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Editors:
Ulrich Schrader
Ma. Guadalupe Santos Espino

JoAnn Miller, Production Editor

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Editorial Policy

The MEXTESOL Journal is dedicated to the classroom teacher in Mexico. Previously unpublished articles and book reviews relevant to EFL teaching and research in Mexico are accepted for publication. Articles may be of a practical or theoretical nature and be written in English or Spanish. The Journal reserves the right to edit an accepted manuscript in order to enhance clarity or style. The author will be consulted only if the editing has been substantial.

Research-Based Articles: A research-based article should report original research or discuss research-related issues. These articles are usually submitted as refereed (judged as acceptable, conditional, or not acceptable) by two members of the Editorial Board who are experts in an area related to that of the article. The refereeing process is blind but, if an author wishes, a referee may be assigned as a mentor to guide the author through the revision process. A footnote will state that the article was refereed.

Professional Practice Issue Articles: In order to open the publication process to more authors, refereed or non-refereed articles are accepted in this section. These normally describe professional teaching experiences or library research related to teaching which the author wants to share with the readers. These articles will be read, judged and styled by members of the Editorial Staff for originality, quality and clarity of ideas.

Reviews: The Journal welcomes review articles summarizing published research or professional practice, position papers which promote or defend positions on a current, controversial topic, and book reviews of classroom texts, recorded material, computer software or other instructional resources. Reviews are non-refereed but are subject to editing.

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La revista MEXTESOL está dirigida al maestro de inglés. Se aceptan manuscritos y reseñas relevantes a la enseñanza del inglés como idioma extranjero e investigación que no hayan sido previamente publicados. Los artículos pueden ser de naturaleza teórica o práctica y pueden ser escritos en inglés o en español. La revista se reserva el derecho de editar un manuscrito aceptado para brindarle mayor claridad o mejorar su estilo. El autor será consultado únicamente para sugerir cambios.

Artículos basados en la investigación: un artículo basado en investigación debe reportar investigación original o discutir asuntos relacionados con la investigación. Estos artículos generalmente se someten a arbitraje (juzgados como aceptable, condicional o no aceptable) realizado por dos miembros del consejo editorial expertos en un área relacionada con el artículo. El proceso de arbitraje es anónimo, pero si el autor lo desea se le puede asignar a un árbitro como mentor para guiarlo en el proceso de revisión. El artículo se publica con una nota al pie de página para indicar que es arbitrado.

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Indicaciones para enviar una propuesta: para facilitar el proceso de publicación se recomienda enviar el manuscrito por correo electrónico a la dirección de la revista. Se debe utilizar un procesador Microsoft Word o Word Perfect para el artículo y gráficas que lo acompañen y ser enviado como un attachment. Además se debe enviar una copia del manuscrito a la Dirección postal de la revista ya que las gráficas, tablas o diagramas que contenga el artículo pueden sufrir alteraciones al ser enviado por correo electrónico. Si no se tiene acceso al correo electrónico, se debe enviar el manuscrito acompañado de una copia en diskette de 3.5”. Favor de indicar si se desea que el **artículo sea o no arbitrado**.

Cualquier correspondencia a la revista que tenga que ver con artículos para publicación debe ser enviada vía fax o correo electrónico a las direcciones que aparecen abajo. La información concerniente a propaganda en la revista o a membresías debe ser enviada a la Oficina Nacional de MEXTESOL cuya dirección también aparece abajo.

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Fax / Teléfono: (55) 5566-8774, (55) 5566-8749

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Manuscript Guidelines

Articles must be typed, double-spaced and preferably no more than twenty pages long. The format should conform to the Publication Manual for the American Psychological Association (A.P.A.) guideline format.

In-Text Citations:
References within the text should be cited in parentheses using the author's last name, year of publication and page numbers (shown below):

Rodgers (1994) compared performance on two test instruments.
or In a recent study of EFL writing (Rodgers, 1994) .....

Or for Direct Quotes:

Rodgers (1994) argued that, "most existing standardized tests do not accurately assess EFL writing performance" (p. 245).

Reference Page:

The list of references found in an article must appear at the end of the text on a separate page entitled "References". The data must be complete and accurate. Authors are fully responsible for the accuracy of their references. The APA format for reference page entries is shown below.

Books:

Brown, J. (1991). Nelson-Denny Reading Test. Chicago: Riverside Press

Journal Articles:

Ganschow, L. (1992). A screening instrument for the identification of foreign language learning problems. Foreign Language Annals. 24, 383-398.

From the Editors

In this issue of the journal we look at several important aspects of language teaching and several new areas for exploration and growth. How do our students perceive us and our work in the classroom?—that is the question Connie Johnson, a former editor of this Journal, explores in her article "Characteristics of Effective EFL Teachers in Mexico as Perceived by Students and Teachers" We're sure you'll want to read this article and find out the answer.

There are two articles on testing in this issue of the Journal. Audrey Don explores the basic principles of testing and encourages us to ask ourselves questions, as she herself did in her Action Research Report "The Role of Assessment in the Language Classroom," about the relationships between what we teach, what we test and how we test. Her reflective research project provides us all with food for thought the next time we want to assess our students. From a different standpoint, Karen Englander in her article "Beyond Statistics: Systematic Development of a High Stakes Reading Comprehension Exam" questions the validity of using only statistical analyses for evaluation purposes and suggests that we need to be wary of using only statistical tools for assessment.

Providing us with some insightful comments about language teaching in the United States, Renate Schulz in her article, "The Quest for Professional Standards in Foreign/Second Language Teacher Development: A U.S. Perspective" presents some revealing information about different criteria for program standards and certification of teacher education programs. In "Teaching / Learning Centers: The impact of On-site Sustained Collaboration for ESL/Bilingual teachers' professional development," Sandra Musanti presents the concept of Teaching Learning Centers for teachers to help and support each other in their workplaces and, in the final analysis, to help the students who are the ultimate beneficiaries.

To those of us who still think the keyboard is part of the piano and a screen is part of the television set, it may be surprising to find out that not all bulletin boards are cork boards for putting notes, comic strips and MEXTESOL information on. Jose Miguel Rodriguez introduces us to the world of Bulletin Board Systems and the field of computer mediated communication as applied specifically to language teaching and learning in "Integrating Bulletin Board Systems /BBSs) as a Tool in Face-to-Face English courses."

Finally, Ma. Guadalupe Santos presents a paper which introduces a new option for academic participation in MEXTESOL's regional and national conventions—poster sessions. Her practical how-to article "Posters as a Resource for Learning and Research "on the preparation and presentation of posters will help all of us be able to incorporate and participate in this relatively new media (for MEXTESOLers) to share our work with other attendees at the conventions.

We hope that you will enjoy and learn much from these articles and that you can apply some of the ideas in your teaching practices. As always, It is important for all of us to be critically open to new ideas and techniques and to experiment with purposeful, well thought-out changes and improvements in our daily activities.

Characteristics of Effective EFL Teachers in Mexico as Perceived by Students and Teachers[1]

CONNIE R. JOHNSON, UNIVERSIDAD DE LAS AMÉRICAS-PUEBLA

Introduction

The research question upon which this study is based is, "Do Mexican students and teachers perceive effective English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers in the same way?" This article will discuss the characteristics of capable EFL teachers as viewed by both the teachers and students. The data from 334 EFL university students and 101 EFL teachers were collected for this study during 2000-2001. The students were from the same university and maintained a dynamic relationship with different university teachers; however, the teachers all came from diverse teaching situations in different parts of Mexico. The ultimate goal for this research is to enlarge the existing data concerning effective EFL teacher characteristics in order to develop language teacher preparation models that incorporate aspects of relevant language teaching and to aid in establishing standards for evaluating language instructors.

In the last decades, criteria for effective teaching have become serious educational research topics and work has been carried out to define the characteristics of the "good teacher" (Bernhardt & Hammadou, 1987; Brophy, 1979; Politzer & Weiss, 1971). Yet, there is still no consensus model of the ideal teacher, nor is there an agreement as to the particular characteristics, desirable behavior or qualifications necessary to produce the perfect teacher (Bernhardt & Hammadou, 1987; Ericksen, 1984; Politzer & Weiss, 1971). Comparatively little research has been carried out in specific subject areas or disciplines of teaching because each teaching/learning situation is unique, and subject areas are different. Due to this, there are teaching behaviors that are considered to be effective in one setting and not in another. For example, mathematics, social studies and language teachers may have different characteristics of effective teaching (Sternberg & Horvath, 1995). This paper is an attempt to determine what Mexican students and teachers perceive as effective EFL teacher characteristics.

Theory of Communication

The teaching of foreign languages is different from the teaching of other subjects in that the means of instruction is also the content of the course. In this paper, effective language teaching is taken from the point of view of communication because of its importance to the learning/teaching process. Teaching is seen as a continuous process of com-

[1] This is a refereed article.

munication in which the teacher is involved in sending messages to students who respond.

The theory of communication that has been presented by innumerable researchers since Monroe (1967) consists of a series of steps. First, the speaker has an idea, which is then translated into verbal symbols. Next, the speaker's brain sends neural messages to the vocal mechanism for the production of speech. While this is occurring, the speaker is also sending non-verbal messages through gestures, eye contact, facial expressions, posture and other body movements. In the fourth step, the listener begins the intake of the message and then decodes and interprets the signals while at the same time reacting non-verbally, cognitively and emotionally. In the sixth step, the speaker reads the verbal and non-verbal reaction of the listener and begins to interpret what is happening to the other party. As the speaker interprets the listener's reaction, he or she responds to the other's expressions of doubt, disbelief, fear, rejection, boredom, disappointment, empathy, interest or acceptance. From this we can say that communication consists of a flow of ideas back-and-forth between speaker, "S", and receiver, "R", such as in the Diagram 1 below:

