TexTESOL III Newsletter

Texas Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages

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Letter from the President

Everyone has something that can cause frustration or embarrassment. A common dream is one in which we are doing a presentation and are not wearing any clothes! Something that is closer to our waking lives is how to answer questions. In the article, "Handling Questions with Authority," George Torok presents strategies on how to do just that. Even though his article focuses on answering questions during presentations, we as teachers are in a similar setting when we are called on to answer questions from our students.

Torok feels that the audience sees questions as "an opportunity for [them] to test your knowledge on the topic." I re-read these points more than once and realized this is what students do when they ask us questions. They may not be doing it consciously, but they do test us before they accept us as authorities in the subject matter we are presenting. They often ask questions just to see if we will allow questions during a lesson. What follows is an adaptation of Torok's article. If you wish to read the original, go to http://www.morebusiness.com

1. Tell your students when you will answer questions. If you aren't going to answer questions during the lesson, make the suggestion to your students to write their questions down. I use post-its, collect them and group them in categories, then answer the questions as time allows at the end of the class or lesson. (I direct the students to write only one question on each post-it.)

2. Prepare for possible questions and have answers ready. Always answer with a positive attitude and smile. This I think is necessary especially if you get asked the same question more than one time. You may have to think about who is asking you the question and craft an answer she/he will understand. This, of course, needs for you to know your students' skills and interests. Don't repeat the same answer!

3. Maintain control. Don't let the questions dominate or determine the direction of the class. Call on the student by name and let one student ask a question at a time. Caution students that you will recognize only one student at a time— be prepared to share how you will recognize them and in what order.

4. After you hear the question, restate it for the entire class. Maintain eye contact with the student while she/he is asking the question. When you restate the question, turn and include the entire class and address the answer to the entire class. Use the question to teach and reinforce material for the entire class and not only one individual.

Contents

5. If you don't know the answer, be honest. Tell the students that you will think about the question and will answer it either before the end of class or during the next class. You can say that you want to be sure that you give them the right information. I have told my students, "Let me think about your question. I want to make my explanation clear and easy to understand." They accept this, and I present the information as a tie-in at the next class meeting.

6. Before you start the lesson, share a question that other students have asked you about the topic and share the answer. This lets your students know that they can ask questions and that you will answer them.

7. If you have tried to answer the question and a student is still confused, call on a student who knows the material and can explain to the student who asked. Ask the confused student at what point she/he got confused; then, let your student experts answer the question.

8. When a student disagrees with how you are presenting the lesson, acknowledge that there are different ways and state that you are sharing with the class what works not only for you but also for other students.

9. Acknowledge when you have been asked a good question. But don't say this for every question you get. I encourage my students to ask questions saying that the only dumb question is the unasked one.

10. Don't end your class with a Q and A session. Instead, allow time for a summary of the key points of the lesson and what students need to do to complete the assignment that is linked to the lesson.

If there is one question you want your students to ask, share the question and answer it before you begin the lesson. One way to present the question is to say, "Here is a question that I know some of you might have." Or say, "This is a common question on this topic."

I hope that these pointers are useful. As always let me know what you are thinking.

Keep in touch.
Anne-Marie
President TexTESOL Region III

Error Analysis Exercises
by Ted Klein

Recently I had my adult immigrant students write a one-page essay on the subject, "Why I Want to Visit (country)." We looked at a world map together and students discussed where they would like to go. Each student selected a country and we talked about good organization of written presentations: 1. Introduction. 2. Background. 3. Main Body. 4. Conclusion. All of the class members were speakers of Spanish and Portuguese from five different countries.

I took the writing work home to correct and found some of the errors particularly interesting. They fell into three categories. First is what I would call L1 errors, directly traceable to the first language of the students. Second were L2 errors. These are errors, which are peculiar to the second or target language, which is English. There are parts of English, which seem to almost universally cause the most difficulty for speakers of many different languages. These include: the proper use of auxiliaries, the limited flexibility in word order (syntax) compared to many other languages, the third person singular verb changes, the proper use of a/an/the/Ø. The third category of errors is what I label "?" This means an error for which we have no good explanation. It simply represents the challenge of second language acquisition and we can only guess why it happens.

