

## The Individual Challenge



Sherrie Davis  
ESL Instructor  
Loyola University  
Chicago

Teachers are eternal students — always learning, exploring, and discovering. I have always said that teachers are my greatest resource, and fortunately, they may be reached now via the Internet.

In the fall of 2008, I concurrently taught ESL for Loyola University Chicago and completed an on-line course, Teaching English Grammar for ESL/EFL, taught by Diane Larsen-Freeman. Through this course, I learned from a great teacher, and then took what was learned and applied it directly to my own teaching of grammar.

This on-line course offered many important grammar points to be explored: what are the different definitions of grammar, teaching grammar explicitly and implicitly, etc. Although I found all points of the course to be helpful, there were two particular areas which were the most beneficial for me.

First, I reviewed the three interconnected dimensions of grammar — *form*, *meaning*, and *use*. *Form* is how a particular grammar point is created; e.g. add *-ed* for the past simple regular tense, such as *walked*, *talked*. *Meaning* is the message being conveyed to the listener or reader; e.g. by adding *-ed* to the verb *talk* the recipient can understand that the action or condition existed in a prior time. Finally, *use* is when or why the structure is used; e.g. when relating a past event we must use the past simple so that the recipient can understand that the event or condition was completed at a prior time.

Furthermore, I learned to analyze the grammar point to be taught for these three dimensions in order to determine what Larsen-Freeman calls the challenge principle. As she explains, we need to determine which dimension of grammar will be most cumbersome for our students; in doing this we can create an optimal learning situation by focusing on what students most

need. Numerous teachers focus primarily on the *form*. But is the *form* always the most challenging dimension for the students? Do the students really know what a particular grammar point *means*? For instance, how is *I am walking to the store* different from saying, *I walk to the store*? Also, do the students really know when to *use* this form? In other words, how do we decide that *am walking* is more appropriate versus *walk* according to the situation?

I quickly put what I had learned into practice. The following week my students were scheduled to learn the passive voice, so I set about analyzing the grammar point using the three dimensions as my guide:

*Form* — the ordering of the words in the sentence changes so that the object becomes the subject, so to speak, and the subject moves into the objective position.

*Michael wrote a book.*

Changed into the passive:

*A book was written by Michael.*

The verb form also changes (but is still in the past tense), needing the 'to be' verb and then the main verb with the past participle form, e.g. *was written*.

*Meaning* — the emphasis of the sentence has changed. *Michael* is no longer the focus of the readers' attention, but instead the *book* is.

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## About the Newsletter .....

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](http://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](mailto: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.)

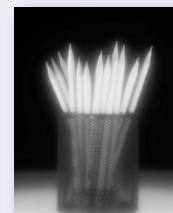
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25 E. Jackson Blvd., Suite 1701  
Chicago, IL 60604

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### Advertisement Information

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(Continued from page 1)

In either sentence the meaning is still essentially the same – There was a man named Michael, and in the past he wrote a book.

*Use* – this is often used in academic writing for a number of different reasons; to name a few, the performer (subject) is not as important as the receiver, the performer is unknown or there is not one, and when the receiver is obvious and therefore doesn't need to be mentioned.

After my analysis, I concluded that the *use* would be the most difficult for the students, for there are so many reasons why we use this form, and students often struggle in choosing when to use any tense, whether it be active or passive. So, the teaching day arrived, and although I emphasized all of the aspects of this grammar form, I incorporated special activities which addressed the *use* dimension. After the lesson, I spent time reflecting on the students' assessments – meaning both classroom performance and homework. I was surprised by my discovery.

To an extent, I was right. The *use* was a challenge because many didn't realize how many different uses there are. The *meaning* was fairly clear-cut and easy to understand. Reordering the words in the sentence (the *form*) was also easily comprehended.

However, determining the challenge principle was not as all inclusive as I originally thought. Approximately half of my students struggled with the *form* of the passive as well. Although they understood that the word order needed to be changed, the verb was often formed incorrectly and then in a number of ways. One specific example was that some of them didn't understand the original tense in the active, and would then change the sentence into a passive, but not the appropriate tense.

*Sally greets the customers.*  
Incorrect: *The customers were greeted by Sally.* (Correct: *are greeted*).

During my reflection two conclusions were formed. One, I learned an essential first step in teaching grammar – determining which dimension could be the most challenging for my students. As a novice teacher I tried to address all of them, believing that all were

equally needed. Pinpointing the challenge can then guide our planning ensuring that we choose appropriate and interactive activities. Second, I discovered that the challenge may be different according to each student and according to that particular student's acquisition of the grammar point.