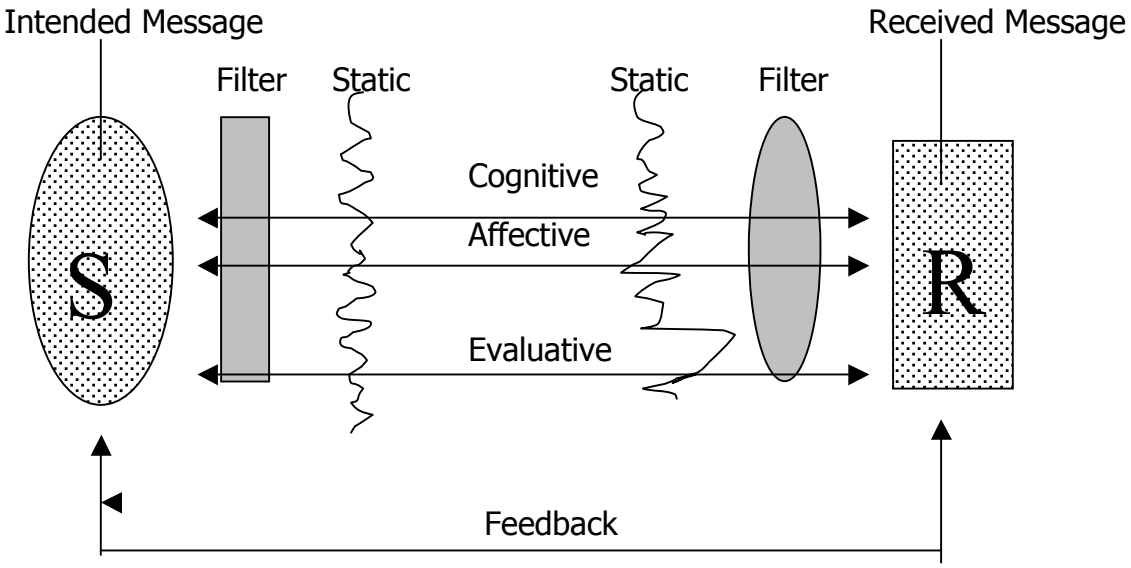

DIAGRAM 1: THE COMMUNICATION PROCESS

In the EFL classroom, communication is similar. The teacher supplies the input, communicates the subject and conveys ideas, concepts and thoughts to the students through voice, symbols, body, visual aids, audio and audiovisual means. The students perceive the teacher's mes-

sage by decoding the symbols, the verbal and non-verbal actions of the teacher and react in various ways to the teacher's communication. However, this type of communication is an intellectually, psychologically, sociologically, physiologically and linguistically complex process that can break down on any of these points (Savignon, 1993). The result of a partial or complete breakdown would result in deficient or poor teaching and learning. The teacher may disrupt the communication process by a disorganized or unclear organization of ideas or argumentation. The students' negative perception of the teacher's knowledge of English could produce an unfavorable sense of the instructor's personality and ability in the learners. Another possible barrier to the communication process is a linguistic one. If the teacher's knowledge of the lexicon (words) or syntax (grammar) of English is deficient, then incomplete or incorrect meanings are conveyed to the students.

Principal Factors in Effective Teaching

Most of the findings in research to determine effective teaching characteristics support the fact that there are several main factors that can help or impede the teacher-student communication. The first is *Teacher-Student Interaction Styles* (Dubelle, 1986; Reid, 1995). Due to the fact that teaching is a two - way process, the quality of the interaction is significant to that process. Even though, as previously mentioned, there is no consensus model for the ideal teacher, effective teachers are often described as those who come to know their students and are sensitive to the way they receive and process information. An effective teacher establishes a classroom environment that is motivating, interesting and holds the students' attention. These teachers adapt their behavior to meet students' needs and are able to respond to the group dynamics of their situation. All of these depend on the interaction styles of both parts.

The lack of effective communication and differences in students' achievement are sometimes blamed on a second factor, that of *Teaching Methods and Techniques* (Dubin and Olshtain, 1986). One method can have some advantages over another but often it is effective communication between student and teacher that determines how well a method is executed in the classroom. An excellent teacher can take a weak method and make it work as long as there is efficient communication; however, the opposite is also true. A weak teacher can attempt to use a proven method and not be able to execute it due to ineffective communication.

Also, a teacher may be an expert in English with a solid knowledge of teaching methods and theoretical rationale, but communication can break down if there is a lack of *Planning and Organization* (Penner,

1992) which is the third factor. A well - planned and organized lesson can help the learner determine the items being taught and arrange them in order of priority.

Interest and Attention (Penner, 1992) in the classroom are other important factors in classroom communication. Without interest there is little attention and without attention, communication and learning will not take place. The importance of being interesting and having a good delivery are extremely important points for teachers who want to have the attention of their students. In student questionnaires used to evaluate teacher effectiveness in major universities in the United States, the factor of interest usually rates high on the list of desirable qualities.

Even though teachers may have excellent academic qualifications, a good background in theories and methods, lots of teaching experience and good communicative skills, these do not guarantee effective classroom communication. The communicative process involves the entire person and effective teachers teach not only the subject but also themselves. While subject matter knowledge and teaching skills enable communication, what is actually perceived by the listener may not depend so much on the teacher's skill but instead on the personality of the speaker and the personal relationship between the learner and the instructor. Because patterns of thought, speech and manners are a reflection of personality, teaching styles vary with the *Personality of the Teacher* which is the final factor I want to discuss. Penner (1992, p. 45) defined personality as the sum of an individual's unique qualities that include five areas:

1. The first quality is physical appearance: This includes dress, hair style, height, weight, age, health and neatness;

2. The next is intelligence: This consists of aptitudes and natural and acquired knowledge;

3. The third quality is social capacity: This Penner defines as the ability to adjust to various social settings and situations and to interact with others appropriately;

4. The subsequent attribute is made up of various cultural qualities: These refer to interactive speech communication and personal manners that appropriately reflect the culture of the interlocutors;

5. Finally Penner lists psychological make-up as an important factor: This, according to Penner, reflects a teacher's emotional stability, enthusiasm and the ability to stimulate and inspire others.

Methodology for the Study

The questionnaire used in the present study was composed of a list of 20 EFL teacher characteristics that were chosen to reflect these five factors of personal, pedagogical and interactional characteristics. The

characteristics had been mentioned in the published studies referenced above concerning teacher qualities and they also corresponded to unpublished research I did in 1999. In this latter project, 196 EFL university students were asked to write as many characteristics as they could remember of motivating and de-motivating factors that had aided or hindered in their learning during all their years of studying English. The 196 students provided 1058 comments which were coded and found to be divided into basically 9 areas. However, by far the largest area with 731 of the 1058 comments (69.1%) conclusively identified the teacher as the principle motivating and de-motivating factor in the students' learning. In Appendix I, we can see the results of the *Teacher Factor* of the study with the 731 comments that were made by the student participants.

From these results which coincided with results published in the literature (Bernhardt & Hammadou, 1987; Brophy, 1979; Ericksen, 1984; Penner, 1992; Politzer & Weiss, 1971), the author concluded that from the students' point of view, the teachers and other areas of influence that the teachers had control over, such as good organization, their command of the language, interesting classes, teaching skills, willingness to help students and other teacher-centered qualities, were factors that the students found as the most helpful in learning language. Based on these findings, a 20-item instrument was created (see Appendix II)**.** This was administered to 334 EFL university students and to 101 EFL teachers. The students were all from the same university, but studying in different English levels while the teachers were from different teaching situations and areas of Mexico. This is due to the fact that the teachers had been members of the audiences of different presentations that the author had given over a period of a year and a half at various conferences. For this reason, this study could not guarantee that 100% of the participating teachers were of Mexican nationality; however, they were all English teachers teaching within Mexico. Another limitation of this study is that not all of the teachers to whom the questionnaires were given returned the results, thus the large difference in numbers between the student and teacher participants. The students and teachers were both asked to choose, from among the 20 items, those they considered to be the 5 most important teacher characteristics and to write the number of those items in order of importance (1-5; 1 being the most important characteristic and 5 the least important). This was done anonymously, so that the students would answer as honestly as possible knowing that their teachers would not be able to identify who wrote which answers.

Results of the Study

The student results were the first to be collected. Initially, the results of the five different EFL levels were merged in order to identify the items that were chosen most frequently by all of the students. In these results, the researcher/author considered any characteristic that was chosen by over 20% of the students as being significant and thus needing to be looked at more closely. The items chosen by between 20-29% were marked on the chart with one asterisk. Those chosen by 30-39% had two asterisks, those by 40-49% were awarded three asterisks, and those above 50% received four asterisks (see Appendix III). The use of one or more asterisks was chosen simply as a visual method to mark the percentages that the items had been chosen and had no other special meaning. All of the characteristics in the questionnaire, except for two that had no generalizable category (these were considered as #5), fell into the following categories.

1. Teacher's didactic skills
2. Teacher's focus on the student as an individual
3. Teacher's command of the target language
4. Teacher's personality qualities
5. Not clearly a category

The table in Appendix III shows the percentages that the students preferred an item, the assigned asterisks for the bolded characteristics that were chosen 20% or more of the time, and the number of the category the characteristic fell into.

Now you may be asking yourself: "Was there a difference among the students of different levels of English in their responses?" In Appendix IV, the groups are represented by their course number placed above the percentages. The courses ranged from Basic I (101) to bilingual students studying content courses in English (400). A quick glance seems to show that there isn't much of a difference, or if there is one, it is very small. However, in evaluating this type of data, one must always prove that there is NO significant difference between the groups involved in the study to make the findings reliable. Thus, a chi-square test was performed on the results of the different groups.[2] These results (Appendix

2 In the case of the chi-square test, if the resulting number is .05 or larger, it signifies that there is a difference between the choices made by the groups. In three of the results, the reader can see that there is an "E-" followed by another number. This implies that the number that follows the dash indicates the number of zeros placed after the decimal point and before the preceding numbers. For example, in the last result of groups 101 to 400 (3.11E-23), the complete number should read "0.00000000000000000000000311" which shows that a very small difference exists between the choices made by the two groups.

IV) indicated no relevant differences between the students of the different EFL levels.

If you remember, the original question in the introduction was, "Do Mexican students and teachers perceive effective EFL teachers in the same way?" When the results of the students were compared with those of the teachers using the chi-square, it was found that although there were some differences, especially in the frequencies of some of the characteristics on the instrument, the chi-square did not reveal any significant disparities between the directions of the frequencies of the two groups (see Appendix V).

Even though the chi-square did not find large differences when looking at all the results, we can see in Appendix V that there were some close similarities in the percentages. If the reader can accept a 10% or higher difference as being significant, then the following characteristics are noteworthy: In characteristic #1, there is a 10% difference between student and teacher choices. Students did not consider that understanding the curricula of all the courses of the English program was as important as did the teachers. In the responses to characteristic #3, the students again demonstrated their preference that the teacher should be flexible by a 15% difference from that of the teachers who did not feel this characteristic to be as important. Both students and teachers regarded characteristic #5 that the teacher stimulated the students to become independent learners to be very important, however the teachers rated it almost 15% higher than did the students. This is possibly due to the present emphasis on autonomous learning in the ELT field. Characteristic #6 demonstrated that a teacher speaking English as their native language was almost 10% more important for the students than for the teachers. In characteristic #9, we can see that having a sense of humor was approximately 10% more important for the students than for the teachers. Characteristics #10 and #11 were both rated extremely high in importance by both groups, but the teachers rated the organization and preparation of the class and motivating students to study higher than did students (with a 28% and a 10% difference respectively). Teaching comprehensibly in item #13 was assessed as being 10% more important for students than for teachers, but again the percentage is high for both groups. And characteristic #14 can alleviate teachers' doubts that the students prefer a teacher of one sex over another. Only five of the 334 students chose that option.

