

FALL NEWSLETTER

TexTESOL III Newsletter for October/November 1998

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Conference News

by Susan Murphy

Hopefully, you have already received our flyer announcing our Fall Conference, which will take place on Saturday, October 17 in Belton, Texas.

In the past, TexTESOL III has always had the Fall and Spring Conferences in Austin. In a way, it's a logical choice. The board members live in or around Austin, and there is an abundance of surrounding school districts, universities, and adult education programs to serve. But we came to realize that we just weren't reaching out enough to non-Austin TexTESOL III members. With a little extra planning and effort, we knew that we could put together a Fall conference in a new location.

And that's exactly what we've have done! On Saturday, October 17, TexTESOL III will hold its annual Fall conference on the campus of the University of Mary Hardin Baylor in Belton, which is about midway between Austin and Waco. For a lot of us, that's just a zip down the road on IH35.

One of our featured speakers will be Dr. Michael Thomas, chairperson of the Modern Foreign Languages at Mary Hardin Baylor. It's largely thanks to his support and enthusiasm, along with other ESL faculty members, Elizabeth Wheeler, Nance Travis, and Carolyn Allemand, that we have been able to pull this off.

Our second presenter is Sara Flores, Killeen's first Hispanic City Council member. She's a dynamic speaker with a strong background in bilingual education and community involvement. We feel very fortunate to have both of these accomplished educators speak at our conference. In addition, we will offer two concurrent hands-on workshops and a focus-group session. Last but not least, there will be a raffle for travel vouchers to the November TexTESOL State Conference and the March National TESOL Conference.

Changes on the Board

Unfortunately for us but fortunately for him, Eric Dwyer, our past president and national TESOL liaison, has accepted a position at Florida International University. John Schmidt, a past president and current at-large delegate, has agreed to be the interim liaison representative. Also, our newsletter editor, Alice Chu, will soon be leaving for Taiwan to do research for her dissertation; Rebecca Herman, an ESL teacher in Del Valle, has graciously offered to serve as interim newsletter editor. Our recently elected second vice-president, Kirsten Siegfried, has left Austin to teach ESL in Mexico. John Duke, who has been active in TESOL in Russia for the past several years, has stepped in as an interim second Vice-President.

Even though we have had some last minute changes to our board, we have continued to work smoothly and energetically as a group. In fact, now that we have our Fall conference planned, we are now looking forward to the Spring conference. Inspired by TextESOL I's recognition of outstanding ESL teachers, we are now considering a similar ceremony that will be combined with our Spring meeting.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or comments at slm@mail.utexas.edu or at

*Dexter Hall
1103 W. 24th
Austin, TX 78705*

Book Review

Images in the Mirror

*reviewed by Leslie Moore
Texas Intensive English Program*

Reflective teaching is a skill, but how does one practice it? This question and dozens of possible answers have been presented in journals, books, teacher preparation programs and at conferences and conventions. Much of the discussion about reflective teaching has focused on the process and its 'how-to' aspects.

Now comes a volume that looks at some products of reflective teaching, which in themselves offer excellent justification for its practice. The book, *Teaching in Action: Case Studies from Second Language Classrooms*, edited by Jack Richards (1998, TESOL), is an

impressive collection of 76 case studies of problems encountered in ESL and EFL classrooms around the world. These case studies are organized into 11 categories: some deal with problems in teaching the traditional skills while the rest treat challenges presented by other, more immediate pedagogical considerations such as the learners themselves and the implementation of lesson plans.

The audience for this book can be classroom teachers--of a range of students, from children to adults, ESL to EFL, shared L1 to mixed L1 backgrounds--who have to deal with problems similar to those in the book, on the ground running. However, the introduction also highly recommends its use in teacher education courses as a jumping-off point for discussion of various teaching.

The format is as follows: "Each case study describes the context in which the teacher is working, the problem that occurred, and how the teacher responded to the problem. Following each case study is a short commentary by a teacher educator..." (ix).

Teaching in Action is useful as a handbook in offering practical suggestions for dealing with chronic pedagogical concerns and in providing models for how to address them in innovative ways. The teaching problems described are real and common. Most helpful is the fact that the case studies reflect problem-solving strategies that can stimulate us to look at our own typical problems in a new light and to ask ourselves: "What else could be tried to address this problem?"