The later conclusion calls for more explanation: Learning each grammar point comes in varying degrees I believe – some students have mastered the *form* while still struggling with the *use*, whereas others have mastered the *use* while still struggling with the *form*, and so on. It is clear that the *form*, *meaning*, and *use* dimension is undoubtedly helpful in guiding our instruction, and yet, there is still the individual relationship to the challenge. Teachers must remember that each student has a personal rate of learning. We often plan for the group, but it is imperative that we remember to build in time for the individual.

*Guest Editor's note: This issue we feature an article by one of our colleagues who describes herself herein as "a novice teacher", but nevertheless a very reflective one. Sherrie welcomes comments and discussion at [Sdavis1@luc.edu](mailto:Sdavis1@luc.edu).*

## **ITBE congratulates our newly elected officers!**

**Elisa Marquez, Vice President/President-Elect**

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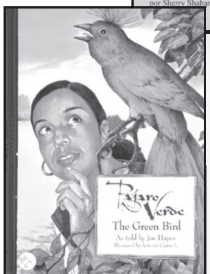
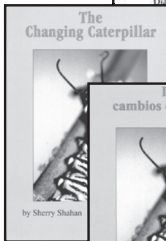
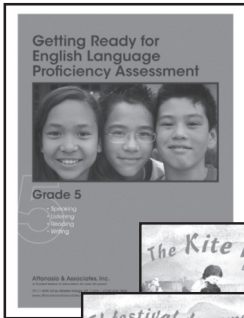
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# Spring 2009 Workshop Report: “Employment in ESL and Bilingual Education”

Illinois TESOL-BE is very grateful to North Park University for hosting our well-attended Spring Workshop this year, on Saturday, April 18, 2009. This workshop was coordinated by our outgoing Professional Development Events chair Becky Swab, who teaches at the University of Illinois-Chicago, Tutorium in Intensive English.

The morning began with welcoming remarks from Dr. Rebecca Nelson, Dean of the School of Education at North Park, and ITBE President Betsy Kubota; and continued with a panel of Illinois program administrators speaking on “ESL Jobs in Uncertain Times”. The members of the panel were Lila Birchfield, from Glenbard North High School; Russell Clark, DePaul University, English Language Academy; Lin Cui, Harper College; Randy Hardwick, BIR Training Center; Susanne McLaughlin, Roosevelt University; and Rebecca Walker, YWCA.

The panel was followed by a presentation by Nancey Epperson of Truman College, who shared her experiences teaching in Turkey as a State Department English Language Fellow; and a break, in which participants were invited to view an exhibition from representatives of several ESOL/BE publishers’ representatives.

Following the break, Dr. Tim Collins, from National Louis University, made an informative presentation on “Building a Resume and Cover Letter”, in which he gave many useful suggestions as to what job seekers should include, and *not* include, in these documents.

The day ended with an information session on North Park University’s ESL Endorsement Program, introduced by ITBE Board member, Dr. Angie Balodimas-Bartolomei.

It is clear that now as always there is great interest in the state of Illinois in employment in ESL and Bilingual Education!



## Save the Date

for these upcoming TESOL and ITBE Events  
(Professional Planner will return in our next issue.)

### **ITBE’s Fall Workshop**

Saturday, October 17, 2009  
Harper College, Palatine

The theme of this year’s workshop will be technology. Watch for forthcoming details!

### **ITBE’s 36<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention: *Changing Times, Changing Lives***

Friday and Saturday, February 26-27, 2010  
Holiday Inn Select, Naperville

### **TESOL’s 44<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention and Exhibit: *Re-imagining TESOL***

March 24-27, 2010  
Boston, Massachusetts

### **ITBE’s Spring Workshop**

Saturday, April 10, 2010  
Venue and theme of the workshop to be announced.

# Member Snapshot

*Dana was interviewed for ITBE by Sherry Rasmussen.*



## **Dana Atwell**

*University of Illinois  
Springfield, IL*

### **In addition to being the ESL Coordinator at the University of Illinois, Springfield (UIS), you are Chair of Study Illinois. Could you please tell us what Study Illinois is, and how it relates to ESL?**

Study Illinois is a state consortium of educational institutions whose purpose is to connect international students and professionals with quality Illinois education and training. We are a not-for-profit organization and since 2003 have grown to represent approximately fifty institutions statewide. Our membership includes language programs, community colleges, and public and private universities of all sizes who are accredited by the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools. Many international students receive ESL instruction prior to or concurrent with enrollment in degree programs or attend shorter term English programs for a variety of reasons. Through a multi-modal approach, Study Illinois helps to connect students with appropriate institutions that meet their needs.