If the reader accepts that the results of the chi-square in Appendix V strongly suggest that the two groups of teachers and students share the same tendencies in their choices (chi-square = 0.000356210), then averaging the percentages of the two should reveal which were the 5 most chosen characteristics (see Appendix VI). As we can see, charac-

teristic #10, of "good preparation and organization" was chosen by almost 65 % of the participants as being the most important teacher characteristic. The second most important, #11, "motivates the students to study", was chosen by 61 %. The third most important teaching quality was characteristic #5, "stimulates the students to be independent learners", with almost 53 % preferring it. In fourth place was item #7, "makes the class interesting" with 46 % of the responses and in fifth place was characteristic #13, "teaches comprehensibly", with practically 43 % of the student/teacher population selecting this teacher quality.

Conclusion

The five qualities mentioned above represent the most desirable characteristics of effective language teachers as seen by both teachers and students in Mexico. However, if we look further at the percentages we can see that many other characteristics were rated quite highly. Teaching is not merely a matter of intellect. One cannot teach a subject without projecting some kind of an attitude and feeling about it to the students. For this reason, teachers' personalities can be of the greatest importance in determining students' and teachers' success or failure in the classroom. Teaching is an art and draws on experiences and resources that are defined and exhibited through the teachers' personalities. In this sense teaching cannot be easily transferred to or learned from others. Teachers should not try to imitate the style or personality of other teachers, but instead they should develop and adapt behaviors and methods that fit their own personalities. In this study good preparation and organization which made English more comprehensible for the students and teaching methods and techniques that motivated students and made them interested not only in the class but also in continuing to study independently, were found to be the most desirable communication qualities of EFL teachers.

Research on effective language teaching should continue and hopefully some of the readers of this article will take it upon themselves to do so. We as EFL teachers should continue searching in the hope that we can better understand the basic principles and phenomena underlying "good teaching", thus improving the teacher education process. Questions of interest for further research could be: "How closely do teachers' beliefs about the important characteristics of EFL teaching parallel their actual practice in the classroom?" or, "To what extent do these characteristics contribute to learners' achievement?" By noting the results, EFL-oriented research can guide the teacher and the teacher trainer towards better defining the principles of effective instruction. The results of this project suggest that, unlike what many teachers think, students are interested in more than simply passing the course. They are constantly evaluating and judging our teaching abilities in similar

ways as we are evaluating their learning. If we think that our students do not care what methods we use or how well prepared we are, we need to think again. These results show that students as well as teachers intuitively know what the characteristics of a "good" teacher are[3].

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[3] I would like to thank all the teachers who have helped this study to take place by completing the questionnaires. ¡Felicidades! ! Son excelentes profesores !

Appendix I

Teachers as Motivational Factors for EFL Students

369 comments representing 62% of all the motivational categories	**# Comments**
Teacher character (inspires confidence, tranquil, empathetic, friendly, patient, good humor, dynamic teacher, enthusiastic, loves teaching)	133
Teacher motivates students, positive reinforcement	57
Personalized treatment (remembers names, is interested in students)	35
Trained and knows how to teach	21
Answers questions and explains in detail	17
Classes are interesting	16
Is a native speaker of English	13
Gives creative homework	13
Mutual respect	11
Flexible	10
Fair evaluation methods	9
Speaks slowly	6
Punctuality	6
Attractive appearance	6
Exigent and demands work of the students	4
Provides goals	3
Responsible	2
Organized	2
Five comments of 1 motivational quality each	5

Teachers as De-Motivational Factors for EFL Students

362 Comments representing 79% of all the de-motivational categories	**# Comments**
Teacher Character (dictator, always mad, little patience, bad humor, hysterical, psychological problems)	110
Teacher correction (humiliation in front of group, criticizes, makes fun of students, threatens)	52
Boring classes	42
Homework too difficult or too much	26
Lacks responsibility, not punctual	25
Poor teacher (doesn't know how or lacks experience)	22
Not a native English speaker	13
Speaks too quickly	12
Only speaks with the better speakers	7
Ignorance of the teacher	6
Lack of discipline	5
Dishonesty	5
Monologues	4
Form of grading	4
Poor physical appearance	3
Doesn't recognize his/her mistakes	2
Lazy	2
Four different comments of 1 de-motivational quality each	4

Appendix II

CUESTIONARIO

Abajo encontraras una lista con características de maestros de idiomas. Escoge las cinco características que consideres que son las más importantes y que tus maestros de idiomas deberían tener. Escribe primero el número de la característica .más importante en una hoja de papel, después el número de la segunda, luego de la tercera, y así sucesivamente hasta llegar a la quinta en importancia. Después, entrega éste cuestionario y tu hoja (sin nombre pero con la clave del curso y el número de sección) al instructor. Gracias por tu cooperación en este estudio.

Que el maestro:

1. Entienda los planes de estudios de todos los cursos del idioma.
2. Ayude a los estudiantes cuando termina la clase.
3. Sea flexible con los estudiantes.
4. Preste atención a su apariencia física. *(limpieza, vestuario)*
5. Estimule a los estudiantes a aprender independientemente.
6. Entienda perfectamente (como hablante nativo) el idioma que enseña.
7. Haga la clase/ lección interesante.
8. Tenga actitudes positivas hacía los hablantes nativos del idioma que enseña.
9. Tenga sentido de humor.
10. Prepare y organice bien su clase.
11. Desarrolle la motivación en los alumnos para estudiar el idioma
12. Sea sensible a los problemas del los alumnos.
13. Enseñe clara y entendible.
14. Sea mujer u hombre
15. Entienda la cultura de los hablantes nativos del idioma.
16. Mantenga disciplina.
17. Ayude los alumnos a que tengan éxito a través de los ejercicios que les da.
18. No discrimine a los alumnos.
19. Enseñe las clases usando el idioma extranjero que están estudiando.
20. Tenga una buena orientación hacía la investigación en el área del idioma qué enseña.

Appendix III
Percentages of the five student groups (334 students) merged
Ranking of Choices

Item	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	Total %	Characteristic	Category
1	0.021	0.021	0.006	0.012	0.012	0.072	Knows the curriculum of the language program	1
2	0.036	0.036	0.027	0.048	0.057	0.204	Helps students after class	2
3	0.102	0.063	0.051	0.051	0.087	0.354	**Flexible with students	2
4	0.006	0	0.003	0.012	0.015	0.036	Appearance is attractive	4
5	0.108	0.126	0.108	0.048	0.066	0.456.	*** Helps students become independent Learners	1
6	0.132	0.066	0.039	0.033	0.021	0.291	* Good command of English	3
7	0.105	0.114	0.093	0.099	0.069	0.48	*** Makes class and lessons interesting	1
8	0.015	0.03	0.039	0.021	0.018	0.123	Has positive attitudes towards English speakers	3
9	0.021	0.06	0.063	0.033	0.075	0.252	* Has a sense of humor	4
10	0.078	0.129	0.132	0.108	0.06	0.507	**** Good preparation & organization	1
11	0.168	0.081	0.114	0.114	0.084	0.561	**** Develops motivation to learn English	1
12	0.015	0.024	0.036	0.06	0.045	0.18	Possesses sensitivity for the students' problems	2
13	0.081	0.09	0.117	0.108	0.078	0.474	*** Teaches so students understand	1
14	0	0	0	0	0.003	0.003	The sex of the teacher	5
15	0	0.027	0.015	0.024	0.012	0.078	Knows the culture of English speakers	3
16	0.003	0.009	0.009	0.033	0.039	0.093	Has a well disciplined class	1
17	0.018	0.072	0.075	0.108	0.093	0.366	** Helps students be successful	2
18	0.012	0.003	0.015	0.033	0.051	0.114	Does not discriminate between students	
19	0.078	0.042	0.045	0.045	0.057	0.227	* Lessons are taught in English	3
20	0	0.006	0.009	0.006	0.027	0.048	Conducts research in the area of English teaching	5

The five teacher categories that all the above characteristics fitted into were the following:

1. Teacher's Didactic Skills
2. Teacher's Focus on Students
3. Teacher's Command of English
4. Teacher's Personality
5. Not clearly a category

Appendix IV
Course Levels *and* Chi-square Results

	Basics		**Intermediates**		**Advanced**	Chi-square results between the 5 different EFL levels	
	Low	**High**	**Low**	**High**	**Very High**		
Item #	**101**	**102**	**201**	**301**	**400**	**Course Numbers**	
1	0.053	0.106	0.091	0.042	0.071		
2	0.213	0.348	0.136	0.211	0.089	0.009779816	**101-102**
3	0.36	0.348	0.348	0.352	0.357		
4	0.053	0.045	0.03	0.014	0.036	1.85E-06	**102-201**
5	0.64	0.515	0.333	0.423	0.321		
6	0.267	0.258	0.303	0.366	0.25	0.00117106	**201-301**
7	0.453	0.439	0.5	0.423	0.607		
8	0.186	0.106	0.106	0.099	0.107	7.12E-20	**301-400**
9	0.2	0.152	0.197	0.31	0.429		
10	0.413	0.439	0.606	0.549	0.536	3.11E-23	**400-101**
11	0.56	0.652	0.53	0.592	0.446		
12	0.187	0.121	0.167	0.113	0.339		
13	0.427	0.47	0.576	0.493	0.393		
14	0.013	0	0	0	0		
15	0.093	0.045	0.045	0.085	0.125		
16	0.067	0.121	0.106	0.127	0.036		
17	0.4	0.424	0.318	0.408	0.25		
18	0.093	0.061	0.136	0.099	0.196		
19	0.2	0.227	0.394	0.197	0.339		
20	0.067	0.045	0.061	0.014	0.054		
21	0.053	0.076	0.015	0.085	0.018		
	75	66	66	71	56	Number of Participants by Level	

Appendix V

Final Results of the Teacher and Student Choices

Item #	Percentages		Characteristics
	Students	**Teachers**	
1.	.072	.178	Entienda los planes de estudio de todos los cursos
2.	.204	.129	Ayude a los estudiantes cuando termina la clase
3.	.354	.198	Sea flexible con los alumnos
4.	.036	.089	Preste atención a su apariencia física
5.	.456	.594	Estimule a los estudiantes a aprender independientemente
6.	.29	.198	Entienda perfectamente el ingles (como hablante nativo)
7.	.48	.446	Haga la clase/lección interesante
8.	.123	.069	Tenga actitudes positivas hacia hablantes nativos de inglés
9.	.252	.149	Tenga sentido del humor
10.	.507	.792	Prepare y organice bien su clase
11.	.561	.663	Desarrolle la motivación para estudiar
12.	.18	.149	Sea sensible a los problemas de los alumnos
13.	.474	.376	Enseñe clara y entendible
14.	.003	0.0	Sea mujer u hombre
15.	.078	.069	Entienda la cultura de los hablantes del inglés
16.	.093	.059	Mantenga disciplina
17.	.366	.406	Ayude a los alumnos que tengan éxito a través de ejercicios

Chi-square result between the two groups (teachers/students): .000356210

Appendix VI

Ranking

1. Characteristic #10 with .649% "Good Preparation & Organization"
2. Characteristic #11 with .612% "Motivates Students to Study"
3. Characteristic #5 with .525% "Stimulates Students to be Independent Learners"
4. Characteristic #7 with .463% "Makes the Class Interesting"
5. Characteristic #13 with .425% "Teaches Comprehensibly"

The Role of Assessment in the Language Classroom: An Action Research Report[1]

AUDREY DON, UNIVERSIDAD LATINA DE AMÉRICA, MORELIA, MICHOACÁN

Testing is and always has been an issue in language teaching. There are times we feel we spend too much time on it or we feel the tests don't really reflect what students have learned; we wonder if tests are too difficult / too easy; if they are appropriate to the age / language level; the issues are many and varied.

