Place

Student: Rolando Contreras
Sponsoring Teacher: Miss Welcker
School: Mill Street School, Naperville

Mexico

Music ranchera
Exquisite food
Xplore the pyramids
I like Mexico
Colors like rainbows in the sky
Oceans are far from my house

CATEGORY: DIAMANTE POEM

First Place

Student: Gustavo Cabrera
Sponsoring Teacher: Erna Huitema
School: Ellsworth Elementary School, Naperville

U.S / Mexico

U.S.
Beautiful, Huge
Working, Running, Recycling
Computer, Checkerboard, Uncle, Aunt
Sleeping, Working, Playing
Poor, Loud
Mexico

CATEGORY: HAIKU POEM

First Place

Student:
Sponsoring Teacher: Miss Holly
School: Apollo School, Des Plaines

Ukraine

The snow is all white.
The trees are green and yellow.
The sun is shining.*
*yellow was changed to shining.

CATEGORY: OPEN POEM

First Place

Student: David Man
Sponsoring Teacher: Erna Huitema
School: Ellsworth Elementary School, Naperville

Hello Bird, Goodbye Worm

HELLO BIRD, GOOD BYE WORM
HELLO SUN, GOOD BYE MOON
HELLO USA, GOOD BYE KOREA
HELLO WATER, GOOD BYE SOAP
HELLO LIGHT, GOOD BYE DARK
HELLO PENCIL, GOOD BYE ERASER
HELLO TRAIN, GOOD BYE CAR
HELLO ICE, GOOD BYE WATER
HELLO ICELAND, GOOD BYE LAND.

Second Place

Student: Andres Aguas
Sponsoring Teacher: Miss Welcker
School: Mill Street School, Naperville

My Country

We have the greatest food like oranges, bananas,
and apples.
It's like your second home. Feel at home.
We have great video games, and videos to watch.
If you like Dragon Ball Z the episode you can see it
in Mexico but it's not in English.
In Mexico you have to be really careful with cactus.
They're in fields but if you go to the City you will
not see cactus.
It's really cool living in Mexico. I like my home in
Mexico because its warm and cozy.
I like to play with my friends in Mexico.



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2007 Student Essay Winners



6-8 grade, Edison Middle School, Champaign, IL

Teacher: Sung Ae Park

First Place Winner (\$150)

Ki-Seong Lee

Second Place Winner (\$100)

Young Ju Suh

Third Place Winner (\$75)

Jeong-Bin Moon

Traffic Culture in America

Ki-Seong Lee

According to the research of Korean National Statistical Office, the number of traffic accident victims per 100,000 people is 16. Do you know how big this rate is? This rate is bigger than the rate of infectious disease victims. I had no idea why Korean traffic accident rate is so high, but after I experienced the American traffic culture, I knew why. American traffic rules and drivers' thoughts were geared for safety. Now, I will write about American traffic rules and culture.

First, children are in the first priority of traffic rules. There are many traffic rules protecting children. For example, cars can not pass beside the school bus while boarding and all cars must slow down in the school zone for walkers. Even city buses wait for students to finish school. For little babies, they must sit on the car seat for safety. Moreover, they must not sit on their parents' lap because it is very dangerous in case of an accident. Once, I saw cars lined up behind the school bus and waiting for it to go. However, nobody waited impatiently and nobody just passed. People's attitudes toward children were very impressive.

Next, many traffic rules are obeyed by each individual. In front of the stop sign, drivers stop for their safety even though nothing is coming. In America, there is a sign called 4 way stop in which cars have to wait for their turn to move. Although there is no traffic light or police officer, cars were in a very good order. In a crowded city Seoul, I have never seen this before and that was one of the biggest shock I have ever experienced in America.

Most impressive thing was that drivers respect and understand other people very well while driving. Once, I was waiting for my friend beside the road. Although I wasn't going to go across the road, the car stopped for me and gave me a signal to go. Also, I saw an old woman going across the street very slowly. While she was in the middle of the road, the traffic light turned green, but nobody moved and nobody seemed to be annoyed by it. I remembered Korean cars honking to the woman angrily in the similar situation. I thought this was the reason why American car accident rate is lower than Korea.