Some of the issues that I personally found relevant were:

- Self-awareness and correction of undesirable teaching behaviors, as detailed by Kimberley Marshall.
- "Dealing with Different Learning Styles," which addresses the problem of trying to get all students to participate in peer editing.
- Programs in which students progress from one level to the next based on end-of-course proficiency tests, as in "Designing a Curriculum Based on Student Needs."
- "Helping Students Cope with Homework Assignment"
- Open enrollment and its effect on classroom dynamics, in which Flora La Fontaine discusses her action research.
- Getting all students to prepare for and participate in class, as described by Kaoru Isenu.
- Convincing students that heavy emphasis on grammar is not necessarily a good thing, as Carol Griffiths relates in an amusing anecdote.
- "Dealing with Students of Different Proficiency Levels"

Some of the case studies did not really offer clear-cut solutions; the solutions were either vague (as in "Trips to Reality for Immigrant Secondary Students") or too open-ended to be immediately useful (as in "The Effects of a Continual Enrollment Policy on Classroom Dynamics").

The follow-up comments by the teacher educators were often helpful in underscoring the pedagogical issues raised by the case study (as in "Dealing with Different Learning Styles" and "The Grammar Dilemma") or in crystallizing points made by the teacher (as Jean Zukowski-Faust does in "Instructor-Student Interaction: Teacher, Friend, or Other?"). At times, however, the usefulness of the comments was limited, especially when the teacher educator was from a different ELT venue, i.e. EFL vs. ESL, and therefore could not completely appreciate the circumstances faced by the contributing teacher.

The case studies are evenly divided between ESL and EFL teaching venues. Over-representation from certain countries (such as China and Japan) and certain contributors and commenters should be mentioned, only because it means that others were under-represented (there were no contributions from Latin America or Africa, for example). This imbalance may be attributable to the fact that Richards is based on Hong Kong.

One slight omission that would have made this book more use-friendly is an index listing the programs, school, and countries of the contributors.

Notwithstanding these minor points, *Teaching in Action* is decidedly worth the investment and merits a choice spot on any language teacher's reference shelf.

Help with T.E.K.S.

Teaching English Units to Second Language Learners

*by Kathleen Landis
Georgetown High School*

A woman I met who had emigrated from Argentina at the age of sixteen bemoaned the fact that she had missed years vital to her understanding of the culture of the generation of Americans to which she belonged. Recent immigrants have many areas in which to catch up with their American peers, but while current texts for second language learners attempt to teach them everyday cultural references, there is a noticeable lack of the works of classical literature that their peers in mainstream English classes read. With the alignment of the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (T.E.K.S.) for English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) to the T.E.K.S. for English I and II, a realignment of thinking may be in

order. The new T.E.K.S. mirror the regular track of mainstream English I and II, expecting ESOL students to have the same experiences in reading, writing, speaking, and listening as their English-speaking counterparts.

As a former Spanish teacher, I have approached ESOL class as a "foreign" language, concentrating on speaking, listening, grammar, and vocabulary, with limited reading and writing activities following and based on what had been learned. I sent my students to mainstream English I and II classes as soon as they could survive, so that they prepared for mainstream English III their junior year. But now I will not only have to stuff my students with as much English as possible, I should give them literary experiences which they can share with their English-speaking classmates.

I still prefer to shelter only the weakest students in my class, placing the stronger ones with their peers and providing help in Reading class, content mastery, and tutorials.

The problem becomes, how do the students who cannot yet read English on the ninth and tenth grade level make use of the texts and supplements used in those courses? I have been working with teachers in the English department to choose some materials that are most memorable to freshman and sophomore students, works with which upper level teachers assume their students have some familiarity. These are the "challenging" texts that are to be dealt with. Now, how to do it?

I felt that a central purpose had to be established to make the work relevant. Often, when an English teacher assigned a writing assignment such as a short story, the ESOL student could not begin because he could not relate to any topic or frame of reference. Arranging reading and writing tasks around topics and vocabulary lists gives students a direction and the means to follow that direction. The teacher then encourages more advanced students to augment the core vocabulary or even try a different topic to complete the writing requirement.