### **You still teach ESL at the University of Illinois, Springfield. How did you first become interested in teaching ESL?**

After college I managed a corporate cafe, but quickly realized that I cared more about helping my staff, mainly immigrants from China and the Dominican Republic, adjust to life in the US. I was intrigued by their life stories and determination and found myself giving English lessons after hours and helping to find community

resources. I had always been excited about learning about different cultures, languages, and travel, so when I moved to Chicago, I decided to enroll in an MATESOL program.

### **Who is the typical ESL student at UIS?**

Our students tend to be either seeking admission to a degree program or already enrolled at UIS. Most are international students although some are domestic. They are from all over the world and as close as Chicago.

### **What are some challenges ESL coordinators face these days?**

The global economy affects all industries, though education seems to be somewhat buffered. A major challenge is to try to adjust any adverse impact of lower student enrollments or reduced operating budgets without sacrificing program quality. Regardless of the wide variation of ESL programs, coordinators tend to be very committed to their students, curriculum, and faculty and staff. I am concerned about numbers of students – both in terms of creating viable programs and regulating class size to accommodate individualization in teaching and learning. Before moving into this position, I taught part-time and am cognizant of the challenges that part-time instructors face.

### **What would you like to see ITBE work on, either in conjunction with Study Illinois or not?**

I find membership in ITBE to be extremely valuable. I have met so many wonderful and committed professionals and learned effective new teaching techniques at the conferences. I would like to see resources for program administrators continue to grow. Study Illinois ties into the recruitment side of program administration and would be delighted to collaborate with ITBE.

# Secondary Conference

*Sharon Draper*

An Exclusively Secondary  
Literacy Conference  
Saturday, November 7, 2009  
Holiday Inn Select, Tinley Park, IL  
Content Areas : Grades 6-12

Young Adult Author: *Copper Sun*  
*Tears of a Tiger* *Fire From the Rock*

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## Secondary Reading League's 33<sup>rd</sup> Day of Reading

- \*Online registration begins June 1<sup>st</sup>
- \*Call Terry for team discount by Oct. 15<sup>th</sup>
- \*CPS Vendor #80827

For more information: Barb  
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## Fabiola Ehlers-Zavala

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Illinois TESOL•BE demonstrates its commitment to the field of English as a Second Language and Bilingual Education each year by awarding two \$1,000 graduate and one \$500 undergraduate scholarship to deserving students.

## Applicants must:

- be currently enrolled in a program in TESOL, bilingual education, or a related field at an accredited college or university or be practicing professionals or paraprofessionals who will enroll in relevant coursework.
- demonstrate financial need.
- be members in good standing of Illinois TESOL•BE (see box below).
- submit a completed application form, along with all required supporting materials.

### CHECK ONE:

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                                  \_\_\_ **\$500 UNDERGRADUATE Scholarship in Honor of Jane Curtis**

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Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_                      Work Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_                      ITBE Membership Expiration: \_\_\_\_\_

School Name and Degree Program: \_\_\_\_\_

(Check one) Currently Enrolled \_\_\_\_\_ Will Enroll in 2010-2011 \_\_\_\_\_

Have you received this ITBE scholarship before? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

### SUPPORTING MATERIALS:

- 1) A letter of application (word-processed and double-spaced) which includes the following: a) a description of your involvement to date in the field of ESL/BE; b) an explanation of your professional goals and how your program of study will help you meet those goals; and c) a brief statement regarding your financial need.
- 2) Two letters of recommendation.
- 3) An official transcript of your academic work. (Unofficial transcripts will **not** be accepted.) A letter of acceptance is required if you are not currently enrolled in an academic program.

All applicants for the \$1,000 Graduate and the \$500 Undergraduate Scholarships must have valid memberships in Illinois TESOL•BE through March 2010. To become a member of ITBE or to renew membership, mail a completed membership application and your dues along with your scholarship application materials. You can also renew your membership online at [www.itbe.org](http://www.itbe.org). Membership applications are available on our web site or in the ITBE Newsletter. Check your status by using your member log-in on the ITBE web site or by e-mailing us at [membership@itbe.org](mailto:membership@itbe.org).

