

TexTESOL III
TEXAS TEACHERS OF ENGLISH TO SPEAKERS OF OTHER LANGUAGES

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FROM THE PRESIDENT

We're all itching, sweating, and dying to let you know who this year's keynotes are for this year's state conference, but we are still waiting for written confirmation from all our invitees. However, we have verbal confirmation and we are really excited. We will make the formal announcement next month, so stay tuned.

ASKING FOR YOUR INPUT . . . You may have noticed on our web page that we have asked for some input regarding speakers and presenters you would like to see. Financially, TextESOL III is in terrific shape. Therefore, if you would like to have us bring in a big name, I bet we could do it. The last two years, we've put on a workshop series. Since 1997 is our turn to put on the state conference, the board has decided not to do a workshop series in September and October as we've done the past two years. However, we would like to put on a workshop/conference in February. For the state conference as well as future workshops, we would like to give TextESOL members an opportunity to suggest exceptional presenters they have seen in the past or have wanted to see. Please feel free to send me your ideas either by e-mail, fax, phone, or post. Please see my addresses on page 2. Please include

* the presenter's name and contact information (if known), * the presentation topic

* your name and contact information, * where you saw the presenter and/or why you would like them to present.

Even if you don't know a particular name, please feel free to request specific topics. There is still time to get your proposal in for presenting at the state conference. We have started putting together panels for discussing some of the advocacy issues that are important in our profession--namely, immigration laws, "English-only", and literacy. If you would like to participate in one of these panels, would like to recommend someone who could contribute to our discussion, or would like to propose a similar panel discussion, please feel free to contact me at any time. You may use the post, fax, or e-mail to submit proposals and ideas. Please have your proposal in no later than July 7.

THANK YOUS . . . I would first like to thank the TextESOL board members and state conference volunteers. I had lunch with Steven Storla, past president of TextESOL IV (Houston), and the leader of last year's state conference. According to

him, we're on schedule, if not slightly ahead. I am grateful to be working with such a diverse and creative bunch of people. They are definitely making my life easy.

I must also thank the people at the Southwestern Educational Development Laboratory for allowing me to come and visit their facility in downtown Austin. I received a three-hour tour and walked away with a library of information. I'm still sifting through it all. The people there are highly educated and creative individuals who passionately believe in promoting education. Their dedication to lifting the quality of life for all people in this part of the country is truly inspiring. Please look at my report of my visit on page 7 of this newsletter.

Eric Dwyer, President

CLASSIFIEDS

NEEDED: Substitute teachers for subjects and part-time Spanish teachers needed by AISD. Contact Michael Hydak at 414-4212 for more information.

FELLOWSHIPS/GRANTS

Call for Proposals for AIDS/Health Education Grants

Purpose To promote AIDS and health education through content-based ESOL instruction.

Who is eligible Teachers promoting AIDS prevention and health education instruction aimed at ESOL students, their family members, and their communities through their ESL/EFL curriculum and/or program. Materials writers developing culturally sensitive AIDS and health education materials (textbooks, manuals, software, videos) available to a wide range of people. Organizations willing to sponsor or cosponsor these activities: Professionals and organizations dedicated to the field of AIDS awareness who serve ESOL students, their family members, and their communities and who collaborate with people in the ESOL field.

Amount of grants Amounts vary from approximately US\$500 to US\$2,000 (CDN\$680 to CDN\$2,720). Grants are payable upon satisfactory completion of selected projects. Advance partial payment may be considered on an individual basis.

Criteria Projects are evaluated according to: the applicant's personal/professional reasons for promoting AIDS and health education, including goals and experience the applicant's background and professional qualifications for carrying out the project the degree of collaboration with organizations and agencies to advance project's goals the extent to which information will reach a wide range of ages and cultures while fulfilling language needs the extent to which current research, references, and techniques are employed Application procedures Applicants should send a proposal not exceeding three (3) pages addressing the criteria set out. Proposals must include: goals and rationale for the proposed project names and contact information of all individuals, groups, and affiliations involved a description of the method by which the project will be carried out a time line for the project's completion criteria for evaluation of its successful completion a budget specifying anticipated expenses Suggested supporting documentation letters from related agencies, individuals, potential beneficiaries of the project reviews of research or practical experience that engendered the proposed project (Documentation should be sufficient to demonstrate that the criteria set out above are satisfied.)

