TexTESOL III Newsletter

Letter from the President

It's mid-April as I write this. You won't read it until May. It reminds me of the deadlines that we seem to be constantly under: the day-to-day deadlines of meeting our classes, correcting papers, returning papers, and enjoying what we are doing.
I want to focus on the last one on my list since we frequently don't add enjoyment to our daily routine. I am reminded of a column written by Michele Sabino, Past-President of TESOL. She presented 5 qualities of teachers who are considered successful leaders. These are

. Build trust and develop rapport

. Diagnose organizational conditions

. Deal with processes

. Manage workloads

. Build skills and confidence in others

As I read these, I thought to myself these are qualities that we use as teachers, colleagues and parents.

As a teacher, it is essential to build trust and rapport within each class that we teach. Without it, we would have little or no participation or honest discussion with our students on the material that we are trying to teach. We all have our own ways to do this. One way is to use icebreakers so that the students get to know one another. For me, it is important not only for me to know my students' names but also for them to know their classmates' names. I have the students make name cards to put in front of them so that we can see the name and the person. Whenever it is possible, I have the students

sit in a circle so that they can see one another's faces and connect the names to them. Being a part of something makes trust possible, and making the classroom a safe place also makes rapport happen.

The first week in my classes I do class diagnostics to check and confirm placement of *my* students. But there have been times that conflicts happen in the classroom. I have had roommates who were both in my class. They usually couldn't separate their private disagreements from spilling over into the classroom. I had to intervene so that the classroom was a good place for the other students. I did this by talking to them both together in my office to find out what I could do to mend the relationship so that they would start to speak to each other and so that the tension in the classroom would also be lessened. We are as teachers called on to evaluate not only our students' skills but also the interrelationships of the students in our classrooms. This is similar to diagnosing organizational problems. In a manner of

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speaking, a classroom is an organization because this group of people is together and working to reach the goals-sometimes as a group and sometimes as individuals. If there is trust and rapport among the students, there will be very few if any organizational problems. But if a conflict does arise, we as classroom teachers need to both recognize it and acknowledge it. Recognizing it is the easier of the two and it is passive. Acknowledging it is harder and needs a more active response. Ignoring it doesn't make it go away; it only makes for more frustration for everyone.

I teach writing. I enjoy seeing students applying what they have learned to write a stellar essay. I am often the first teacher to introduce them to the norms of writing in the North American culture. What I need to be mindful of is how my students are processing the information that I am giving them and what processes they use to do the assignment that I have given. We all learn differently and at different speeds. As teachers, we need to recognize the rhythm of the class and use it to teach our students. What I teach or should I say how I teach can be adapted by the students to create their own individual process. I have learned from both my students and colleagues to honor the process that gets them to the end results and complete the assignment.   Sometimes we forget there are many ways to do something not just one—mine. We need to encourage our students to develop not a singular one size fits all process, but strategies on how to create and follow through on the process that will get the assignment done correctly and well.

In my next column, I will connect managing workloads and building skills and confidence in others to teaching. I hope that I have given you something to think about until then. As always, let me know what you are thinking and doing. aschlend@austincc.edu

Keep in touch.

Mark your calendar!!!
October 15, 2005
TexTESOL III Fall Conference
"Come Learn and Grow with Us!"

Please check our website
http://www.textesol.org/region3/ for updates.

Implementing a Tutor Training Program
By Robert Pinhero

This article is Part II of a three-part series. Look for Part III in the next TexTESOL III Newsletter. Part I can be found in the February 2005 Newsletter.

In our previous issue we examined the steps you might follow in establishing a volunteer training program. Once that work is complete, we're ready to move on into the implementation phase. The final part of this series in our next issue will address your program's maintenance and continuous improvement.

1. Conduct tutor orientations. Many programs find it useful to offer a tutor orientation prior to pre-service workshops. Orientations act as a recruitment tool, yield additional program exposure, and provide an opportunity to disseminate program information without using up precious workshop time. In addition, an orientation program gives tutors a chance to make a better decision about attending the workshop. The long-term effect is usually a reduction in training dropout rates and better tutors. Orientations are typically 1 to 3 hours and are offered prior to pre-service workshops. Topics covered may include background information on literacy and the local program, learner profiles, funding and accountability requirements, and a brief activity to give prospective tutors a "taste" of what the training will be like. You may want to ask an established program that offers tutor orientation for ideas and suggestions.