I first became interested in the area of testing and evaluation when I came across the following. The author mentions four important factors that teachers should be aware of in relation to testing:

1. Test *what* was taught.
2. Test in the *way* we taught in class.
3. Test what learners *can do* (not just focusing on what they can't / don't do well)
4. Allow for the *creative use* of language. (Shrum & Glisan, 2000, p. 292)

The first point I felt was not a major concern in my case. However, I began to think about the *way* I test and the *way* I teach. This was the first thing that made me think there was something incongruent.

First of all, I thought about all the kinds of activities I engage my students in during regular class time (many varied activities immediately rushed to mind; the list was long). I most definitely teach in many different ways, using a variety of techniques and practices frequently, yet I tend to test in a fairly rigid pattern with the same very limited factors taken into consideration each time: a written test completed individually by students--in silence--that includes vocabulary, grammar-in-context exercises, reading comprehension, dialogue completion, etc. as well as a listening component. Although the written tests I administer do require students to use the language in different contexts (my problem is not with discrete items as are found in traditional tests) the problem is more with *the way* students are tested. In this paper, when I refer to testing, I will be referring specifically to the tools I use to evaluate my students. I will describe the kinds of tests that I have been using as well as the other factors that I take into account to arrive at the final grade for students during the semester.

If I were to conjure up an image of my students during class time I thought of my students sitting in pairs or in groups, working collaboratively. Yet when I thought about the class during testing, only one picture came to mind: my students sitting in rows, heads down, writing. The two images did not coincide.

To begin with, I looked at the way students worked in my classes. In a typical day in our classroom, students frequently work in pairs or in groups on a myriad of different tasks from songs to conversations; games and puzzles, TPR activi-

[1] This is a refereed article.

ties, and interactive tasks that require students to use the language for some communicative, meaningful purpose. Yet, when I examined my grading breakdown, I realized that the major form of assessment and most of the semester grade was dedicated to one major format: a written test.

For years I have thought that my grading system (my assessment procedures) was effective, fair and representative of a communicative syllabus. On closer examination, I realized that 60% to 80% of the assessment for the semester was dedicated to written tests: from the short weekly quizzes (20%), the longer unit or two-unit partial examinations (20%) to the final semester written test (20%). I also included listening comprehension tests and quizzes (20%) and usually an oral grade based on one or two oral proficiency interviews toward the end of the semester (20%).

I also considered that my classes allowed for the *creative use* of language, but questioned whether my testing practices did also. I was not convinced. When I corrected the tests, what did I focus on by marking things wrong? I drew student's attention to what they had done *wrong*, not what they had done *right*; what they *couldn't do* rather than on what they *could do*. I realized that as far as my own teaching was concerned, I was failing to attend to items 2, 3 and 4 from the list above (in terms of my testing practices). Here is where I began my investigation on the topic.

Jim Cummins writes that "Assessment and instruction are two interlocking and interdependent components of any educational program" (O'Malley, Valdez Pierce, 1996, p. iv.). It seemed to me that I had not managed to develop the required interdependency between the two.

Often, in fact, testing in my classes is an add-on--almost like time-out from instruction "… to attend to the business of getting a grade for the student's report card" (O'Malley, Valdez Pierce, 1996, p. iv.).

I had to go back to the basics: Why do we test / evaluate? Clarke & Agne indicate there are several purposes for assessment that can be grouped into four main areas:

1. To focus student learning (to inform and guide students)
2. To focus on teaching (to inform on day-to-day teaching and to evaluate the effects of teaching)
3. To improve systems (to evaluate systems, i. e., the curriculum).
4. To influence policy and planning (to evaluate programs / to inform the public) (Clarke & Agne, 1997, p. 296)

Of these, we as classroom teachers are primarily concerned with the first two points.

Classroom testing procedures, according to Cohen, have undergone some improvements in recent years. He talks about "...a shift from using assessment as a way to keep students in their place to using assessment as a way to help students find their place in a school and the world community of language users" (Cohen, 1994. p. 3). He also draws our attention to research carried out by Sho-

hamy in 1985 (Cohen, 1994. p. 4, based on Shohamy, 1985) He lists both some questionable classroom practices as well as some promising classroom practices that have served to further define for me what we should and should not be doing with testing:

What we should avoid:

- Administering tests instead of giving instruction.
- Using tests as the exclusive measure for grading.
- Returning tests to students without offering corrections or explanations.
- Using only one testing method.
- Giving tests students did not know how to take.
- Taking too long in returning tests.

What we should be aiming for:

- Broadening the scope of what is included in assessment from tests alone to a variety of formal and informal assessment techniques.
- Viewing assessment as an opportunity for meaningful interaction between teacher and students.
- Judging students on the basis of knowledge they have, rather than on what they do not know.
- Using assessment measures intended to help learners to improve their skills.
- Training the test takers in test-taking strategies if performance on the assessment task could benefit from such training.
- Returning the evaluated tests promptly.

(Cohen, 1994. p. 4, based on Shohamy, 1985)

Further research matters have caused me to question the way I evaluate my students, particularly the use of the more traditional written test format. According to Ellis, Larson-Freeman and Long (Cohen, p.16) "rarely is there a one to one correspondence between what is taught and what is learned." If we are to consider this, we might wonder why, on completing a unit, topic or theme, we immediately proceed to test our students. We also have to keep in mind that not all students learn the same things in the same ways, nor do they learn at the same rate. Yet we expect all of our students to perform equally well on our written tests. If, as Nunan (1999, Ch. 4) points out, learners learn many things simultaneously and imperfectly, our expectations of student performance on written tests may be quite unrealistic.

Other interesting studies carried out in the 1970s and 1980s (Lightbown and Barkman 1978; Lightbown 1983; Pica 1983; Ellis 1984, to mention a few) found evidence that language instruction does not alter the pattern of grammar acquisition (Larsen-Freeman & Long. 1991, pp. 304-307). I was fascinated to read that students learn certain verb morphemes in the same order, whether they have had formal classroom instruction or have learned outside the classroom: First, - ing; second, regular past tense; third, irregular past tense and fourth, third person present –s.

This comes to me as quite a surprise given that most EFL textbooks I have come across expect students to learn the simple present (including third person singular -s) before any of the other verb forms. (Since reading this, I have not penalized my students at the beginner level on tests for forgetting the "s" on the third person present).

Another point worthy of mention is the importance of attending to student autonomy not only in teaching practices but in testing and assessment practices as well. If we are to encourage students to become more independent learners, it is essential that assessment become a tool for them as well as for us as teachers.

From what I have read, it appears that assessment, like teaching which has over the years moved away from favoring any one methodological focus to favoring an eclectic approach, should include a variety of methods. What I also hoped to explore in my Action Research Project were some alternative ways of testing / assessing my students that reflect an interactive language class.

Below is a summary of some of the questions that I needed to consider in regard to the initial problem I posed for this project on testing and assessment:

- What measures can I take to bring testing more in line with what I do in the classroom in terms of the *way* I teach? How can I develop the interdependency between teaching and testing?
- Aside from the traditional written test, how can I broaden the scope of the assessment I am using?
- What other *formal* measures could I use? What *informal* measures could I use?
- How can I better use testing as a tool for students to measure their progress and guide them to improvement?
- How do students see testing? What purpose does it serve for them?

Below is also the summary of the conclusions I have collected from various sources and the points that I was most interested in for this project:

1. Integrate testing and teaching.
2. Sample student performance in daily learning activities: informal assessment (TALK scores: T= Talking, A= Accuracy, L= Listening K= Kindness and cooperation (Shrum & Glisan, 2000, Appendix 8.2, pp. 392-394), dictations, collaborative oral exercises, etc.
3. Test in a context that is meaningful for students.
4. Use formative [2] (assessment without grades that gives students and teachers the chance to repair) as well as summative grades (grades assigned to measure learners advances--*value* added).
5. Use multiple means of assessment.

[2] Although I included some forms of assessment that could be regarded as formative, for the purposes of this Action Research Project I focused only on summative assessment for grading purposes.

6. Use not only teacher assessments but peer and student self-assessments as well.

My class

My class was a first year basic level EFL class I had at a small private university in Morelia, Michoacan, Mexico that met for four hours per week. The age of the students ranged from 18 to 23; all of the students had studied English for several years at primary and high school level but had been unsuccessful due to either the large number of students in the class, poor learning conditions (teachers spoke to them in Spanish rather than using the target language) or low motivation. They had all experienced the sensation that English was difficult for them, yet they were all eager to be able to speak in English as that had been given little attention in their past experiences, which had been more focused on grammar exercises, filling out workbooks, etc.

Plan of Intervention

My research provided me with a very good source of alternatives for testing that I tried out over a period of two weeks at the end of a two-month period, approximately 32 hours of class time.

I compared the very limited traditional form of testing (the written test and the audio test) with a series of alternative assessment measures with the aim of bringing my assessment measures more in line with the kinds of activities we do on a daily basis in the classroom.

My aim was to create the interdependency that Cummins speaks of between classroom activity and assessment. I gave an initial questionnaire to my students that compared the kinds of activities we do on a daily basis compared to those we do for assessment (which looked at the traditional test format). I then gave them another questionnaire at the end of the two-week alternative assessment period to compare the two forms of assessment and to get opinions from students on their preferred form of assessment (based on the reasons they gave for their choice).

The following is a breakdown of how I would traditionally grade (first period) and how I graded in the alternative grading period (second period):

<u>First two-month period (grading system and testing)</u>

50 % 1 formal written test (based on the content of the textbook we use)
20 % 1 quiz (dictation of questions which were answered by students)
30 % 1 listening comprehension test (found in the Teacher's Manual of our textbook)

<u>Second two-month period (Action Research and Alternative Testing)</u>

10 % 1 listening comprehension test (as in the first period)
10 % 2 quizzes (dictations of questions that were then answered by students, as in the first period)
10 % 1 error correction quiz (students' correction of the classes' most common mistakes--those that had arisen from class work)

20 % 1 cooperative speaking test (pair work; peer- and self-evaluation) (idea adapted from Tim Murphy in Brown, 1994, see Appendix)
20 % TALK scores (oral testing of daily classroom speaking activities--concept and rubrics from Shrum & Glisan, 2000 Appendix 8.2, pp. 392-394)
20 % 1 cooperatively designed written test including items from classroom task-based activities (used for both TALK scores and inclusion on the written test and material covered in the textbook).
10 % 1 descriptive paragraph of a family member—done in-class as a test

Finally, after conferencing with students and taking some time to reflect on the results of the modified assessment plan, I drew some conclusions as to the impact this study would have on my classes in the future.