Deadline January 1, 1998. Mail or fax applications directly to the AIDS/Health Education Fund Co-Chair at 1890 East 7th Avenue, Vancouver, B.C. V5N 1S2, Canada, fax 604-253-0051, or to the TEAL Charitable Foundation, Attention AHEF Co-Chair, 177-4664 Lougheed Hwy, Burnaby, B.C. V5C 5T5, Canada.

Evaluation procedures Applications are evaluated by an international committee that recommends grant recipients to the Foundation's Board of Directors. Applicants can expect to receive notification by April 30, 1998.

Additional comments: These grants are financed by interest revenues generated by the TEAL Charitable Foundation's AIDS/Health Education Fund, a permanently protected endowment fund held and invested by the Vancouver Foundation. The Fund was established following a 1992 TESOL Resolution to Promote AIDS Education Through Content-Based ESOL Instruction. Grants were issued for the first time in 1996. The TEAL Charitable Foundation is a nationally registered Canadian charity.

LITERACY AUSTIN **New Volunteer Orientation**

We invite you to see our literacy center and hear about our program. We will tell a little about our history, our present program, the different volunteer opportunities, the students we serve, the tutoring commitment and the training we provide our volunteers. We hope you have lots of questions for us to answer.

If you are interested in attending a volunteer orientation session, please RSVP us at 416-7214. (Or you may arrange a time to watch the one hour video orientation Monday-Friday 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.)

When: July 1st, 6:00 - 7:00 p.m.

Where: 2800 S IH-35, Suite 160 Fountain Park Plaza 111

Training is 18 hours plus one session of practice teaching with a student. The dates for July's workshops are:

Monday, July 7, 6:00 - 9:00 p.m.
Wednesday, July 9, 6:00 - 9:00 p.m.
Saturday, July 12, 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.
Monday, July 14, 6:00 - 9:00 p.m.
Wednesday, July 16, 6:00 - 9:00 p.m.
Wednesday, July 23, 6:00 - 9:00 p.m.

****Starting in July** Literacy Austin will offer Citizenship Classes on Saturday afternoons. Classes are taught in Spanish and English.

A Tour of SEDL

By Eric Dwyer

Sometimes it must feel that no matter how much we acknowledge our problems, we never solve them. However, it is nice to know that we have organizations in this country where people are endeavoring to make teaching easier and more effective. The Southwestern Education Development Laboratory (SEDL) in Austin is one such place. While it is a think tank, it is also much more. The people there are expected to be innovative. They are also expected to attack today's most urgent issues in education through thinking-up, field testing, and the implementation of new programs. SEDL works toward making certain that each student--regardless of any ethnic, financial, or physical obstacle--has the opportunity to have a full education. I found that on my tour of SEDL that not only are the people committed to this goal, but they are

also passionate about it. Using long-term, systematic, and research and experience-based approaches, SEDL currently focuses on these six goals:

* enhancing family and community involvement in education * addressing linguistic and cultural diversity * aligning and supporting policy development * promoting instructional coherence * applying technology to school restructuring and learning * changing the organization and management of schooling