What follows is an outline for creating topic units. It is a result of my studies of second language acquisition in Spanish, workshops in ESOL and English language arts, and conversations with English teachers at Georgetown High School. ESOL I and ESOL II classes for 1998-1999 will begin a new process that may take several years to refine.

Creating Units

Choose a reading or series of literary selections with a common topic or theme, then:

1. Create a vocabulary list for the unit
 1. Base the choice of words on
 1. What students need to say to survive at school or in the community
 2. What students want to say to each other

3. What students need to know to pass core classes
 4. What students ought to know to go on to higher education
 2. Generate vocabulary lists
 1. Choose words from readings
 2. Allow students to add personal choices
 3. Test some words as spelling words
 4. Use all words frequently
 5. Make all words readily available on cards or vocabulary sheets for students' continual use
2. Read chosen selections
 1. Introduce topics by reading in students' first language and/or using short selections on students' current reading level
 2. Help students "read chosen selections with a variety of strategies"
 1. Use videos
 2. Use abridged versions
 3. Read aloud and summarize
 4. Read key passages in the original
 5. Work together to puzzle out sections
 3. Discuss the form or genre of that reading
 1. Do comparison only to the forms already discussed
 2. Choose literary terms which are evident and can be applied to the writings chosen
 3. Assess the six TAAS competencies in a variety of ways
3. Tie in writing skills
 1. Try to use a writing skill that reinforces the form(s) presented in the readings
 2. Encourage the use of vocabulary lists that have been generated
 3. Include practical writing first
 4. Teach grammar skills that students need for this writing as weaknesses are found
 5. Teach grammar skills that can improve or expand a certain task
4. Choose appropriate listening and speaking skills
 1. Encourage class discussions
 2. Teach skills in taking notes from lectures
 3. Have students do oral presentations
 4. Work on pronunciation problems as they arise
 5. focus on communication first and mastery second
5. Produce a product using media in a way suggested in the T.E.K.S.
6. Reinforce second language skills
 1. Vary activities and recycle the most useful skills

2. Pace the units to meet the students' skill level
 3. Keep students engaged in reading, writing, speaking, and listening at all phases.
7. Assess students
1. Daily grades
 1. Vocabulary/spelling quizzes
 2. Short writings that are graded on a limited amount of skills
 3. Completion grades to encourage engagement in tasks
 2. Major grades
 1. Objective tests on reading
 2. Writings that have gone through revision process
 3. Projects

The ultimate goal of my scheme is to move the students' level from beginner to advanced in English in their reading, writing, listening, and speaking abilities. I will try to accomplish this while giving them experience similar to their English-speaking peers. It is my hope that when the senior English teacher asks, "How does Beowulf compare to King Arthur?", my former students will confidently raise their hands in the air.

TexTESOL III Fall Regional Conference

TexTESOL III is excited to announce our first "on-the-road" Regional Fall Conference!

DATE:
Saturday, October 17, 1998

PLACE:
**York Science Center at the University of Mary Hardin Baylor in
Belton, Texas**

TIME:

Registration
10:00 am - 10:30 am

Conference
10:30 am - 4:00 pm

FEE:
Members \$15; Student members \$12.50
Non-members \$20

Lunch provided
No pre-registration necessary

FEATURED SPEAKER:
Dr. Michael Thomas, Chair of the Department of Modern Languages at the University of Mary Hardin Baylor

Dr. Thomas' presentation will be on the Rassias Method, or the Dartmouth Intensive Language Model (DILM). John Rassias is a professor of French at Dartmouth College. There and in the Peace Corps, he developed a unique method of teaching foreign languages, which is highly successful to this day. This method allows the student to connect emotionally with the language. It encourages creativity with the language. It promotes the creation of instant communicative contexts, which are always fun and always purposeful. This method can transform and re-energize any teacher and any classroom.

The conference will also include concurrent workshops and focus groups PLUS a raffle (three \$50 travel vouchers for the November 6-7 State Conference in Arlington and a \$250 travel voucher for the International TEXOL Conference in March to be held in New York).

If you plan to attend, please contact Susan Murphy by e-mail at slm@mail.utexas.edu or by phone at (512) 452-4679 or by mail at 1424 Ridgemoor, Austin, TX 78723. We need to know how many plan to register so that we can inform the caterers.