### **MAIL COMPLETED APPLICATIONS, POSTMARKED BY DECEMBER 11, 2009, to:**

**Leah D. Miller, Awards Committee Chair**  
**4019 N. Clarendon, Apt. 3 S.**  
**Chicago, IL 60613**

Scholarships will be awarded at the 36th Annual State Convention on February 26th, 2010, in Naperville, IL. Recipients will be notified by phone and by email. **Attendance is expected.** For additional information, please call (773) 935-9185 or visit our website at [www.itbe.org](http://www.itbe.org).



## Professional Development Award

Each year, Illinois TESOL•BE demonstrates its commitment to the field of English as a Second Language and Bilingual Education by awarding a maximum of ten professional development scholarships for ITBE members to attend the annual convention. The Professional Development Award covers registration for the **February 26-27, 2010** ITBE Convention in Naperville, IL. In addition, either hotel accommodations for Friday night or a maximum of \$50 worth of transportation expenses will be covered.

### Applicants for the Professional Development Award must:

- a) be practicing or retired ESL and/or bilingual education teachers, or full-time or part-time time graduate or undergraduate students enrolled in a program in TESOL, bilingual education, or a related field;
- b) demonstrate financial need;
- c) not be eligible to receive support for the ITBE convention from their institutions;
- d) be members in good standing of Illinois TESOL•BE through March 2010; and
- e) submit a completed application form along with all required supporting materials.

### Application

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_ ITBE Membership expiration date: \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City, State, Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Current employer(s) and Position(s) held: \_\_\_\_\_

Have you received this ITBE scholarship before? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

#### SUPPORTING MATERIALS:

- 1) A letter of application (word-processed and double-spaced) with an explanation of how you will benefit from attending the Illinois TESOL•BE State Convention and a brief statement of financial need.
- 2) A letter of recommendation from an employer or academic program. (NOTE: Individuals whose employers offer financial support for professional activities are not eligible.)

All applicants for the Professional Development Award must be members of Illinois TESOL•BE through March 2010. If you are not currently a member of ITBE or if you would like to renew your membership, mail a completed membership application and your dues along with your award application materials or renew your membership on-line at [www.itbe.org](http://www.itbe.org). Membership applications are available at [www.itbe.org](http://www.itbe.org) or in the ITBE Newsletter. Please make sure your Illinois TESOL•BE membership is valid through March 2010. Check your status by using your member log-in on the ITBE web site or e-mail us at [membership@itbe.org](mailto:membership@itbe.org) for the expiration date.

#### MAIL COMPLETED APPLICATIONS, POSTMARKED BY DECEMBER 11, 2009 to:

**Leah D. Miller Committee Chair**  
**4019 N. Clarendon, Apt. 3 S.**  
**Chicago, IL 60613**

Recipients will be notified by phone and by email. Award certificates will be presented at the convention on Friday, February 26, 2010. Attendance is required. Applicants who have received awards in previous years will be considered, but new applicants will have priority. For additional information, please call (773) 935-9185, or visit our website at [www.itbe.org](http://www.itbe.org).

# ITBE's 4th Annual Elementary Poetry Contest Winners

*Guest Editor's note: Every year ITBE conducts a poetry contest, coordinated by our Elementary SIG Co-Chairs, **Margaret Gigous** and **Dr. Ruth Becker**. The following are the poems written by our first place winners, announced at the 35th Annual Convention last February. Margaret and Ruth wish especially to thank **Robin Richards**, from Reba O'Steck School in Aurora, and **Ewa Pitcher**, from Willow Bend School in Rolling Meadows, for encouraging their students to write poems for the contest.*

## **Liliana Juarez, 1st Place 2nd Grade Acrostic Poem**

### **Posadas**

Posadas  
Open the door the guests are here  
Santa Claus is coming on December  
Abraham is my dad  
Dinner at 4:00 p.m.  
Abulita is good  
Star in the tree

## **Maansi Thapa, 1st Place 3rd Grade Acrostic Poem**

### **Nepal**

Nice and Kind people.  
Exciting kids running all around.  
People Munching rice everyday.  
A great country.  
Lovely mountains in Nepal.