I experienced a lot of cultural shocks in America especially in traffic culture. American traffic rules are designed for children and are obeyed by people's conscience. Most important thing was that drivers yield other drivers and walkers. I was highly impressed by the safe traffic system in America while I was ashamed of Korean traffic system in which people don't respect people very much. Once I saw a TV commercial about traffic accident victims and they seemed very pathetic. When I grow up as a driver, I will try best as I can to change the Korean traffic culture so that innocent people won't suffer from traffic accidents.

Differences between Korean and American Schools

Young Ju Suh

"Clang" the bell just rang. And the front door of my classroom opened. "Good morning" we greeted our teacher, bowing as politely as we could. At that time, over the Pacific Ocean, there was Edison Middle School in the U.S.A. "Good morning Mr. Smith!" the students said hello to their teachers, some of them casually shaking their hands. Can you see the difference between Korean schools and American schools?

As you know by the ways of teachers getting greeted in the morning, atmosphere of Korean teachers and American teachers is different. You cannot see students bowing to their teachers in America. But in my country, Korea, I can not see students shaking their hands to greet their teacher. This was what I felt very strange at first when I started to go school in the U.S.A in August last year. The ways of teachers wear is totally different. It was interesting that American teachers wear T shirts and jeans instead of formal suits which Korean teachers always wear. American

teachers are as comfortable as T shirts and jeans, also they are friendly. But some Korean teachers keep distance between them and their students. Even though Korean teachers are formal and American teachers are casual and informal, both countries' teachers respect and love their students.

I could found difference between Korean students and American students too. I can remember the days when I went to middle school in Korea. Every morning, when students came into school through the gate, teachers checked their hair styles and their uniforms to make sure they wore in the right way. What if some of them break the school rule by wearing untidy hair? They get detention and get a bad grade at their attitude. But in America, we can see students wear what they want and have hairstyles in their own ways. I think American students have more rights than Korean students in their school life. But, some students just worry about their fashion styles instead of studying. Korean students treat their teachers very politely while American students treat them comfortably.

The most important thing that I found about American school is that students are not driven to compete with others. There is not a ranking system in the U.S.A. So the students learn what they want without worrying about their ranking in class. But in Korea, there is a ranking system. Every student competes very hard to take the first place in their classes, and in the whole school. They go to a lot of cram schools to learn English and math. Sometimes, students get sick because they study so hard. This can be contrasted with American students who enjoy sports and many creative activities.

Korean schools are very formal and students compete each other. Instead, American schools are informal, casual, and not stressful. Both countries' schools are very different as I mentioned above. I came to the United States 6 months ago. At first, it was hard to go school in America. But now, I think it is a great experience to go American school which has a different culture from Korean schools.

My Family is a Melting Pot

Jeong-Bin Moon

Many people believe that education is all the more important because it is a far-sighted national policy, so numerous Korean parents want their children to study abroad. I am positive that all parents want their children to be successful, but living in a different country can make success much more difficult to achieve. In a new country, children experience new cultures, customs, traditions, and languages.

Most Korean parents prefer that their children neither speak Korean nor play with other Korean kids when they are in America. They just want their children to have ONLY American friends, and attend the "mainstream" classes with regular native English speaking students. Most of them do not want to accept the fact that their children need ESL or bilingual classes. However, to the contrary, I believe that ESL helps bilingual students fully emerge in the mainstream better than such brutal immersion strategies.

My dad is Korean American, who is fluent in both Korean and English, and my mom is Korean. My dad communicates in Korean with Mom and me, but when he talks to my grandparents and other people, he uses English instead of Korean. Dad and I understand how difficult learning a second language is. We have been there and we have done that. So he knows how important bilingual and ESL classes are.