Help make TextESOL III history and join us on October 17 at the University of MaryHardin Baylor. We have made this conference especially affordable in order to compensate for any additional travel time and expenses on your part. Looking forward to seeing you there!

Accommodations are as follows:

Place:
BEST WESTERN MOTEL
1414 East 6th St.
Belton, Texas 76513
Phone and fax:

(254) 939-5711

Prices:

1 person (1 double bed)
\$50.00 plus tax

2 persons (2 double beds)
\$55.00 plus tax

3 persons (2 double beds)
\$60.00 plus tax

4 persons (2 double beds)
\$65.00 plus tax

Belton is 45 minutes from Waco, home of the Texas Ranger Hall of Fame, and the Dr. Pepper Museum.

Temple, 10 minutes north of Belton, is home to the Railroad Museum.

Killeen, 20 minutes west of Belton, is home of Fort Hood, the largest military installation in the World and site of two military museums.

Two lakes and picnic areas, plus boating and swimming, are within 15 minutes of Belton: Lake Belton and Lake Stillhouse.

Culture Shock

LIVING IN THE LAND OF THE MORNING CALM

by Rebecca S. Fletcher

"Man-un, juseyo," the Korean restaurant owner said to my husband and me politely.

"What do you think he wants?" I whispered.

"Beats me," my husband whispered back.

"Maybe he's thanking us for our business," I suggested.

"Kamsa hamnida," my husband and I said together, "thank you," being only one of the two

Korean phrases we had learned during our first week in this Asian country. "How are you?" was the other phrase. Unfortunately, neither seemed to be helping us out in this situation. "Man-un, juseyo," the restaurant owner said again, a little more insistently this time. "Maybe he wants more money than we gave him," I said. "I hope not, because we don't have much on us," my husband replied. The restaurant owner pulled out a calculator and punched in the number 10,000. Apparently, he wanted 10,000 won. Unfortunately, my husband and I only had 2,000 won. "Uh-oh, what do we do now?" we asked each other.

The scenario described above is pretty typical for newcomers to any foreign country. This misunderstanding became the first of many that my husband and I have had to endure since moving to Korea. At the time we didn't know that we were expected to pay for our food after our meal, even at a fast food restaurant. We had given the restaurant owner some money when we first ordered, but we soon discovered that it was for only part of the meal. We also accidentally ordered twice as much food as we wanted. A hassle yes, but we wouldn't trade our experience for anything.

Our story begins in April of 1996 when I was finishing my master's degree in English. Despite earning a high GPA and possessing an impressive work record, I was having trouble landing a job. Then one day I noticed a sign on campus stating: "Teach English in Asia. See the Career Center for more details." Intrigued, I went to the Career Center and found a wealth of information about teaching English in Japan, Korea and Taiwan. My husband and I searched the Internet for more specific information and then decided to pursue teaching jobs in Korea because the positions there paid the highest salaries. By late June of 1996 my husband and I were en route to Seoul to begin our new careers as EFL (English as a Foreign Language) teachers in a small town in South Korea.

Korea is definitely a country of contrasts. The overall theme seems to be "East meets West." For example, in downtown Seoul high-rise buildings with TV screens on them stand next to ancient palaces. Elderly women wearing traditional Korean clothing and carrying bundles on their heads pass trendy youths wearing cutting edge fashions and listening to Western music that blares through the headphones of their expensive personal stereos. Kentucky Fried Chicken restaurants stand next to tiny traditional Korean food stalls. These contrasts, however, are what make Korea unique. People continue to make kimchi (pickled cabbage, a Korean meal staple) as they have for hundreds of years. Confucianism continues to thrive even as students demonstrate for change. In the neighborhood where my husband and I first lived, apartment buildings stand next to rice paddies and grazing fields for goats. In rural areas farmers still use water buffalo to plow their fields. In this era of technological advancement, it's nice to see people carrying on the traditions of their ancestors.