Analysis, Reflection and Conclusions

The questionnaires I gave my students after the first period of traditional assessment were enlightening: Clearly the majority of the activities we were involved in on a daily basis were *not* considered in the evaluation process. I asked students after the second period of alternative assessment to compare the two forms of evaluation in a questionnaire similar to the one that I had given them after the first period of evaluation. The objective was for them to check which activities (the same list of activities that we often did in our regular classes) we evaluated in the first period compared to the second period. The results confirmed that our assessment in the second period had included a greater number of the activities that we did regularly in class.

My students had calculated that we evaluated an average of about 30% of the regular classroom activities in the first period as compared to between 60-70% in the second period.

In the second period, we had managed to evaluate a much greater percentage of the activities that we did in class on a regular basis.

A very important moment during the second alternative assessment period I carried out for the Action Research Project was the self- and peer-evaluation I included in the summative evaluation on the Cooperative Speaking Test (Appendix).

The first part of the evaluation form asked students to reflect on how well they had been able to carry out the tasks. They then went on to the evaluation for grading purposes. Although this was a summative evaluation form in essence, it most certainly contemplated formative evaluation in that students had to reflect on their performance, as the first part of the evaluation was reflective and not related to their grade.

The final interviews I conducted with students were also very revealing. We spoke about the two evaluation periods before they filled out the final questionnaire. First of all I gave them the figure calculations of the two exam periods and explained again, to remind them, what items had been taken into consideration in the two periods. We then had a round table discussion in Spanish about the advantages and disadvantages of the two systems. Interestingly, to begin with, some students said straight away that they preferred the first period because there was

less work: They just came, did their tests and were finished. Then other students started to talk about how they had not done so well on the written test and that the second period had taken into consideration a wider selection of material and that it had been better for them to be evaluated constantly. One student commented that if you missed class on the day of the exam, you could miss a huge percentage of your grade--more food for thought. Another student offered the opinion that she had learned more in the second period because she knew we were having many different evaluations and had made an extra effort to review and be constantly up-to-date. As a result of the backwash effect, she was encouraged to work more consistently. I then left students to complete their questionnaires telling them there were *no right or wrong answers*. They were to honestly write down which form they preferred and I would only use their individual choice to evaluate them for the last period. If they chose the first period form of evaluation I would only count the final written exam, the listening exam and the oral interview. If they preferred the second period, I would carry on evaluating in multiple ways during the entire final evaluation period.

An interesting result of the questionnaire is that everyone chose the second period for a combination of the reasons we had discussed in the whole class discussion as well as new ideas that had not been discussed. Two students wrote that they felt the second period of evaluations had given them the chance to improve; another student elaborated on this by saying that in the second period if they did badly on the written test they could still make up their grades on the following evaluations. Another reported that he thought it was easier in the second period without the pressure of just one written test, while yet another reported that she had felt more involved in the subject matter.

So, I was not the only one who was more content with the way we had evaluated their work: We had all been involved in the assessment / evaluation process and the evaluations had in fact seemed more woven into the learning process and had not been only something additional.

The Tools

I will return briefly to the alternative evaluation tools I used and speak of the advantages I saw in using them.

I decided to include an assessment item that reflected the work we had been doing during the semester on error correction. Students had to keep a log of their own errors, of the situation in which they occurred, and their own remedy to help them remember the correction for the future. I have periodically shared these anonymously with the whole class and we have analyzed them as a short class activity. For the quiz, I gave them a selection of sentences with the typical errors that had come up in their class work and homework and they had to correct them. The students were familiar with this type of exercise and were very successful at it. They even performed well almost two weeks later on the section of the written test that dealt with physical descriptions of people (a parallel of the in-class activity).

The short descriptive paragraph they had to write was also similar to the kind of work we had been doing for the last month on describing people. I had them describe one member of their family and tell me about their interests, likes and dislikes. They had to bring a picture the next day so we could match the description with the picture (in one of our classes we had done a similar activity describing a famous person). The Interactive Speaking Test was an idea I adapted from Tim Murphy (Brown, 1994) that gave complete autonomy to students in much the same way as they would carry out pair work in our regular classes. I had never tried anything like this before and was somewhat hesitant of giving the students so much responsibility on a grading exercise, but could not have hoped for a better result. The students carried out the evaluation task as indicated and went about evaluating themselves and their peers fairly, critically and responsibly. It was definitely a vote in favor of student autonomy and has made me curious to look for and create other such opportunities for my students. All agreed that it was a fine learning experience.

The collaborative written test gave my students, for the first time, a role in preparing the written test. It was a valuable class activity--collaboratively recalling and registering from memory the content of the classes during the two-month period to be evaluated--as well as the actual exercise of designing test items to be included on the test. As this was the first time we had done such an activity, I was unable to use the test items they had designed; they were either inappropriate, inaccurate or invalid test questions. However, we did use their ideas as practice exercises and they provided some good input to clear up doubts and confusion before taking the test. So the entire exercise had been an extremely useful learning experience.

This semester was my first attempt with the TALK scores--I think it is a great new tool as it does not take time out from the class: Students are evaluated on their ***T****alking,* ***A****ccuracy,* ***L****istening, and* ***K****indness and cooperation* as they partake in any pair or group work activity in a regular class.

Conclusion

Many of the things I tried out for this Action Research Project were, in fact, very closely linked to my normal classroom practices, which was my major objective to start with. I have obtained many insights as a result of this project and am now convinced that we must use a greater variety of tools to assess our students. It is essential that we keep in mind that testing and evaluation should not be time out from the classroom, nor should it always be a separate activity, distinct in nature and style from a regular classroom activity. I am energized to continue exploring and experimenting with the new tools I have discovered. I decided not to go into the area of formative evaluation but this will now be my long-range objective. I am convinced that this experience was formative for both my students and for myself. We have all learned not to dread evaluation time and many students, as well as myself, witnessed how the constant process of evaluation kept them more focused and more aware of what they needed to do as language learners. It has

made them realize that the effort they put in produces results when one is *constant*. Unlike the usual cramming, last-minute studying for the next day's exam, the students learned the importance of on-going review and regular participation. Those who were constant felt the difference in their progress and I too witnessed their progress.

This project has helped me to integrate testing with what we do in the classroom on a regular basis. There most definitely was more of a fusion of regular classroom activities with evaluation activities. In fact, sometimes they were one and the same. I had thus managed to attend to Shrum and Glisan's second point: Test in *the way* you teach.

I felt that the activities I had chosen were definitely more meaningful for students and there was not the usual pre-exam anxiety when we carried out the evaluations. Students were serious about their work, and there was a healthy tension as they went about the tasks at hand, not the nervousness that produced the negative reactions I had seen so often in the past when it came time to take a test. I had also made space for Shrum & Glisan's third point: Test what learners *can do* (not just focusing on what they can't / don't do well).

I feel there was a good selection of varied activities, as there are in our normal classes. I had managed to achieve multiple means of assessment as well as allowing for the *creative use* of language while assessing (Shrum & Glisan's fourth point).

When I returned to the issue of grading and the weight given to each of the different aspects, I felt more assured that my grading policy was now more representative of the kind of work we carry out in class. I compared what I had traditionally evaluated and the respective percentages and made a projection of how I will probably assess in future. There are noticeable differences in the way I have distributed the weighting of each section now and I feel confident that it is an improvement on my old system. It is now more representative of classroom work and of the time we spend on each of the different skills. The traditional written test has not been disposed of, yet it no longer has the main role in the overall scheme of grading.

I will continue my search for ways to improve and modify in following semesters, although I feel I now have a solid base for more meaningful evaluation as a result of this study.

Finally, in addressing the issue of self- and peer-evaluations, I am sure I have found (as others before me have also) one more important key to changing students' attitudes to evaluation. If, as two of my students wrote on their final questionnaire, the evaluations we do in our language classes actually help students to improve, to become more focused in their studies, to encourage them to work consistently and to become more involved in the process of learning, then we have most definitely done our students a service as educators.

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Appendix

Interactive Speaking Test: Student A

My name:_____
My partner's name: _____
***** Nota. No se puede usar el español en el examen. Si tu compañero usa el español nota UN PUNTO abajo por cada palabra en ESPAÑOL. Se **deduce** el total de puntos de la calificación final.********
Registro de puntos por hablar en español: _____

STUDENT A:
1. Ask your partner 5 questions about his / her family. Write the information below:
1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
2. Ask your partner 5 questions about his/ her likes and dislikes. Write the answers below. **Use** your partner's **name. (Example: Audrey likes coffee.)**
1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
Total 10 marks.
Minus number of words in Spanish.

Interactive Speaking Test: Student B

My name:_____
My partner's name: _____
***** Nota. No se puede usar el español en el examen. Si tu compañero usa el español nota UN PUNTO abajo por cada palabra en ESPAÑOL. Se **deduce** el total de puntos de la calificación final.********
Registro de puntos por hablar en español:

1. Ask your partner 5 questions about **favorite weekend** activities. Write the **answers** below. Use your partner's name.
1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
2. Ask your partner about his/ her likes and dislikes (**DON'T** ask the SAME questions as your partner ******)
Write the answers below. **Use** your partner's **name. (Example: Audrey likes coffee.)**
1.
2.
3.
4.
5. (adapted from Brown, 1994, pp. 383-384)

Beyond Statistics: Systematic Development of a High Stakes Reading Comprehension Exam[1]

KAREN ENGLANDER, UNIVERSIDAD DE BAJA CALIFORNIA

Since multiple choice tests continue to be used for assessing student performance, their manner of construction is critical to both test creators and, especially, test takers (Thorndike 1971). Proper interpretation of test results is dependent upon the test being reliable and valid. Statistical measures of reliability and validity assure that suitable conclusions regarding the test-taker's ability can be drawn. When the test has important consequences (high stakes) for the test-taker, such as admission, graduation and/or certification, the validity of the test is crucial (Messick 1995). Several practitioners (Alderson 1990a, Cronbach 1984, Baxter & Glaser 1993, Paxton 2000) have stated that verbal reports and protocol analysis might help evaluators understand why test takers choose the answers they do. In this study, verbal reports were used to verify that items on a standardized exam were valid according to the testing objective of each item. Results showed that, in fact, some items that were statistically acceptable became invalid when subjected to a verbal report.

This paper will discuss the systematic development of the *Universidad Autónoma de Baja California*'s English Exit Exam (EXEDII). Criterion-referenced testing will be contrasted with norm-referenced testing and the role of construct validity will also be examined. The method of using verbal reports is presented and the two specific methods of validating the construct of this particular exam--statistics and verbal reports--are outlined. Results and discussion which demonstrate that statistics alone cannot provide sufficient information to determine the validity of an exam item follow.