My bilingual teacher has two kids who are biracial. Her son struggles not to speak and learn Korean, but her daughter (two years younger) likes to study and speak Korean with her mom. My bilingual teacher tries really hard to make her kids speak Korean with her, because she knows how important and useful it is. When children are young, they tend to do what their mommy tells them to do. However, as they grow, they begin to recognize that they are different from others, not only their skin color, also what they eat at home and what they speak with others. Children do not like to be different. If they seem different, they think they are unordinary and weird which is a wrong idea. They should be proud of having an advantage in learning a second language from childhood. I have a baby brother who is also biracial. A few years later, he will learn Korean like my bilingual teacher's children, but no one knows what will happen to him next. However, I will do my best to teach him to speak Korean.

In my family, Korean culture and American culture are blended together. Just because two different cultures got mixed does not mean that I can not find my true identity. I am who I am no matter what. I am so proud of my small cultural mixing pot family that I can learn new tradition, food, customs, and everything about a different country. My dad, mom, my baby brother, and I make such a small family, but in it, there are many interesting facts that everyone can learn about new cultures. That's why I call my family as a small cultural melting pot.



9-12 grade, New Trier High School, Winnetka, IL

Teacher: Kurt Weiler

First Place Winner (\$150)

Justin Lim

Second Place Winner (\$100)

Mirela Naneva

Third Place Winner (\$75)

Julian Ramon

Justin Lim

As I have grown up in the different cultures Korean and American, I have personally seen and experienced differences in these cultures. In any culture, there are different things people do to celebrate, greet, argue, think, and act. Korean culture is a lot different from American. In fact, Koreans have unique ways of thinking, communicating, and behaving. The most noticeable differences between Korean and American culture are the typical Korean's driving style, social behavior and food.

The first thing that average American will notice in the crowded city like Seoul is the very aggressive driving. Although Korean people are nice and friendly in person, they are very competitive and become very aggressive when driving in crowded cities. When driving, they cut one another off, do not allow other people to enter the lane, accelerate very quickly to keep their position or to take someone else's position. When they become very frustrated, which is often, they yell swear words and many strange sounds to show that they are mad. If the situation becomes even worse as I have seen, people come out of their cars and start fighting physically on the street. Many people do not easily accept their faults, always blame other people, and try to win the argument. However, these conflicts are not only blamed on Korean people. Korean traffic is very bad because there are too many cars and poor road conditions that cause drivers to become more stressful. Nevertheless, Korean drivers are very aggressive and definitely even more aggressive than American taxi drivers.

While Korean people are very competitive when driving, they are very respectful towards each other in person. When foreigners begin observing Korean people, they will notice the difference in greeting manner. Among the manners that Korean people must follow, greeting by bowing 90 degrees is the most important thing that represents the Korean people. When they bow, they must bend low enough so that adults can see the top part of their heads; they have to put our arms right next to the body as in military salute. If they move when they bow, people might see it as disrespectful. Moreover, if a child doesn't bow to adults people will look down on his or her parents. According to Korean culture, bowing has been an important manner since long time ago. In the contrast to the American culture, Koreans have to show respects to adults and thus they bow to them.

Another difference between Koreans and Americans is the diet where Korean considers rice as a main source of nutrition. Korean people are based on Rice. Rice is the most important food that Korean people consume almost every day, because it provides most of their carbohydrates. Unlike an American's average meal which is based on corn and potatoes, Korean people began eating rice since the early centuries and since then the rice has been used everywhere. Koreans use rice to make a drink called "Shik Hae", which is a sweat sugary drink. It can also be used to make desert called "Dock", which is a white chewy snack. They also ferment rice to make liquor called "Soju", 22% alcohol. Just as corn is used everywhere in our culture, rice is used everywhere in Korean people's life.

Driving style, social behavior and food are typical qualities of Korean people and they are very different from those of American's. The driving style shows how competitive they are, social behavior shows how they greet one another in respectful way, and the rice shows how rice has influenced the Korean's meal. Foreigners may think them as strangers because of our own qualities, but I am proud of three traits of a typical Korean.