I took the fifteen errors that I found most interesting and made a classroom exercise out of them. Each student was given a copy of the fifteen errors that their class members had made. Students were then asked to verbally correct the sentences. Hands were raised. Some of the corrections were right and others wrong. I wrote the correct possibilities that the students gave me on the chalkboard. The students were then challenged to figure out, after an explanation of the above system, "What caused the errors?" By the third example, class members were talking about differences between their languages and English and most of the time coming up with an

L1, L2, or ? responses. I had not tried this approach before with students at this level, although I had used similar approaches with non-native speakers of English in ESL teacher trainings and who brought examples of their own students' work.

Following are the fifteen sentences that we used as a classroom exercise:

Writing Errors-1 Correct errors that you see in the following sentences.

1. I have a dream for know Canada.

2. My status legal in this country is O.K.

3. My principal reason for to visit Spain is to have a good experience.

4. I'm married the American man.

5. Portugal is a small country but is beautiful.

6. She has a boy friend Portuguese.

7. Italy is capital of Rome. There are famous for great monuments.

8. I want to go to Egypt, because that country has to much mysteries.

9. Japan is one of the world's economic gigants.

10. I not see my family in ten years.

11. She will marry with him and we go to their wedding.

12. Today I'm going to write about Europe continent.

13. I would like to know about the pyramids Egypt.

14. They have also pyramids.

15. My state have a lot turistics.

Following are corrections of each item and the probable causes that we came up with:

1. I have a dream to know Canada. Cause: L1. In Spanish "for know" is a direct translation of "para conocer."

2. My status legal in this country is O.K. Cause: L1. Adjectives follow nouns in Spanish.

3. My principal reason for visiting Spain is to have a good experience. OR My principal reason to visit Spain is to have a good experience. Cause '?'. This double structure does not occur in either language. Perhaps the student was familiar with both possibilities and combined them.

4. I married an American man. OR I'm married to an American man. Cause: L2. There is general confusion among speakers of many languages about "I'm" and "I" on structural and phonological levels and widespread difficulty with specific and non-specific article usage, as well as use of the passive voice as an alternative.

5. Portugal is a small country, but it is beautiful. Cause: L1. Neither Spanish nor Portuguese would use "it" before the verb "to be" (ser or estar).

6. She has a Portuguese boy friend. Cause: L1. Adjectives follow nouns in Portuguese.

7. Italy is the capital of Rome. Cause: '?' Spanish would have also said "la capital." It is famous for great monuments. Cause: L2. It is possible that the student wanted to say "They are" in reference to both Rome and Italy. However, there is much confusion both structurally and phonologically between "they are" and "there are" for speakers of many languages.

8. I want to go to Egypt, because that country has very many mysteries. Cause: L2. There is universal confusion between the homophones "to, two and too." There is also a consistent semantic problem with differences between "very" and "too" much, for speakers of many languages, as well as the use of "much" for mass nouns and "many" for count nouns.

9. Japan is one of the world's economic giants. Cause: L1. "Gigants" is a direct translation from the Spanish word "gigante," which means giant.

10. I haven't seen my family in ten years. Cause: L1. Instead of using the present perfect form, which exists in Spanish, events starting in the past and continuing to the present are normally expressed in the present in Spanish, such as, "It makes ten years that I 'no' see my family." (Hace diez años que no veo a mi familia.)

11. She will marry him and we will go to their wedding. Cause: L1 and '?' "Marry with him" is a direct translation from Portuguese. The lack of "will" with the verb go, was probably a simple error, as the future or "going to go" form would have normally been used in Portuguese as in English.

12. Today I'm going to write about the European continent. OR Today I'm going to write about the continent of Europe. Cause: '?' Normally the second example would be used in Spanish.

13. I would like to know about the Egyptian pyramids. OR I would like to know about the pyramids of Egypt. Cause: Probably L1. In Spanish we would again put the adjective after the noun. However the adjective is pluralized in Spanish if the noun is pluralized. Therefore, in Spanish, the sentence would be "pyramids Egypts," (pyramides egiptanos) or "pyramids of Egypt," (piramides de egípto).

14. They also have pyramids. Cause: L2. In many languages that have more verb tenses and noun declensions than English, word order (syntax) is much less important.

15. My state has a lot of tourists. Cause: (turistics) L1. Both touring and tourist (adj.) can be "turístico" in Spanish. Next ("have") Cause: L2 difficulty in general with the third person singular in English, which is our most frequent inflectional change. The missing "of " after "lot" is also an L1 problem, as "de" (of) would not be used in Spanish in this context..