I wanted to visit SEDL because I felt these issues were relevant to our needs in ESL. Many of the issues SEDL addresses are our issues--foreign immigrants in formerly monocultural communities, cultural diversity, and teaching less-educated adults how to better educate their children. My three hours at SEDL gave me but a glimpse of what they do. I met several people who filled me in on several exciting projects and ideas pertinent to our needs. The following is a review of the key figures and projects at SEDL. Victoria Dimock helps bring computer technology to rural schools in Arkansas--schools which have recently seen a great influx of immigrant students. She says that many people in rural schools have been afraid of the Internet. Furthermore, professional development is often difficult for these teachers to gain. They have little money and little time to put into taking classes at nearby colleges. Therefore, Vicki has been developing an on-line workshop that teachers can work with on their school computer. Teachers key in a specific web URL and work through the problems. They then interact with Vicki through e-mail. Vicki says the results have seen a general increase in Internet use by both teachers and students. Teachers are less afraid of the Internet and are gaining insight into their new students. You may check out her interactive on-line workshop at: www.sedl.org/ann/ Jos* Velyzquez helps communities and families get more involved in the education of students. In a number of schools in the SEDL region, Jos* has been leading Comprehensive Action Teams, or CATs. The idea behind CATs is that the progress a school achieves is dependent not only on the students, the parents, or the school staff, but also on the support of the community at large. CATs puts local businesses, civic and religious organizations, and social service providers into a team with the students, parents, and administration. Together, CAT members decide on the issues which most impact their community and then develop their own method of solving problems. As the issues are being decided, Jos* leads meetings designed to help CATs develop practice consensus-building skills, shared leadership, and decision-making skills. Jos* says the first workshops have shown people both inside and outside the school taking deep interest in the academic progress of the students. In the near future, it is hoped that students will be performing better while reducing incidents of substance abuse, violence, and teenage pregnancy. The jury is still out, but Jos* says he's hopeful. We'll keep watching. Pat Guerra leads diversity training workshops. Her focus is on inner city development. Pat uses her research in student/teacher and student/student interaction as the foundation of her training sessions. Pat observes that 85 percent of all inner city teachers are white females, and most of them are scared. Pat says that most teachers don't understand how different the basic daily rituals of their students are. Furthermore, many of these teachers then needlessly undermine students by telling them that their

routines are wrong: "It's so easy to invalidate a child," she says. She leads workshops where she attempts to put educators in their students' shoes. Pat says that the focus of her discussions is to help teachers develop diversity awareness, to understand the L1 and culture of their students, and to be able to compare teacher and student cultures without judgment. Other projects of the SEDL Language and Diversity Program include educator exchange programs, intercultural colloquia, and development of Native American languages curricula. Vctor Rodrguez and Chuck Reese discussed their work with international schools with me. Of particular focus is an international school on the New Mexico/Chihuahua border. For years, the joint towns of Columbus, New Mexico and Palomas, Chihuahua have been a single community with a frontier bisecting it. However, the border line has also divided the community into two separate educational philosophies. Nevertheless, both teachers and students looked upon this division as an advantage and crossed the border freely, thereby engaging in each system regularly. However, in the past few years, vehicle and drug traffic at the border has significantly increased. Therefore, with a busier border crossing, it is no longer practical for teachers and students to freely cross the border and to gain access to the benefits of both US and Mexican education systems. In addition, the educational community has become separated as people on each side of the border are less exposed to their neighbor's education system. SEDL is looking into creating technology and programs so that the interplay of cross-border education may resume. Programs that are currently being attempted include the establishing of binational task forces, the creation of a binational network of community leaders, teacher exchanges, instructional materials developed by teams of teachers from both countries, and student exchanges. Bobby LaBouve leads Project ExCELL (Excellence and Challenge: Expectations for Language Learners). Bobby states that our future teachers will need second language training. It is the goal of Project ExCELL that elementary school children will start L2 classes. In the meantime, the project has established a statewide set of K-12 performance standards for the state of Texas. A primary feature of the standards is the four C's:

* communication: students listen, speak, read, and write in a language other than English, * cultures: the student gains knowledge of other cultures, * connections: the student uses the L2 in other subject areas, * comparisons: students gain insight by comparing their own language and culture to another.

The standards have been written and are now in the field-testing and revision stages. SEDL is a nonprofit institution that receives funding from federal, state, and private sources. Two current contributing institutions are TEA and the US Department of Education. SEDL is one of nine such think tank labs in the country and serves the states of Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas.