Naneva Culture

Mirela Naneva

Every nationality has developed its own culture, unique somehow or other. Different nationalities have different customs and traditions. Some are similar to others in one way or another; yet, others differ extremely from the rest. For the past two hundred years, Americans have developed their culture, which I, a Bulgarian teenage-girl, got to know during the past three years since I moved to America. On the other hand, I am perfectly

familiar with the Bulgarian culture, for I've lived in Bulgaria basically my whole life. Having the experience of living in two completely different countries, I may say that a person must live in a country to really get to know its culture. But in order to get a closer feeling of what the Bulgarian one is like, Americans need to know that Bulgarians are very traditional and hard-working people.

Bulgarians are very traditional in different ways. The nation has developed customs about a thousand years ago, which for centuries have been passed from generation to generation. To this day, Bulgarians are still not willing to change their customs and holidays, or food. In America, most holidays are associated with former presidents or such famous people. In Bulgaria, on the other hand, most celebrations are for the people's sake. For example, some of the holidays are Names Days, "Baba Marta," "Trifon Zarezan," etc. Names Days are based on typical Bulgarian names related to saints. They are celebrated throughout the year, different names on different dates. To Bulgarians, one's Name Day (if any) is almost as important as their birthday. "Baba Marta" (Grandma Marta) is a traditional holiday, associated with sending off the winter and welcoming the upcoming spring. People, especially kids, put on a "martenitsa", which are red and white fabric threads, or dolls, called Pijo(the male) and Penda(the female). They are meant to bring health and happiness. People are to keep the martenitsa on until they see a first stork, coming back from the South. Since Bulgarians are consuming pretty big amounts of alcohol weekly, they celebrate "Trifon Zarezan" (Vinegrower's Day) on February 14. It's an ancient custom, where men sprinkle their vines with wine for a good harvest. After that, a big dinner follows, with lots and lots of wine included.

Another thing Bulgarians are not willing to replace is their unique food. Unlike Americans, who depend mostly on fast food restaurants, Bulgarians like to cook their food themselves. A Bulgarian cannot live long without *batnitsa*, which is the most typical food there. It is made of Bulgarian *sirene* (feta cheese), eggs, butter, and yoghurt, all mixed together. Then the mixture is spread between layers of dough of flour. Baking for about thirty minutes will finish up the dish. It goes perfectly with *airyan*, which is a mixture of mostly yoghurt, some water, and sugar. Bulgarians highly value their yoghurt, since it is said to be of best quality, due to the special Bacterium that grows only there. This is how a typical breakfast at your Grandma's would look like—banitsa with airyan. As for dinner, the "shopska salad" is a must-have on the table. It is made of cucumbers, tomatoes, peppers, onions, and feta cheese. While women do the cooking, men are taking care of the drinks. Rakia, an alcoholic beverage, is the national drink of Bulgaria. It's usually made of grapes, plums, or apricots. Every man living in the rural area home-produce rakia in their backyard. A man cannot resist from having it on the lunch or dinner table, since it goes well with pretty much any kind of dish. However, if rakia is not on the table for some reason, then beer or wine is. Historic researchers say wine production originated in the territory of what is now Bulgaria some 2,500 years ago. Ever since then, people never stopped producing it. Bulgarians love their high-quality wine, and as already said, it is the greatest substitute of rakia on the table. This routine of home-production of food and drinks shows that Bulgarians like things to be fresh and real, not just a frozen salad or a hamburger that just needs to be heated up in the microwave. Having an alcoholic beverage on the table at most times, which lightens people up and creates an inside fire, reflects exactly what Bulgarian people are—warm and energetic!