Koreans, we have discovered, are very friendly, generous, and curious. Our students continually grill us about American culture and have asked us questions like "Why do Americans wear their shoes inside their homes?" When we asked our students why they take their shoes off, they replied, "To keep the floors clean." So much for mystical Korean traditions. One of the first classes that I taught was comprised of a group of older Korean homemakers who proceeded to unofficially adopt me. They took me out to delicious lunches, bought me innumerable presents and taught me some basic Korean phrases. I soon learned to answer an emphatic "NO" to their queries of "Do you need anything?" Once

I admired a ring that one of these ladies was wearing and she not only gave it to me, but she adamantly refused to take it back. My students have also included Korean children, who are wonderful creatures. They have an innocence about them that American children lack these days. Once I asked a little boy in my class what he would choose if he could have anything he wanted for his birthday. He chose a new bicycle. A refreshing answer at a time when American children are shooting each other over \$200 athletic shoes. Contrary to the popular image of Asian children being orderly and obedient, Korean children are spoiled by their parents and allowed to act as they please. However, rather than acting bratty, most Korean children are warm and affectionate and have a zest for life. Unfortunately for them, their parents try to channel this energy into hours and hours of after school lessons.

One young student of mine had a schedule rather rigorous for her age. At the tender age of eleven, this Korean child got up at 6:00 am, went to school from 8:30 am to 3:30 pm, then went to numerous after school classes until 8:00 pm and then did homework until her bedtime of midnight. Korean parents have become caught up in "keeping up with the Kims" and their children both benefit and suffer for this attitude.

One wonderful Korean tradition that continues to thrive is the marketplace. Every town has an open market where shoppers can haggle over fresh vegetables, spices, meat, pots and pans, clothes and various other everyday essentials. Of course, Korea is a developed country and there are supermarkets and department stores that offer the same merchandise as the markets. But, it is much more fun--as well as economical--to bargain with a farmer over the price of his potatoes than to simply buy a bag at the local grocery store. There is a carnival atmosphere at these markets as sellers clap their hands and shout at passersby to get their attention. The crowds of people who throng the market get caught up in the festivities and smile and laugh as they make their purchases. Quite a pleasant way to shop.

One rather unattractive aspect of Korean culture is the excessive consumption of alcohol. Every night businessmen and university students stagger home from bars after drinking copious amounts of beer and "soju," a liquor similar to whiskey or tequila, which is drunk in shots rather than sipped. It is not unusual to see men passed out on the street or relieving themselves in alleys around ten o'clock on any given evening. There appear to be two reasons for this kind of hard drinking. First of all, it is an integral part of doing business. Men often meet their colleagues or clients after work to have a few drinks while discussing business ventures. Additionally, Korean men seem to feel that as the breadwinners of their families they suffer a lot of stress and that the sole relief for their stress is to drink alcohol heavily. Alcohol is one of the major causes of death in Korea, from alcohol related illnesses to alcohol related accidents. Unfortunately, there does not seem to be any major change occurring in the drinking habits of Koreans despite the numerous problems alcohol causes in Korean society.

Perhaps the greatest advantage of being an American living in Korea is the opportunity to be at the other end of the telescope. I am in the minority here and every day I am stared at, pointed at and talked about by people who pass me on the street. More often than not I struggle with my Korean-English dictionary to make sure that I am understood, and that I understand what is being said to me in return. Why is this an advantage? By living in America it is easy to become inured to the activities and problems which occur around the world. Mud slides, earthquakes, and deadly typhoons always seem to happen in other

countries to other people. Additionally, important cultural events become secondary to "American culture," whatever that is. Americans become annoyed when immigrants pour into the country and "take away our jobs and don't even speak the language."

I feel that living abroad has made me more empathetic to the problems of the people of the world and created in me a deep admiration and profound appreciation for the various cultures that make up the planet Earth. Plus, it certainly has given new meaning to the phrase "America is a mosaic rather than a melting pot."

BIO: Rebecca Fletcher has been, and continues to be, a writer, editor, teacher and all-around curious person. She was born in Texas where she lived for 31 years until June of 1996 when she moved to Korea to pursue a career in teaching English. She completed her Bachelor of Arts in English at The University of Texas in 1991 and she completed her Master of Arts in English at Sul Ross State University in 1996. Rebecca's goal in life is to travel the world and write about her experiences.

Teaching Tips

Walking Your Students Through a Description of Place

The first time I taught a writing class, I quickly grew tired of the anemic descriptions that I got from many students. I got descriptions like: "There are a lot of nice things you can do there. It is very beautiful. You can swim, etc. . ."