2. Publicize the workshop. Timing is very important to publicity and often there is a little trial and error involved in tapping into the pulse of your community. Advertising too early is often as detrimental as advertising too late. Talk with other organizations in your area and find out what works for them. Consider your local newspaper, radio stations and cable TV bulletin board listings. Agencies with programs that are compatible with yours may be willing to include your information in their newsletter. Church and club bulletins and newsletters can also be effective. You may also consider publicizing your training among agencies that interact with populations similar to yours.

3. Consider logistics. Programs may not have as much control over logistics as they would like; however, they are important. Consider the workshop location, participants' safety, lighting, seating, tables, electrical outlets, kitchen facilities, and heating and cooling. All of these contribute in varying degrees to the workshop success. Prospective volunteers will have a difficult time focusing on your training if they are freezing or can't hear the presenter over outside noise. Remember too, that many participants my come directly from work and the courtesy of some light snacks and beverages will go a long way in helping them relax and get in a receptive frame of mind.

Get your program up and running, start listening to your trainees' feedback, and begin to think about how you can continue and improve your current training practices, the subject of the last article in this series.

Robert Pinhero was the director of a literacy program, held positions on several non-profit boards, and has instructional and training experience in Adult and Family Literacy, ESL, GED, and Workforce Literacy. Locally he served as an adjunct consultant to the Texas Family Literacy Center; serving on the original committee that developed the Texas State Plan for Adult Education. He operates a consulting business and serves on the National Governance Council of ProLiteracy America, the Board of South Central Literacy Action and the Board of the Texas Association of Nonprofit Organizations.

Towards Quality? Teacher Certification and Teacher Need
By Dr. Mary Lee Webeck

When a person enters the website of the State Board of Educator Certification (SBEC) to inquire about teacher certification in Texas, he/she sees an important statement, "The State of Texas is facing a major educational challenge—a growing shortage of qualified teachers." (http://www.sbec.state.tx.us/SBECOnline/certinfo/becometeacher.asp).

According to SBEC, there are three basic routes to certification:

> U = University-Based Programs: Teacher training offered by colleges and universities as part of an undergraduate degree program.

> PB = Post-Baccalaureate Programs: Teacher training offered by colleges and universities for individuals who already hold a baccalaureate degree.

> A = Alternative/Accelerated Programs: Teacher training offered by education service centers, school districts and other entities, as well as colleges and universities, for individuals who already hold a baccalaureate degree.

> <http://www.sbec.state.tx.us/SBECOnline/edprep/region.asp>

In addition, the Texas State Board of Education passed a ruling to provide for the Temporary Teacher Certificate (TTC) at its April 2, 2004 meeting. The TTC provides an additional certification route for people who hold a bachelor's degree or higher to enter the teaching profession in certain fields at the 8-12 grade level. This ruling followed heated and vocal debate between concerned citizens, teacher educators, and policy makers.

Increasingly, teacher quality is the focus of unprecedented policy analysis (Darling-Hammond & Stake, 2003). A pervasive question in the field of education is asked: How does one describe an accomplished teacher, one capable of reaching and teaching a diverse range of students, delivering instruction that is challenging and content-rich, while meeting guidelines within the classroom, school, district, state, nation and world? That is a big question, writ large in the minds of teacher educators, school administrators, and policy makers who recognize that accomplished teaching does not "just happen" but instead can be developed over a period of time through the experiences and growth of a teacher.

Further questions follow when we consider the predictions that the United States will soon face teacher shortages, particularly in the areas of mathematics, science, language instruction, and special education (Baker & Smith, 1997; Boe, et al, 1997; Boe, et al, 1998; Hussar, 1999, 2002). A search of jobs posted for ten large urban and suburban school districts in central Texas does indicate high teacher need in these areas. Problematically, the number of new teachers prepared to teach in these jobs does not match the need, and the needs appear disparate across districts. Texas is not alone in facing these issues (Broughman & Rollefson, 2000). In a study published in 2003 in *Education Policy Analysis Archives* (EPAA), researchers report an uneven distribution in the teacher shortage across regions, school districts, schools, and subjects (Murphy et al., 2003).