Description of the English Exit Exam

At the *Universidad Autónoma de Baja California* we believe that all graduates must have at least an intermediate command of English to be successful in further study or career. Consequently, educational testing experts and English as a foreign language teachers collaborated in creating a high stakes exit exam of English language proficiency called EXEDII. All undergraduates who have not taken three semesters of English language instruction (approximately 480 hours) must pass the EXEDII before they can receive their graduation diploma. The exam is comprised of 100 multiple choice items. Reading comprehension is one

[1] This is a refereed article.

of three areas or *domains* (listening comprehension and grammar are the other two) in which students must demonstrate competency. The reading comprehension section of the EXEDII was created by a team of instructors (Adriana Usabiaga, Leonora Velasco, Bill Richter and the author) at the *Escuela de Idiomas*.

Criterion-referenced testing of reading comprehension

The exam was built as a criterion-referenced test. Following from the work of Glaser (1963, 1973) and Popham and Husek (1969) these tests are different from norm-referenced tests. The TOEFL and TOEIC are well-known norm-referenced tests; that is, the tests provide a measure of performance interpretable in terms of an individual's standing in relation to all the other people who took the test at that time. In contrast, criterion-referenced tests are interpretable in terms of clearly defined, specified tasks or "behavioral objectives." The test administrator can judge student performance in relation to specific objectives (Hambleton 1994)-- in this case whether or not the student possesses intermediate-level competence in English--and not be concerned with how the student performs in relation to other students.

For our reading comprehension exam, the skills and sub-skills which characterize reading comprehension had to be identified. Munby's (1978) classic taxonomy of 260 language skills served well. Fifty-seven of these skills are relevant to reading (see Appendix 1). To obtain appropriate representation of the L2 reading comprehension skill, we combined the specific skills outlined by Munby, the interactive strategies of making meaning (Carrell, Devine & Eskey 1988), and the top-down/bottom-up processing of text (Grabe 1988).

For our purposes, the exam had to be representative of the domain of reading, and it had to determine whether students had an intermediate level of proficiency. To establish an intermediate level, we adopted the skills and strategies listed in the scope and sequence overview provided in the textbook[2] used in the university's intermediate-level EFL classes as our starting point. Each skill or strategy related to reading was translated into a behavioral objective (see Appendix 2). Each objective was measured by particular test items. It was assumed that if the item functioned successfully, and the student possessed the targeted proficiency level, then the student would arrive at the correct answer. If the student chose an incorrect answer, it would be the result of not possessing the targeted proficiency level.

This concept of assuring that the exam tests what we want it to test raises the issue of validity. Validity has traditionally been construed as having three aspects: content, construct and criterion. (Standards,

[2] *On Target One* (1990). Scott Foresman, Longman

1974, 1984, APA, AERA & NCME). These three aspects of validity determine what the exam is testing, whether that exam is representative of that ability, and, if the student passes that exam, whether he or she will be able to perform the ability the exam is intending to test (see Moss 1992 for a synthesis). In other words, we want to be sure the exam is testing reading comprehension (and not spelling); that it is testing understanding of sentence connectors (because that is a reading subskill); and that it is testing at the intermediate level (and not higher, nor lower). For the purposes of this study, we were particularly interested in verifying construct validity: Whether the score really reflects the test-taker's ability in that skill (in this case, reading comprehension at the intermediate level).

Talk-aloud protocols – Possibilities and limitations

Verbal reports, variously called think-aloud, talk-aloud, self-reports, self-observations and self-revelations, have been used to identify the mental processes readers use to understand the printed word (Cohen 1987, Alderson 1990b, Anderson 1991, Presley & Afflerbach 1995). To perform a verbal report, a person is asked to say aloud everything that he or she is thinking while performing a task. Ericsson & Simon (1984, revised 1993) claim that these verbal reports can be systematically analyzed through a procedure called protocol analysis to understand cognition (Newell & Simon 1972). Verbal reports allow researchers a "window…to peer into the workings of the mind" (Smagorinsky 1998).

Protocol analysis was first proposed as a way of revealing actual cognitive processes (Ericsson & Simon, 1984). However critics of the method, based on Vytgosky's (1987) conception of thought and words, argue that in the process of forming words, thought (cognition) itself is altered. Thought is much like a storm cloud, whereas speech is a shower of words (Smagorinsky 1998). Words are differentiated and then put in sequence to form speech, which then forms verbal reports. In other words, speech is not a "window" to cognition because cognition is altered--some would say created--through speech.

Critics argue that Ericcson & Simon's premise is wrong, and verbal reports and protocol analysis cannot let us know *how* people think. In our study, we were interested in verbal reports not as windows to the cognitive processes of the mind itself, but rather as a report of activity. In other words, by asking students to talk aloud as they answered the test items, we were not looking for evidence of how their mind worked, we simply wanted to know what information, which was available in their short-term memory, they were using to answer the questions. Our aim is well suited to the methodology of verbal reports and avoids the criticism of researchers such as Smagorinsky (1998).

Statistical evidence

Educational statisticians from the *Instituto de Investigación y Desarrollo Educativo* analyzed the performance of 710 students who took the exam. The measures of difficulty, discrimination, and discrimination coefficient produced numbers all in the acceptable range. Table 1 shows the ten items that were later subjected to verbal reports. These particular ten items were chosen simply because they represent the items corresponding to the first long text of the exam (items 64-69), and a selection of four items corresponding to four of the seven short texts (items 94, 96, 97, and 99) of the exam.

Item	p	D	r^{bis}	Item #	p	D	r^{bis}
#64	.62	.50	.40	#69	.38	.49	.40
#65	.54	.71	.57	#94	.45	.76	.59
#66	.46	.30	.21	#96	.24	.48	.41
#67	.65	.34	.31	#97	.35	.55	.45
#68	.52	.43	.32	#99	.37	.64	.50

TABLE 1. MEASURES OF THE PILOTED ITEMS BASED ON 710 TEST-TAKERS.

To interpret these statistics, the following definitions were used. The symbol p equals difficulty. The closer p is to 1, the easier the item is, and conversely, the closer it is to 0, the more difficult. According to Thomson & Levitov (1985) the ideal difficulty of an item on a 100-item test with four multiple choice options for each is p = .63.

The symbol D indicates the discriminatory ability of the items and is calculated using the top 27 percent and bottom 27 percent of the scores. The higher the D number, the more likely that the high scorers got this item right and the low scorers did not. If all test takers get it right, or all get it wrong, the item is not discriminating well and its value is: D = 0. The figures can be interpreted as follows (Ebel & Frisbie 1986):

If D = .40 or higher, the item is very good;
.30 to .39, the item is reasonably good but subject to improvement;
.20 to .29, the item is a marginal item and needs revision;
less than .19, the item is poor.

The term r^{bis} is similar to D but calculates the discriminatory power of an item based on the scores of all the test-takers, not just the 54 percent taken into account for determining D. The statistics reveal that item 66 is weak based on its discriminatory ability although at the same time it is not an especially easy question. Items 69, 96, 97 and 99 are quite difficult but function well in discriminating high-ability scorers from low-ability scorers. Consequently, based on these statistics, only item

66 might deserve a closer look. The other nine items functioned adequately statistically.

We, however, were primarily interested in the language interaction of the texts, items and responses. A pilot study of verbal reports was initiated.

Method

Ten items (see Table 1) were selected from the 34-item Reading Comprehension Section of the EXEDII exam. They represented a 120-word text *(Chocolate: A World Favorite)* and its accompanying six questions, and four questions each relating to its own two- to three-sentence text.

Four students from different classes volunteered to participate. Each student had recently completed the Intermediate level at the Language School and so was presumed to possess the targeted proficiency level for this exam as determined by its criterion-referenced construction. Each student sat in a classroom with one member of the research team who had never had contact with that student. The students were instructed to "keep talking" while reading the texts and completing the ten test questions. They were permitted to use their L1 (Spanish) or L2 (English) as they wished. To determine what information in the text itself was being used, students were also prompted with questions such as, "What in the text helped you choose that answer?", "How did you arrive at that answer?" or "How do you know?" The four verbal reports were tape-recorded and later transcribed.

Results

Strikingly, two of the ten items we piloted were found to violate the exam's specifications; in other words, the item was not testing what it was intended to test. All four students chose an incorrect answer for item 66 using a similar rationale. The item was intended to determine the student's ability to differentiate fact from opinion. It reads:

> In this text, "chocolate is more wonderful when candy makers combine it with other ingredients" is:
> A. an opinion of somebody other than the author
> B. a generally accepted fact
> C. an opinion of the author
> D. a verified fact

The prompt in the text reads, "Some people think that...." Note three of the students' verbal reports:

> *Tomas*: "Some people think' is an opinion but it cannot be letter A. 'A' say an opinion of somebody and people no is somebody, is many people, so I say, hm, I say the answer is letter B, a generally accepted fact."

Both Maribeth and Eduardo hint at the same problem.

Maribeth: They mention *people* (her emphasis) like it. It mentions people so it be generally accept.

Eduardo: It's a generally accepted fact because it's talking about the people.

The fourth student, too, chose B – a generally accepted fact.

Item 69, in which the students were asked to identify and correctly infer the author's opinion, was also problematic. The specifications require that the author's opinion be demonstrated through qualification of an adjective or adjectival phrase.

The item reads:

Complete the following sentence with the best option. The author thinks that...

A. chocolate with fruits, nuts or coconuts can be heavy.
B. chocolate with shapes, such as flowers, are nice.
C. sugar and fat are bad for health.
D. chocolate with ingredients is sold all over the world.

While the correct answer is B, Maribeth tells us, "The author thinks that chocolate with ingredients is sold all over the world." Eduardo, who struggles with this one, and is tempted by D, finally decides, "Okay, in the title it says 'Chocolate: A world favorite' I think it's gonna be letter D." The use of the word "world" in the title and nowhere else in the text has an overwhelming influence which was not considered in preparing that item. This distractor is clearly misleading.

Discussion

The high stakes nature of the EXEDII, i.e. students must pass it in order to receive their undergraduate degrees, requires that the validity of the exam be closely evaluated.

The care which was taken in developing the Reading Comprehension Section of the EXEDII seems to meet virtually all the relevant criteria in order to provide a heuristic framework for test interpreters. This process is outlined below.

The EXEDII test developers specified the boundaries of the domain to be assessed by looking at the psycholinguistic process of reading and then referencing Munby's (1978) taxonomy of skills. The content of the exam is relevant to the domain and is representative of it. Cronbach (in Moss 1992) recommends "inspecting items" as a means of gathering evidence, and this was also done.