Aside from being traditional, Bulgarians are also very industrious, hard-working people. Agriculture is a very aspect of Bulgarian culture. Unlike American people, who just go the grocery store and buy whatever they need, most Bulgarians home-produce most of the goods a person needs. Nothing tastes better than their own, which people have been put a lot of effort and great care all year long. Those who have gardens, in the spring, they plant tomatoes, peppers, cucumbers, onion, potatoes, beans, peas, melons, watermelons, etc. And then in the summer, they are being picked. As for apple trees, pear, cherry, etc., men take great care of them throughout the year, spraying and pouring water upon them regularly. In the countryside, all men have their own land, which they cultivate. In late fall, wheat, corn, barley, oats, etc. are sowed. In the summer, people harvest. In the fields, people take care of grape vine. In the spring, they cut it off, and in the fall they pick the grape. And what about those women whose families don't have a land to cultivate? Bulgarian rose oil is thought to be of the best quality in the world. One of the many reasons for that is due to the hard work women do. The best rose oil is the one picked up before dawn, four-five o'clock in the morning. Not only it's a hard job to get each one of the many, many roses, but the women have to get up so early in the morning, while some Hollywood celebrity is sleeping comfortably, wearing top quality perfumes, made of that same rose oil.

Every nationality is proud of its own culture, no matter when it originated. Bulgarian may be a small, non-powerful country, but it is extremely strong in the sense of having developed a unique culture, which the traditional, hard-working people have conserved for centuries, passing customs from generation to generation, still doing so today.

German Culture

Julian Ramon

Every country has its own historical and traditional culture, which is different from any other, just like Germany and the US. Those two are completely different and in completely different parts of the world. Because of those facts, American sometimes doesn't know a lot about Germany, or may even have wrong ideas about Germany. I am German, and I have lived there my whole life. But one year ago, I moved to America, and I got to get familiar with American culture. I can tell that American and German culture is nothing alike. "Soccer" and the "Oktoberfest" are two very important German events, which you have to get to know, so that you have an idea of what German culture really is like.

One very old, important and successful German sport is soccer. Soccer has always been popular and important for the Germans. Ever since around the 1870s, there were big teams which had sponsors and which also represented a city. Those teams competed against each other in a league called "Bundesliga", which in other words means "German Soccer League". Many people in Germany went to soccer games and they started getting interested. And after many years soccer became more and more popular. But the real breakthrough of soccer in Germany was when they won the World Cup of soccer in 1954 in Bern for the first time. You can still hear people talking about this very important event. People also wear old soccer uniforms, just like the ones the soccer players wore in that World Cup. On weekends usually a lot of people go to soccer games to watch their favorite teams play. And if their team wins then they drive in their cars through the city, honking the horn, so that everybody recognizes that the team has won. But German soccer is also known for something different. For example, the German national team is known for its very precise and strict game play. Partly because I live in America now, I can tell how Americans are different from Germans in sports. The American basketball players, for example, like to show off, to make the sickest moves and dunks. They just enjoy impressing their audience. Instead, the German soccer player's goal is to play a fair and successful game by playing very secure, focusing on the ball and by playing safe passes.

Soccer has an important quality, which really shows that Germans are interested in sports, but another very important quality, which shows the German side of friendship and happiness, is the "Oktoberfest". The Oktoberfest is a very old festival, which takes place during October in the city of Munich. The Oktoberfest started as a small festival in 1810. Ever since then, the festival has gotten bigger and bigger, and has gained visitors each year. Today over 6 million people visit the Oktoberfest from all over the world. A big part of Oktoberfest is its special beer called "Wiesnbier", which contains more alcohol, and which is brewed extra for this event. Another big part of the festival is the traditional clothing. Men wear old leather pants called "Lederhosen", and women wear dresses called "Dirndle". Now, many Americans visit the Oktoberfest each year, and they really like it there. I think one of the reasons they come there, is because of the famous beer. Of course beer is a big part of the Oktoberfest, but I think there is much more about the Oktoberfest. Germans visit it to spend time with friends and family, to talk about all kinds of things, to dance and sing traditional folk music, or to just celebrate. The point of the Oktoberfest is to have fun, and just to enjoy life.

If you are familiar with German soccer, and the Oktoberfest, if you can appreciate enjoying the company of family and friends, then you are well prepared to know more about my culture, and to get to know what it really means to be a German.

This annual writing contest is sponsored by ITBE for Middle School and High School students. In recent years, however, the participation from individual schools has been rather minimal. It is hoped that more schools will choose to participate in the future. The students will certainly appreciate having the opportunity to win a monetary award as well as having their essays published in the ITBE Newsletter.

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