For more information please visit SEDL's home page at: www.sedl.org

NEWS FROM NATIONAL TESOL

Creativity in Second and Foreign Language Teaching

from TESOL Matters, Vol. 7 No. 2, April/May 1997

by Mary Ann Christison President of TESOL, 1996-1999

It seems fitting that my first column in TESOL Matters should be about creativity since the English word creativity comes from the Latin verb *creare*, which means to bring into being or to become. As a language teacher, I have pondered the notion of creativity in the language classroom considerably during the past two decades. Like most teachers, I have had moments of originality and creativity in my teaching, and sometimes my creative efforts have been embraced by colleagues and others in the field. Yet, even with these positive experiences, creativity has been elusive. There seems to be no way to determine when creativity will strike, and when it does, there seems to be no way to predict how others might react. I have not always understood my own creative efforts or the impact my creative ideas might have on the TESOL profession. This has troubled me because the future of the TESOL profession is tied closely to creativity and innovation. The creative ideas we have as teachers will dissipate unless there is a receptive audience to evaluate and implement them. In the past few months, I have been reading Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi's wonderful book entitled *Creativity* and have been struck by the implications of his work for English language teaching. I would like to share some of his ideas with you. Until recently, I thought that creativity was something that happened inside a person's head. Now, I understand it is the interaction between what one is thinking and the sociocultural context in which one finds oneself. Csikszentmihalyi's first question of creativity is not "What is it?" but "Where is it?" He believes that creativity is found in the interrelations of a system made up of three components: the domain, the field, and the individual. A domain consists of a set of symbolic rules or procedures. Mathematics, physics, and language are domains. Mathematics and physics have sharp boundaries and well-defined rules. Language study is more diffuse, but it is still a domain. The second component of creativity is the field. The field includes all of us teachers, the people who consider ourselves gatekeepers to the domain (p. 28). As English language teaching professionals, we decide whether a new idea or product should be included in the domain. We decide what ideas get remembered and recognized. The last component, of course, is the individual.

Most of us have been used to thinking that creativity begins and ends with the person. The most important implication of Csikszentmihalyi's model is that creativity does not depend solely on individual creativity. It depends on how well suited the respective domains and fields are to the recognition and diffusion of novel ideas. We can find a wonderful example of this interpretation of creativity in the Italian Renaissance in Florence from 1400 to about 1425. Many influential works of art in Europe were created during this quarter century. If creativity is only within the individual, then we have to wonder what the explanation is for an unusually large number of creative artists being active during that brief time. Was it some freak genetic mutation or a drastic change in the educational system? The Renaissance in Florence cannot be explained solely in terms of the domain either, the sudden access to information. Otherwise, an equal spurt of artistic growth would have occurred in cities all over Europe. But, in fact, no other place in Europe matched Florence in the intensity and depth of artistic expression. The field also played an important role. The leaders of Florence wanted to make Florence the most beautiful city in Europe. They commissioned great frescoes and statues to accomplish this goal. They became involved in encouraging, evaluating, and selecting works of art. It would have been impossible to assimilate all the work the artists produced without leaving Florence in chaos. The situation in Florence during the Renaissance is similar to that of English language teaching today. Just as the leaders in Florence had a responsibility to promote innovation, so do we as professional language teachers. The field is a very important component in enhancing creativity and affecting the rate of innovation. Csikszentmihalyi suggests three ways that a field can influence this rate. The first way is by being either reactive or proactive. The question we should ask ourselves is: What do we do as a profession to stimulate creativity and novel thinking? The second way to enhance creativity is to consider the selection filter. The question we should ask ourselves is: How much novelty and innovation do we need in English language teaching? Do we filter out too much or let in too little? Both ends of the continuum are dangerous. On the one end, the profession is starved for new ideas; on the other end there are too many unevaluated ideas, and the field flounders. The third issue is how well connected we are as a profession to the rest of the social system and how well we are able to channel support into our own domain. TESOL, as a professional organization, becomes important in this regard by advocating for its members. As professionals in TESOL, we have the responsibility to enhance our own creative efforts -- set goals, pursue work we love, make time for reflection - - but we also have a responsibility to determine the merits of a new idea or product for our profession. It is our responsibility to learn the rules and content of our domain, as well as the criteria for selection and the preferences in our field, so that we can make these determinations. Understanding how individuals, domains, and fields operate together within the creative process means that we can be more thoughtful, informed, and purposeful in this decision-making process. Then, creativity, change, and innovation will happen in such a way that all of us in TESOL will benefit.