To comply with construct validity, we set an intermediate level of proficiency as the desired level within the domain of reading comprehension, and adopted the syllabus definition of which skills constituted that content domain on this particular exam. Further statistical analysis of item difficulty, discrimination and discrimination co-efficient generated evidence that the interpretation of the scores was valid. Messick (1995) suggests another method of gathering evidence of an exam's

construct validity: the substantive aspect. This refers to the theoretical rationales for consistency in test responses. We constructed the Reading Comprehension Section of the EXEDII based on a psycholinguistic understanding of the interactive nature of reading, incorporating both bottom-up and top-down processing which is consistent with the theoretical underpinnings of the domain. Careful attention to the specifications for items served to ensure that skills and sub-skills were balanced and complete. The substantive aspect of validity requires empirical evidence that the theoretical processes are actually engaged in by the respondents in the assessment task. To obtain this evidence, Cronbach (cited in Moss 1992) suggests administering the test to individuals who are asked to think aloud.

Think-aloud procedures and the interpretation of the data collected are not transparent operations. Smagorinsky (1998) undermines Ericsson & Simon's (1984, 1993) assertion that cognitive processes can be revealed through verbal reports and protocol analysis. Bearing in mind these limitations of verbal reports, we set the following goal: To elicit what students said about how they chose a particular answer from among the four multiple choice options. We adopted Ericsson & Simon's assertion that short-term memory is accessible. We did not presume that we could uncover cognitive processes. The verbal reports were elicited to reveal what specific data test-takers were using to solve the task. Test items which seem well constructed both by observation and statistical analysis still need to be subjected to this evidentiary procedure (Moss 1992).

As we demonstrated, directed verbal reports confirmed test items that operated as intended, and revealed problems with several items that otherwise had gone undetected. At this time we are revising the problematic items. Then we will subject these items to both the statistical procedures of difficulty and discrimination and to verbal reports. We also intend to undertake research using verbal reports with the two other sections of the EXEDII: Grammar and Listening Comprehension. As our work with verbal reports for the Reading Comprehension Section indicates, this investigative technique is indispensable in assuring the validity of the substantive aspect of an exam. As test creators we are compelled to use all the available evidentiary procedure – and not rely solely on statistics – especially when the consequences of examination scores carry high stakes.

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APPENDIX 1
Munby's (1978) taxonomy of skills relevant to reading.

19 Deducing the meaning and use of unfamiliar lexical items, through understanding of word formation:
- stems/roots
- affixation
- derivation
- compounding

19.2 contextual clues

22 Understanding information in the text, not explicitly stated, through
- making inferences
- figurative language

24 Understanding conceptual meaning, especially
- quantity and amount
- definiteness and indefiniteness
- comparison; degree
- time (esp. tense and aspect)
- location; direction
- means; instrument
- cause; result; purpose; reason; condition; contrast

28 Understanding relations within the sentence, especially
- elements of sentence structure
- modification structure
- negation
- modal auxiliaries
- inter-sentential connectors
- complex embedding
- focus and theme:
- thematic fronting; and inversion
- postponement

32 Understanding relations between parts of a text through grammatical cohesion devices of
- reference
- comparison
- substitution
- ellipsis
- time and place relaters
- logical connectors

37 Identifying the main point or important information in a piece of discourse, through
- topic sentence, in paragraphs of
- inductive organization
- deductive organization

39 Distinguishing the main idea from supporting details, by differentiating primary from secondary significance
- the whole from its parts
- a process from its stages

a category from its exponent
statement from example
fact from opinion
a proposition from its argument

45 Skimming to obtain
the gist of a text
a general impression of a test

46 Scanning to locate specifically required information on
a single point, involving a simple search
a single point, involving a complex search
more than one point, involving a simple search
more than one point, involving a complex search
a whole topic.

APPENDIX 2

Relation between Reading Comprehension Skill, EXEDII Exam Behavioral Objective for the Item, and Munby's Taxonomy of Skills Relevant to Reading

Skills or strategy from textbook	BEHAVIORAL OBJECTIVE *(Translated from Spanish)*	Munby's code
Recognize main idea	#1 Identify and understand the main idea, directly stated in text	37.4
	#7 Identify and understand the main idea, not directly stated in text	37.4
Recognize main idea distinct from secondary ideas	#13 Identify and understand the main idea, not directly stated in text but paraphrased from secondary ideas	39
Understand information in sequence	#27 Identify and understand specific information: sequence	32.6
Recognize an appropriate title	#24 Identify and understand the main idea: select a title	45.1
Scan for specific information: numerical or lexical	#2 Identify and understand numerical information #23 Contrast information in different parts of the text #26 Infer logically information that requires simple calculation	46.1, 46.2, 46.3, 46.4 24.1
Identify and use examples and/or definitions	#8 Identify and understand specific information located in amplification of an idea through explanation or definition	28
	#14 Identify and understand specific information in an example	28
Identify what the examples exemplify	#19 Identify and understand specific information which follows a discourse marker of location	32
Recognize the difference between comparison and superlative	#33 Identify and understand the difference between the comparative and superlative	24.3
Identify correct and incorrect inferences	#12 Infer logically objective information	24.7
Differentiate fact from opinion	#9 Identify and differentiate fact from opinion: a fact	32.1
	#15 Identify and differentiate fact from opinion: identify different options	32.1
Identify opinions and/or beliefs of the author or others	#3 Identify and differentiate fact from opinion: opinion of the author or of others #6 Infer logically the author's attitude	32.4, 32.6

Recognize markers of sequence	#32 Understand discourse marker: chronology #34 Identify and understand the sequence expressed by adverbs or prepositions	24.4, 28.5 24.5
Recognize markers of cause or reason	#30 Understand a discourse marker, result or consequence	24.7
Recognize pronoun reference, including relative clauses	#21 Identify and understand a reference of a personal pronoun or pronominal phrase #25 Identify and understand reference information in a relative clause #28 Identify and understand pronoun reference of 'that' or 'which' #29 Identify and understand pronoun reference of 'that' or 'who'	32.3 32.1 32.1 32.1
Identify words in context by explanations	#4 Understand vocabulary in context; clue: rhetorical structure of example #20 Understand vocabulary in context; clue: expansion that explains the meaning	19.2 19.2
Identify words in context by synonym in adjacent sentence	#17 Understand vocabulary in context; clue: a synonym in parallel position in adjacent sentence #18 Understand vocabulary in context; clue: definition given as reference	19.2 19.2
Identify words in context using contrast or addition marker	#31 Understand discourse marker of addition	36.6
Identify words in context using similarity marker	#10 Understand vocabulary in context; clue: marker of comparison, similarity or parallelism #16 Understand vocabulary in context; clue: marker of example and examples that illustrate the meaning	32.2 28.5
Identify words in context using affixes	#11 Understand vocabulary in context; clue: word with affixes	19.1
Identify words in context using direct object of the verb	#5 Understand vocabulary in context; clue: complement or direct object of the verb	19.2

The Quest for Professional Standards in Foreign/Second Language Teacher Development: A U.S. Perspective[1]

RENATE A. SCHULZ, UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA

Society is in constant flux and societal changes necessitate frequent reviews of the goals of teacher education and the preparation of teachers.[2] Vélez-Rendón (2002) maintains that "The body of knowledge and skills that a second language teacher needed two decades ago is no longer sufficient in today's global and rapidly changing world" (p. 461). Teacher development, teacher qualifications, and teacher certification present continuing challenges for all nations.

This paper describes concurrent efforts by three different independent national organizations to develop professional standards for foreign/second language teachers in the United States. The paper is offered for information only and should not be seen as a model for developing teacher standards in Mexico, since, obviously, the efforts described have grown out of the U.S. educational context. The three standard-setting efforts summarized here are those of the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC), and the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS).[3]

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[1] This is a refereed article.

[2] This article is a revised version of a paper presented at the VIII Foro de Lingüística Aplicada at the Universidad de las Américas in Puebla, May 16 - 17, 2003.

[3] It should be noted that this is not the first concerted effort at developing national standards for foreign language teachers in the United States. Already in 1929 such standards were proposed (Purin, 1929), followed by a second extensive effort by the Modern Language Association of America in 1966 (Guidelines, 1966). Although these efforts did have some impact, none of them resulted in a cohesive, nationally-accepted set of standards necessary for a major upgrading of the profession at large. Unfortunately, many of the excellent recommendations of previous attempts at setting standards could not be implemented on any meaningful scale, partly for economic reasons, but mostly for political/ideological reasons. In the U.S., setting general educational policies is the purview of each individual state rather than the federal government. To this date, individual states, and even individual local communities, and individual institutions of higher learning jealously guard their freedom to establish educational curricula and practices they themselves determine, given the perceived needs and contexts (and, unfortunately, also the financial and other resource limitations) of their local, political and geographic constituency. The result of this lack of conformity is that curricula for teacher preparation, assess-

The NCATE Standards

NCATE (National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education) is a national accreditation agency for teacher education programs, recognized by the U.S. government. The organization is concerned with overall program standards rather than the qualifications of individual teachers. That is, if a state education agency ascribes to the NCATE standards (and 33 states do at present), each individual teacher education unit in that state has to demonstrate to an NCATE Board of Examiners that it provides a curriculum which permits its pre-service teachers to achieve the stated standards. Individual institutions not located in states affiliated with NCATE may elect to apply for NCATE approval for its programs but do not need to do so. NCATE approved the standards for foreign language teachers developed by ACTFL (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages) on October 19, 2002. NCATE had previously accepted the standards developed by the TESOL (Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages) organization for ESL (English as a Second Language) teachers. The six NCATE/ACTFL standards summarized in Figure 1, and the five NCATE/TESOL standards summarized in Figure 2 are provided as guidelines to teacher preparation institutions to prepare performance-based curricula and assessments which focus on what novice teachers should know and be able to do.

FIGURE 1: NCATE/ACTFL STANDARDS FOR FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHERS[4]

I. Standard I: Language, Linguistics, Comparisons
   - Standard 1.a. Demonstrating Language Proficiency
   - Standard 1.b. Understanding Linguistics
   - Standard 1.c. Identifying Language Comparisons

II. Standard 2: Cultures, Literatures, Cross-Disciplinary Concepts
   - Standard 2.a. Demonstrating Cultural Understanding
   - Standard 2.b. Demonstrating Understanding of Literary and Cultural Texts and Traditions
   - Standard 2.c. Integrating Other Disciplines In Instruction

III. Standard 3: Language Acquisition Theories and Instructional Practices

ment procedures and criteria, as well as teacher qualifications vary widely. Unless special agreements have been made between specific states to accept the teaching credentials from another state, the teaching credentials are not portable, i.e., individuals certified to teach in one state cannot automatically teach in another state. Given the high mobility rate of the U.S. population, this lack of portability causes a hardship for many teachers and exacerbates the growing teacher shortage in many localities. For an overview of issues relating to foreign language teacher development in the United States, see Schulz (2000).

[4] For full text of document go to http://www.actfl.org (look under special projects).