If you want your students to produce a rich description of a place, try this exercise in guided writing. Have your students imagine a place they are very fond of. It can be a place they go to relax, or to enjoy themselves. Once they all have a place in mind, ask the following questions and have them respond freely in writing. It is best not to hurry through this exercise. Give your students time to meditate on their responses.

- What is the name of the place you are thinking about?
- How do you get to this place?
- What is the first thing you see when you arrive there?
- If you turn to the right, what do you see? and to the left?
- What does the air smell like?
- If you reach out and touch something, how does it feel?
- What sounds do you hear?

- Are there people there? What are they doing?
- What objects, plants, animals are there?
- How do you feel?

These are just some of many questions you can ask during this exercise. The exercise can also be adapted for descriptions of people, or for responding to literature. You ask the questions. The students respond in writing. Their responses form the basis for essays that have more energy, and more vivid detail.

Source: <http://members.aol.com/Jakaik/ESLLessons.html>

E-mail your comments to John Korber at Jakajk@aol.com

Games for the ESL Classroom

TIC TAC TOE

(For beginning to intermediate level students)

All you need for this game is a chalkboard, and a list of vocabulary. Draw a nine square grid on the board and fill each box with one word. Divide the class in half, and designate one half as -x- and the other half as -o-. The students on each team collaborate in coming up with grammatical sentences using the vocabulary. When they use a word in a correct sentence, mark either x or o over the word. Three in a row wins! This game is good to review general vocabulary, parts of speech, and verb forms, without ever tiring the students.

STOP

(game for all levels)

This is a simple vocabulary game that can be played with two levels of difficulty depending on the level of your students. In the easy version, draw five columns on a chalkboard. Assign each column a letter from the alphabet and shout "Go!" The first students to fill in all the columns with a word that begins with the letter of each column shouts, "STOP!" You can go through the whole alphabet like this and also use common two letter word beginnings like ex, sh, sp, ch, etc. In the more difficult version, assign each of the five columns a general category like food, clothing, emotions, office items, things in the house, etc. You then call

out a letter from the alphabet. Students have to fill each column with a vocabulary word that begins with the letter and pertains to the category.

THE COFFEEPOT GAME

This is a traditional but fun game to play: one student is sent out of the class and the remaining students choose a simple verb (e.g., "walk," "eat," "dance," etc.). The student that is outside then returns and has to find out which is the "mystery" verb by asking yes-no questions to the other students. The word "coffeepot" is provided to substitute the verb. The student then asks: "Do you coffeepot every day?" "Do you coffeepot with your leg?" until he/she finds out which is the mystery verb.

BALL GAME

Students stand up in a circle around the teacher. A ball is tossed to a student and the teacher asks a question (e.g., "Say a color."). The student then responds and throws the ball back to the teacher. The teacher then throws the ball to another student and asks another question. For higher levels, you can ask such questions like "Give me the past participle of an irregular verb." This is a fast game, and it is great for reviewing vocabulary.

Source: <http://www.lingolex.com/userpages/Ernie.html>

E-mail your comments to: ernie@ibeuce.com.br

NEW BILINGUAL EDUCATION / ESL T.E.K.S. WEB SITE

Take note of the new Bilingual Ed/ESL TEKS Implementation web site:
www.tpc.esc4.net/bilingual/ESL/

This web site currently has the complete TEKS as well as downloadable Bilingual Ed / ESL TEKS professional development manuals.

To be added later are pages with information on program development, instruction, and assessment.

[Table of Contents: October/November 1998 Newsletter](#)

CLASSIFIEDS

POSITIONS: Austin Community College has the following ESL volunteer and voluntary internship positions available: ESL volunteers to help refugees from Bosnia, Vietnam, Cuba and Africa to get a job. Even one hour of your time would greatly help. Also available are voluntary teaching and teaching assistant training positions. Contact Marianne Dryden, Interim Refugee ESL Coordinator, Austin Community College, 5930 Middle Fiskville Road, Austin, Texas 78752 or call (512) 517-6770.

NEEDED: Substitute teachers for all subjects, and part-time Latin and Spanish teachers needed by Austin ISD. For applications for substitute teaching and teaching applications, call Personnel, Austin ISD: (512) 414-1721. Call Michael Hydak at (512) 414-4212 for more information.