To estimate the size and nature of the late 1990's teacher shortage, researchers analyzed data from the U.S. Department of Education's 1999-00 School and Staffing Survey (SASS). Their analysis pointed out that teacher shortages are a regional but not a national

crisis. Districts in the south, southeast, and southwest had the hardest time filling vacancies, even after the school year had begun; many positions are "late-filled" or not filled at all. Disparity also exists between urban, suburban, and rural schools. Urban schools' late-fill rate was 50 percent higher than suburban schools and twice as high as rural schools. Schools with more than 40 percent minority students had a late-fill rate more than double that of others, and schools with more than 40 percent poor students had a late-fill rate almost twice that of others. As we find in Texas, these data from the national level indicate that schools with large populations of poor and/or minority students find it more difficult to hire teachers.

Murphy and his colleagues report that positions in special education, foreign languages, and English as a second language were the most difficult to fill. Another issue considered problematic is the shortage of teachers of color in contemporary schools (Kirby et al, 1999; Lewis, 1996). It seems logical that these findings, when considered in light of their local needs, would not surprise Texas administrators seeking to fill positions.

Across the United States, efforts to increase the supply of teachers, such as signing bonuses and expanding and accelerating teacher training programs, have somewhat increased the total number of teachers, but positions in the hardest-to-fill regions, schools, and subjects remain unfilled (Murphy et al., 2003). Other researchers and theorists have focused attention on understanding issues related to teacher retention (Baker & Smith, 1997; Grissmer & Kirby, 1997; Ingersoll, 1997, 2001; TEA, 1995). These efforts have met with mixed responses, nationally, and within Texas, where policy makers and legislators attempted to problem solve these issues through the creation of policies and programs that support alternative certification. The TTC passed by the Texas State Board of Education is one example of such an effort

and the effects of this policy remain unknown in the early stages of implementation.

Some of the most vocal and research-based criticism of non-certification policies and some forms of alternative certification programs has come from a highly respected researcher, Linda Darling Hammond. She has been vehement in acknowledging that there is a problem in teacher retention, especially in high needs settings, such as those found in many urban schools, but she also calls attention to the idea that teacher preparation is an equally important concern (Darling Hammond & Stake, 2003). Of great concern to many teacher educators and policy makers concerned with teacher quality and preparation is the 2001 report issued by the Abell Foundation suggesting that there are not significant differences in teacher quality as a result of teacher education programs (Walsh, 2001). Darling Hammond responded quickly to the report. Her immediate and legitimate concern was for how the report, which she considered to be flawed, would be used in policy decisions. For example:

> In July, 2002, the U.S. Secretary of Education cited the Abell Foundation paper in his Annual Report on Teacher Quality as the sole source for concluding that teacher education does not contribute to teacher effectiveness. The Secretary's report then recommended that requirements for education coursework be eliminated from certification standards, and attendance at schools of education and student teaching be made optional (Darling-Hammond, 2002, Abstract).

Darling-Hammonds' objections to the Abell Foundation's report, which she considers to be poorly researched and inaccurate in its assumptions, points out very clearly her concern with uncertified teachers or those who receive weak preparation in brief programs for alternative certification (Darling-Hammond, 2001, 2002). The fundamental issues at the core of her argument reside around the importance of teachers receiving professional preparation in both content and pedagogy. She suggests:

. . .evidence suggests that lack of preparation actually contributes to high attrition rates and thereby becomes a disincentive to long-term teaching commitments and to the creation of a stable, high ability teaching force. Lack of preparation also contributes to lower levels of learning, especially for those students who most need skillful teaching in order to succeed (Darling-Hammond, 2002, Conclusion).

As policy makers and those working in programs for teacher certification in institutions of higher education or alternate certification continue to grapple with these issues, there will be ongoing debate about balancing the need for teachers and the need for quality. In Texas it is likely that the conversations will continue to be heated.

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TexTESOL State Conference Update

Excitement is building for the 2005 State Conference, November 3-5 at the Renaissance Dallas-Richardson Hotel, hosted by TexTESOL V. I hope that you will not only learn about the conference, but will help spread the word. Most of all, in seeing all the great events being planned, I hope you will be inspired to participate.