## **Derrick Gatorano, 1st Place 4th Grade Acrostic Poem**

### **Africa**

A war sent my dad to the USA  
Freedom is for Africans too  
Rawanda is where my parents were born  
In Rawanda my mom was a lawyer  
Chad is a country in Africa  
A war sent my Grandpa to Switzerland

## **Alfonso Pizzo, 1st Place 5th Grade Acrostic Poem**

### **Italy**

Incredible beaches  
Tall mountains rising up into the sky  
Airplanes soar across the beach  
Love Italy  
Yes, I speak Italian and English

## **Ankit Singh, 1st Place 3rd Grade Open Poem**

### **India & America**

My Country is  
India, black roads, dogs everywhere  
My Country is  
Noisy, street foods, women in saris  
People talking in different languages  
There are different kinds of presidents  
Buildings all around  
There are big schools  
Fireworks for Diwali  
Deserts are very sweet  
No computers in school  
Temples in India  
That is my country

My country America  
My home is quiet  
There are computers in America  
There is good food in America  
There are fun things to do  
More people in America  
Very quiet in America  
Different kinds of school  
Different houses  
Different kinds of teachers  
Different playgrounds  
Small restaurants everywhere  
Big beaches in Florida  
Animals on a farm  
This is how I remember America.

## **Robert Giba, 1st Place 5th Grade Open Poem**

### **Poland & America**

My country is  
Very quiet on a farm  
Animals are everywhere  
People working on machines  
Lot of dirt  
People are nice  
Schools are very different  
Than American schools  
My house is  
Clean and nice  
Perfect for my family  
Smaller than American houses  
This is how I remember my Poland.

My home is  
A city filled with loud noises

Many cars on nice asphalt  
 Schools are bigger  
 Houses are bigger and nicer  
 Not a lot of animals  
 Lots of buildings  
 More fun outside  
 Less work  
 Not so green  
 This is how I see America

Atlantic City  
 Noisy, sunny  
 Walking, sitting, eating, swimming  
 Buildings, beach, stores, friends  
 Visiting, photographing, drinking  
 Huge, beautiful  
 Taj Mahal

**Sethu Murugesan, 1st Place**  
**4th Grade Diamante Poem**

I still don't know where I want to live...

**India & America**

**Priyanka Subudhi, 1st Place**  
**3rd Grade Diamante Poem**

**My Travels**

Bombay  
 Noisy, busy  
 Shopping, feeding, admiring  
 Mom, dad, me, family  
 Missing, visiting, drawing  
 Wonderful, different

Schaumburg  
 Clean, quiet  
 Living, driving, talking  
 City, light, crowd, buildings  
 Sightseeing, eating, walking, listening  
 Busy, noisy  
 Chicago

India  
 Busy, colorful  
 Walking, yelling, whistling  
 Taj Mahal, sugarcane, rice, saris  
 Sparkling, decorating, cleaning  
 Beautiful, busy  
 Delhi

America  
 Brightness, clean  
 Exercising, cleaning, writing  
 Presidents, White House, Bald Eagle, Schools  
 Apartments, trees, plants, green  
 Cleaning, dressing, playing  
 Colorful, large  
 Chicago

## People in the News



**Dennis Bricault** has been named as the 18th recipient of the Zenos Hawkinson Award for Teaching and Campus Leadership at North Park University. This award is given to a faculty member who has made a significant contribution to teaching and leadership at North Park in areas including, but not limited to, model classroom teaching, campus leadership, student mentoring, pioneering instructional methodology, or creative course development.



**Juli Campagna**, ITBE's Executive Secretary, gave a talk on the types of law school examinations given in civil law (non-English speaking) countries at the Georgetown Law School in Washington D.C. Juli explains that whereas engineers, mathematicians and other professionals face considerable hurdles learning the English they need to study and/or practice their field through the medium of English, foreign lawyers have a double whamy: their legal system is fundamentally different from the system of the so-called English-speaking (common law) countries, and the role of the lawyer is absolutely different as well. All this impacts how foreign law students approach their courses in U.S. law schools, a question that far exceeds "mere" language.



**Russell Clark** reports that the English Language Academy, which he directs at DePaul University, has received a gift of \$25,000 from the Kronfeld Family of Chicago to provide continuing education for ELA instructors and to purchase educational materials and technology for the ELA. According to Russell, the Kronfelds understand the challenges of learning English in a foreign land, as David Kronfeld faced after emigrating to the United States from Israel. As a result, David and his daughter Beth now support students who come to the US to learn English and advance professionally. Beth Kronfeld stated at the time of the gift, "We wanted to help the ELA continue to make a dramatic difference in students' lives. Time and again, we've seen the ELA produce great English speakers through its highly structured and supportive educational environment."



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