Reference Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1996). *Creativity*. New York: HarperCollins.

CLASSROOM COLLABORATIONS

Share favorite activities and techniques from your classroom with other TexTESOL III professionals. Please send your brief entries by mail to the Newsletter Editor, Alice Chu, at the Dept. of Anthropology, 1.130 EPS, University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas 78712 or by E-mail (alicec@mail.utexas.edu).

LANGUAGE TEACHING STRATEGIES

Using Drama and Literature in Language Teaching

News from TESOL

Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, Inc. (TESOL) announces the publication of a new collection of language teaching activities. *New Ways of Using Drama and Literature in Language Teaching*, edited by Valerie Whiteson, offers teachers more than 55 effective and enjoyable ways to use drama and literature in the ESOL classroom. In her introduction, Whiteson notes the importance of surrounding students with the best examples of language available, adding that "for many of us, 'the best' includes literature." She also reminds us that by integrating literature into lessons, teachers give their students excellent opportunities to express themselves in the target culture. The activities in *New Ways of Using Drama and Literature in Language Teaching* make use of authentic international literature and include lessons adaptable for a variety of age groups and abilities. This easy-to-manage book is divided into four sections: Prose, Poetry, Drama, and A Mixed Bag. The introduction to each section discusses the rationale for using the specific genre in the language classroom and offers ideas for incorporating authentic texts into ESOL lessons. In the introduction to the poetry section, for example, Whiteson includes web sites to visit for texts of poems. The introduction to the prose section discusses the importance of choosing texts that both the teacher and students will enjoy. The activities in this book were designed to challenge the intellects of students and help them practice the English they already know. Teachers at all levels will find *New Ways of Using Drama and Literature in Language Teaching* to be a welcome addition to their professional libraries and an invaluable resource for planning activities that involve literature. Copies of *New Ways of Using Drama and Literature in Language Teaching* may be ordered by mail: TESOL Publications, 1600, Cameron St., Suite 300, Alexandria, VA 22314; by phone: (703) 518-2522; fax: (703) 518-2535; or E-mail: publ@tesol.edu

more CLASSROOM COLLABORATIONS

Can't Say Yes or No

by Karima Benremouga Emporia State University, Kansas

Taken from TESOL Journal, Spring 1997

The Can't Say Yes or No game is a simple and highly motivating activity that does not require a lot of preparation. It helps students think in the target language and can be adapted to any foreign language classroom. To play, the students work in pairs, taking turns asking and answering questions for 2 minutes. The objective is for the student answering the questions (Student B) never to say the words yes or no. If Student B does say yes or no before the 2 minutes are up, she loses, and the game begins anew with Student B asking Student A questions that time around.

Procedure 1. Give students several minutes to think about and write five information questions. For example,

Where to you come from? Where do you live? Do you have brothers and sisters? What kind of music do you like? What is your favorite food? What do you do when you get bored?

2. Explain that during the game, the questioner will have to think on her feet

during the conversation and follow up with some spontaneous, leading questions. For example:

Student A: What kind of music do you like? Student B: I like jazz music. A: You like jazz? B: I like jazz music. A: And how about rock and roll music? B: No...

In this case, Student B falls in the trap and loses. Another example illustrates an exchange in which Student B successfully manages to avoid being led into answering yes or no:

A: What is your favorite food? B: I love french fries. A: French fries? B: Exactly! French fries. A: But that's bad for your health. Did you know that increases your chances of a heart attack? B: I know, but I just love those fries. A: How about vegetables? Don't you like them? B: Absolutely not. Vegetables are good for children.

In the second example Student B uses a variety of conversational gambits to avoid saying yes or no, and so wins the round.

But this game is not about winning or losing so much as it is about students functioning and communicating in the target language--and students do become involved in this communicative activity.

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