Our list of keynote and featured speakers is truly impressive. Our Pre-Conference Institute, to be held on November 3, offers three choices for a day of relevant, engaging professional development. Our Site Visits, planned for Friday, November 4, are equally varied and pertinent to our many-faceted field.

My excitement about the conference grew at the TESOL Convention in San Antonio, as I spoke about our plans with TexTESOLERs from all over the state. When they heard our theme – "No Teacher Left Behind" – many smiled appreciatively. As the many program components of this conference have begun to fall into place, I have become increasingly assured by our theme and clear in its meaning. ESOL touches many kinds of educators in many different situations. Our 2005 State Conference, in the scope of its program, has much to offer each one of us. It will serve the variety of our membership, and leave none behind.

Get involved by responding to our Call for Proposals. Just as we stress to our students the importance of cooperative learning, the best part of a conference is very often what we learn and share with each other. The efforts of putting together a demonstration, workshop, or colloquium are rewarding in many ways, not least in how it can re-inspire one's own work. I encourage you to work with colleagues. Download the Call for Proposals at www.textesolv.org and please note the June 25th deadline.

Bart Chaney
President, TexTESOL V
Program Co-Chair, 2005 State Conference

Calendar of Events

July, 2005

24-29. The 14th World Congress of Applied Linguistics hosted by the American Association for Applied Linguistics, Madison, Wisconsin, USA. E-mail mjcurry@its.rochester.edu. Web site http://aila2005.org/.

August, 2005

10-12. 1st Congress on Sociolinguistics and Sociology of Language & Interim Conference of International Sociological Association Research Council "Glocalization" and language use: Joining the global and local" Web site: http://www.staff.hum.ku.dk/smo/smo2/RC-next-conf-fr.htm

September, 2005

16-18. 2nd International Online Conference on Second and Foreign Language Teaching and Research. The Reading Matrix. Contact Dr. Meena Singhal at editors@readingmatrix.com, Dr. Adrian Wurr at awurr@uncg.edu, or Dr. John Liontas at jliontas@nd.edu. Web site http://www.readingmatrix.com/onlineconference/index.html.

Octorber, 2005

15. TexTESOL Rigion III Fall Conference. "Come Learn and Grow with Us!" More information coming soon. http://www.textesol.org/region3/.

November, 2005

4-5. 2005 TexTESOL State Conference. "No Teacher Left Behind." Renaissance Dallas-Richardson Hotel. Web site http://home.flash.net/~presv/Frames/Frames.htm

October, 2006

2006 TexTESOL State Conference
Austin, TX

Call for Newsletter Submissions

Do you have some thoughts on the teaching of English to speakers of other languages? Do you have personal stories to share that are related to TESOL issues? Do you have some helpful tips for other TESOLers? If you do, please consider submitting an article to TexTESOL III Newsletter. Submission deadlines:

Submission	1/1	4/1	7/1	10/1
Publication	2/15	5/15	8/15	11/15

Visit http://www.textesol.org/region3/ for submission types and guidelines.

Discover a New World of Education

Sponsored by the United States Department of State, the Fulbright Teacher Exchange Program arranges: direct one-to-one classroom exchanges to over thirty countries for teachers at all levels. Most exchanges occur for an academic year. Argentina, Mexico, and the United Kingdom offer fall-semester exchanges. The United Kingdom and Morocco offer six-week exchanges.

In addition to the teacher exchanges, there are administrative exchange opportunities in Argentina, Bulgaria, Canada, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, Mexico, Romania, the Slovak Republic, Thailand, Turkey and the United Kingdom. Oman, Jordan, and Uruguay currently offer opportunities to host incoming administrators during site visits to the United States. Germany offers a two-week special program for U.S. principals to study school systems there for several weeks.

The program also offers eight-week seminars in Italy or Greece for teachers of Italian, Latin, Greek or the Classics.

Prospective applicants must meet the following general eligibility requirements:
    U.S. Citizenship
    Fluency in English
    Bachelor's degree or higher
    Be in at least third year of full-time teaching
    A current full-time position

The application deadline is October 15, 2005 for the 2006-2007 program year. For more information and/or an application please visit our Web site: www.fulbrightexchanges.org or call (800)726-0479.