This exercise took about an hour and a half of class time and proved useful to the students, as well as enjoyable. We learn in language, as in life, from our mistakes, by finding out what is causing most of them. I **do not** recommend this type of exercise as a test. It has been proven by researchers in the past, designing multiple choice language exercises, that seeing **wrong** English, as opposed to inappropriate but grammatical choices, can result in students actually learning the incorrect responses. This exercise should be done under the constant control of an instructor, who can assist every step of the way.

Fortunately, I am functional in Spanish and familiar with Portuguese. However, I have learned over the years to deal with new languages as problems arose. For example, I noticed years ago, that my Arabic speaking students were saying "I student," instead of "I am a student." I asked a student how to say that in Arabic. He wrote on the board "Ana Talib," below my "I am a student." I asked him what each word meant and he said "Ana means "I" and Talib means student." I asked about the absence of a linking verb and he explained that the Arabic verb

equivalent of "to be" was never used in the present tense. It is used in the past tense. My Arabic speaking students were not having difficulty using **was** and **were.**

Since then I have worked with students who speak numerous languages and we have always been able to find out what was causing problems, by putting the two languages side-by-side and labeling the function of each word. The information was good for the students and for my teaching. I have not only slowly learned what causes some specific problems, but I am also constantly reminded how far my students have come in "switching codes."

Ted Klein started teaching English to speakers of other languages before the acronym ESL came about. He taught, trained teachers and wrote ESL training books working for the International Office of the University of Texas and the Defense Language Institute English Language Center. He has taught ESL in Saudi Arabia, Egypt, China and Turkey as well as Austin, TX. He is an independent consultant and trainer. taklein@ev1.net

VLC Effective Grant Writing Discussion Forum

From January 17 - 27, Verizon Literacy Campus (VLC) will offer a moderated discussion on the VLC Discussion Forum about the following facets of the grant writing
process.

The guest moderator for this discussion will be Jim Aiello, development officer for ProLiteracy Worldwide. During the nine-day period, questions will be posted on the Forum for participants to discuss. At the end of the period, this discussion will be archived on the VLC site.

To read the messages posted to the Effective Grant Writing forum:
1. Go to www.literacycampus.org.
2. Click on "Discussion Forums" in the upper left menu bar.
3. Click on "For Program Staff".

To respond to messages in the Effective Grant Writing discussion, follow steps 1 and 2 above.

If you have already registered for a VLC Discussion Forum:
1. Click on "Log In" and enter your user information.
2. Go to the Discussion Forum page at:
http://www.literacycampus.org/discussion/index.asp
3. Click on "For Program Staff". You will see several topics displayed.
4. Click on "Effective Grant Writing". You will see a welcome message from Jim Aiello containing information about this discussion as well as instructions for accessing helpful resources in the VLC Library.

A Report on the 2005 TexTESOL State Conference
By Fu-An Lin

As TexTESOL III gets ready to host the next statewide conference in October, the 2005 State Conference in North Dallas has certainly become an inspiring model. TexTESOL V, the host of the 2005 conference, was greatly successful in offering its conference attendees a variety of informative yet entertaining activities.

The keynote presentation given by the owner of the well-known Dave's ESL Café, Dave Sperling, was especially memorable. An expert in using technology to teach ESL, Mr. Sperling presented his own work as well as an impressive list of web resources, which he categorized into Online Publishing, Meeting and Communication, Online Learning, and Online Tools for Exploration. One of the most interesting concepts that he mentioned was "key pals," pals who write to each other with a computer keyboard. With the help of the Internet and technology, the concept of "key pals" holds a great potential as an incentive for students to write with a purpose. Mr. Sperling concluded his presentation with tips for teachers. The list of web resources and the tips can be found at http://www.eslcafe.com/present/.

Another memorable event at the 2005 State

Conference was the Award Luncheon, where TexTESOLers of the Year were recognized. Mr. Frank Cronin from TexTESOL Region III was the recipient of the TexTESOLer Award. Frank worked on the TexTESOL III executive board for nearly 10 years. Although he is not currently serving as a board member, he continues to assist the board in conference coordination, including the 2006 State Conference.

By nominating Frank for the award, TexTESOL III wanted to show that participation and contribution are not limited to a board membership. Instead, they are what every member can do!

Indeed, the 2005 State Conference would not have been a success without the help from its many volunteers. With the most exciting event in the year 2006 fast approaching, we want to encourage you to consider being part of the excitement. If you would like to be a volunteer for the 2006 State Conference, drop us a line at TexTESOL III, 603 13th Street, Suite 1A, #173, Austin, TX 78701. Or write to any one of us serving on the TexTESOL III board (our contact information is listed on the second page).

And remember to check the TexTESOL III website, http://www.textesol.org/region3/, for updates on the conference. We look forward to hearing from you!

FREE ONLINE READING MATERIALS

Compiled based on recent discussions on the listserv: TESL-L@CUNYVM.CUNY.EDU

- Voice of America: http://www.voanews.com/english/
- Literacy Works Learning Resources: http://literacynet.org/cnnsf/archives.html.
- New York Times: http://www.nytimes.com/learning/teachers/lessons/languagearts.html
- Newsweek: www.newsweek.com
- Words in the News: http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningenglish/newsenglish/
- Culture-Lab UK: http://213.130.36.108/site/templates/issue1/home.asp
- Find Articles: http://www.findarticles.com

Calendar of Events

February, 2006

19-25. CICLing-2006 - 7th International Conference on Intelligent Text Processing & Computational Linguistics, Mexico City, Mexico. Web site: http://www.cicling.org/2006/

March, 2006

15-19. The 40th Annual Convention in Tampa, Florida (TESOL 2006) "Daring to Lead" *Take advantage of the early registration rates (see the table on the right).* For more information, visit http://www.tesol.org.

Registration Class	Early Registration (on or before February 3)	Late Registration (after February 3 or on site)
4. Retired Member* (member dues additional)	$140	$160

Registration Class	Early Registration (on or before February 3)	Late Registration (after February 3 or on site)
1. Member Registration (member dues additional)	$250	$285
2. Nonmember Registration (membership not included)	$415	$425
3. Student Member Registration (member dues are separate)	$100	$100

March, 2006

24-25. TexFLEC 2006 (Texas Foreign Language Education Conference). University of Texas at Austin. Web site: http://studentorgs.utexas.edu/flesa/texflec/. *See Call for Proposals on the next page.*

April, 2006

6-8. Southwest Conference On Language Teaching Conference. Phoenix, Arizona. Web site: http://www.swcolt.org/proposals.htm

October, 2006

26-28. 2006 TexTESOL State Conference. Austin, TX. Web site: http://www.textesol.org/region3/

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 or websites for other TESOLers? If you do, please consider submitting an article to TexTESOL III Newsletter. Submission deadlines:

Submission	12/1	3/1	6/1	9/1
Publication	1/15	4/15	7/15	10/15

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

Texas Foreign Language Education Conference
TexFLEC 2006

FLESA

2005-2006

Language, Culture, and Identity: Interweaving Pathways in Second/Foreign Language Education

Sponsored by
The Foreign Language Education Student Association
and
The Foreign Language Education Program

The University of Texas at Austin

24-25 March 2006

with keynote presentations by
Dr. George Braine of the Chinese University of Hong Kong
and
Dr. Yasuko Kanno of the University of Washington

Our theme this year is the exploration of issues regarding multiculturalism and identity in second or foreign language learning and teaching. The core goal of the conference is to encourage critical thinking in issues of identity, culture, and language and to promote interdisciplinary research in the field of Foreign Language Education.

CALL FOR PROPOSALS

Proposals for presentations of papers are requested in the following areas: second/foreign language acquisition, language pedagogy, assessment & evaluation, language & culture, language & technology, literacy, applied linguistics, bilingual education, and sociolinguistics. Papers should explore some aspect(s) of the relationship of language, culture, and identity.
Submission Deadline: 27 January 2006

Selected proceedings from the conference will be featured in *Texas Papers in Foreign Language Education*, a journal published by the Foreign Language Education Program.

For submission guidelines, registration information, and updates on the keynote address, visit:
http://studentorgs.utexas.edu/flesa/texflec/
Or e-mail us at: TexFLEC@ccwf.cc.utexas.edu

Conference Co-Chairs: Brandi Demont (brandidemont@gmail.com), Fabiana Sacchi (fsacchi@mail.utexas.edu), Katerina Theodoridou (rina.th@mail.utexas.edu), Michael Tallon (tallon@satx.rr.com)