Standard 3.a. Understanding Language Acquisition and Creating a Supportive Classroom
Standard 3.b. Developing Instructional Practices That Reflect Language Outcomes and Learner Diversity

IV. Standard 4: Integration of Standards Into Curriculum and Instruction
Standard 4.a. Understanding and Integrating Standards Into Planning
Standard 4.b. Integrating Standards in Instruction
Standard.4.c. Selecting and Designing Instructional Materials

V. Standard 5: Assessment of Languages and Cultures
Standard 5.a. Knowing Assessment Models and Using them Appropriately
Standard 5.b. Reflecting on Assessment
Standard 5.c. Reporting Assessment Results

VI. Standard 6: Professionalism
Standard 6.a. Engaging in Professional Development
Standard 6.b. Knowing the Value of Foreign Language Learning

FIGURE 2: NCATE/TESOL ESL STANDARDS FOR P-12 TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAMS[5]

Domain 1: Language
Standard 1.a. Describing Language
Standard 1.b. Language Acquisition and Development

Domain 2: Culture
Standard 2.a. Nature and Role of Culture
Standard 2.b. Cultural Groups and Identity

Domain 3: Planning, Implementing and Managing Instruction
Standard 3.a. Planning for Standards Based ESL and Content Instruction
Standard 3.b. Managing & Implementing Standards Based ESL and Content Instruction
Standard 3.c. Using Resources Effectively in ESL and Content Instruction

Domain 4: Assessment
Standard 4.a. Issues of Assessment
Standard 4.b. Language Proficiency Assessment
Standard 4.c. Classroom-based Assessment for ESL

Domain 5: Professionalism
Standard 5.a. ESL Research and History
Standard 5.b. Partnerships and Advocacy
Standard 5.c. Professional Development and Collaboration

Although the FL and ESL standards are not identical, both sets of standards require that beginning teachers demonstrate language proficiency, be able to describe language in linguistic terms, demonstrate cultural understandings, be able to deliver content-based instruction,

[5] For full text of document go to www.tesol.org/pdfs/aboutassoc/ncatestds.pdf.Programs

understand the second language acquisition process, and be able to create supportive classrooms and develop instructional practices that reflect language outcomes and learner diversity. Further, teachers understand the standards developed for language learners and can implement them in planning, instruction, and curriculum and materials development; they are familiar with assessment models and use them appropriately in administering, reporting and interpreting results; and finally, teachers engage in professional development. The FL standards developed by ACTFL also require that teachers know the value of foreign language learning (standard 6b). The full texts of the standards are available on the ACTFL (www.ACTFL.org for FL – link to "Special Projects)") and TESOL (www.TESOL.org for ESL – link to "Standards and Initiatives") web sites for closer examination and comparison.

The INTASC Standards

In June 2002, the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC), under the auspices of the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) released a draft of its *Model Standards for Licensing Beginning Foreign Language Teachers* for public comment and projected approval in the fall of 2003. The foreign language standards are based on ten core principles believed to be valid for the teaching of any subject area and grade level. These ten standards, applied to foreign language teaching are presented in Figure 3.

FIGURE 3: INTASC STANDARDS FOR BEGINNING FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHERS[6]

Principle #1: Content Knowledge. Language teachers are proficient in the language they teach. They understand language as a system, how students learn a language, and how language and culture are linked. They are knowledgeable about the cultures of the people who speak the language. Using this knowledge, they create learning experiences that help students develop language proficiency and build cultural understanding.

Principle #2: Learner Development. Language teachers understand how students learn and develop and can relate this to their development of language proficiency and cultural understanding. They provide learning experiences that are appropriate to and support learners' development.

Principle #3: Diversity of Learners. Language teachers understand how learners differ in their knowledge, experiences, abilities, needs and approaches to language learning, and create instructional opportunities and environments that are appropriate for the learner and that reflect learner diversity.

[6] For full text of document see Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (2002), *Model standards for licensing beginning foreign language teachers: A resource for state dialogue.* Washington, DC: Council of Chief State School Officers.

Principle #4: Instructional Strategies. Language teachers understand and use a variety of instructional strategies to help learners develop language proficiency, build cultural understanding, and foster critical thinking skills.

Principle #5: Learning Environment. Language teachers create an interactive, engaging, and supportive learning environment that encourages student self-motivation and promotes their language learning and cultural understanding.

Principle #6: Communication. Language teachers use effective verbal and nonverbal communication, and multi-media resources, to foster language development and cultural understanding.

Principle #7: Planning for Instruction. Language teachers plan instruction based on their knowledge of the target language and cultures, learners, standards-based curriculum, and the learning context.

Principle #8: Assessment. Language teachers understand and use a variety of assessment strategies to monitor student learning, to inform language and cultural instruction, and to report student progress.

Principle #9: Reflective Practice and Professional Development. Language teachers are reflective practitioners who continually evaluate the effects of their choices and actions on others and who actively seek out opportunities to grow professionally.

Principle #10: Community. Language teachers foster relationships with school colleagues, families, and agencies in the larger community to support students' learning and well-being.

According to the INTASC promotional literature, the INTASC model standards are intended to be a resource for state policymakers, teacher education programs, professional organizations, teacher supervisors and others, as they work to improve the quality of foreign language education in the United States. In other words, the INTASC standards are not binding guidelines. Rather, the Council of Chief State School Officers invites individual states and institutions to adopt or develop similar standards for entry-level teachers as those proposed and develop their own assessments.

The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS)

The third and currently most successful effort (in terms of actual impact[7]) in proposing national standards and actually offering a creden-

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[7] According to the web site of the NBPTS (www.NBPTS.org), the National Board has certified 32,138 teachers in all 27 certification areas offered by the end of 2003. The web site also states that in 2003 the following numbers of FL and ESL teachers successfully completed National Board Certification:

English as a new language (Early and Middle Childhood)	60
English as a new language (Early Adolescence through Young Adulthood)	46
World languages other than English (Early and Middle Childhood)	21
World languages other than English (Early Adolescence through Young	

tialing procedure for "accomplished," (i.e., experienced) teachers is that of the National Board for Professional Teacher Standards (NBPTS). The National Board was created in 1987, in response to a U.S. government report, entitled *A Nation at Risk* (1983) and a subsequent report by the Carnegie Task Force on Teaching as a Profession, entitled *A Nation Prepared: Teachers for the 21st Century* (1986). With extensive support from the U.S. Department of Education, the National Science Foundation and a number of private foundations, the NBPTS has developed standards, assessment criteria, and a performance-based assessment process for teachers from pre-kindergarten to grade 12 (i.e., ages 3 to 18+) in practically all fields taught at these levels. Interestingly, the NBPTS focused on developing standards for "accomplished teachers," i.e., standards and a *voluntary* credentialing procedure for already certified teachers with a minimum of three years experience who want to document superior qualifications. The focus on national standards for experienced—rather than entry-level—teachers, was doubtlessly selected to get around the 50 state education departments which would need to give their approval for any meaningful national entry-level standards—which, from my current perspective-- is practically an impossible feat (see Note 2).

The standards for NBPTS certification are based on five core propositions of what teachers should know and be able to do:

1. Teachers are committed to students and their learning.
2. Teachers know the subjects they teach and how to teach those subjects to students.
3. Teachers are responsible for managing and monitoring student learning.
4. Teachers think systematically about their practice and learn from experience.
5. Teachers are members of learning communities (*World languages other than English standards*, 2001).

These five core propositions are reflected in 14 standards for certification in the *World languages other than English standards for teachers of students ages 3 – 18+* (2001) presented in Figure 4, and the 12 standards for certification in *English as a new language standards*, presented in Figure 5.

FIGURE 4: OVERVIEW OF NBPTS WORLD LANGUAGES OTHER THAN ENGLISH STANDARDS--AGES 3-18+[8]

The requirements for National Board Certification in the field of World Languages Other than English are organized into the following 14 standards. The standards have

Adulthood) 201

[8] For full text of document go to www.nbpts.org or see *World languages other than English standards* (2001).

been ordered as they are to facilitate understanding, not to assign priorities. They are each an important facet of the art and science of teaching; they often occur concurrently because of the seamless quality of accomplished practice.

Preparing for Student Learning

I. Knowledge of Students

Accomplished teachers of world languages other than English draw on their understanding of child and adolescent development, value their students as individuals, and actively acquire knowledge of their students to foster their students' competencies and interests as individual language learners.

II. Fairness

Accomplished teachers of world languages other than English demonstrate through their practices toward all students their commitment to the principles of equity, strength through diversity, and fairness. Teachers welcome diverse learners who represent our multiracial, multilingual, and multiethnic society, and they set the highest goals for each student.

III. Knowledge of Language

Accomplished teachers of world languages other than English have the ability to function with a high degree of proficiency in the languages they teach, know how the languages work, and draw on this knowledge to set attainable and worthwhile learning goals for their students.

IV. Knowledge of Culture

As an integral part of effective instruction in world languages other than English, accomplished teachers know and understand the target cultures and target languages and know how these are intimately linked with one another.

V. Knowledge of Language Acquisition

Accomplished teachers of world languages other than English are familiar with how students acquire competence in another language, understand varied methodologies and approaches used in the teaching and learning of languages, and draw on this knowledge to design instructional strategies appropriate to their instructional goals.

VI. Multiple Paths to Learning

Accomplished teachers of world languages other than English actively and effectively engage their students in language learning and cultural studies; they use a variety of teaching strategies to help develop students' proficiency, increase their knowledge, strengthen their understanding, and foster their critical and creative thinking.

VII. Articulation of Curriculum and Instruction

Accomplished teachers of world languages other than English work to ensure that the experiences students have from one level to the next are sequential, long-range, and continuous, with the goal that over a period of years students will move from simple to sophisticated use of languages.

VIII. Learning Environment

Accomplished teachers of world languages other than English create an inclusive, caring, challenging, and stimulating classroom environment in which meaningful communication in the target languages occurs and in which students learn actively.

VIII. Instructional Resources

Accomplished teachers of world languages other than English select, adapt, create, and use appropriate resources to help meet the instructional and linguistic needs of all their students and foster critical and creative thinking among them.

IX. Assessment

Accomplished teachers of world languages other than English employ a variety of assessment strategies appropriate to the curriculum and to the learner and use assessment results to monitor student learning, to assist students in reflecting on their own progress, to report student progress, and to shape instruction.

X. Reflection as Professional Growth

Accomplished teachers of world languages other than English continually analyze and evaluate the quality of their teaching in order to strengthen its effectiveness and enhance student learning.

XI. Schools, Families, and Communities

Accomplished teachers of world languages other than English work with colleagues in other disciplines, with families, with members of the school community, and with the community at large to serve the best interests of students.

XII. Professional Community

Accomplished teachers of world languages other than English contribute to the improvement of instructional programs, to the advancement of knowledge, and to the practice of colleagues in language instruction.

XIII. Advocacy for Education in World Languages Other than English

Accomplished teachers of world languages other than English advocate both within and beyond the school for the inclusion of all students in long-range, sequential programs that also offer opportunities to study multiple languages.

FIGURE 5: OVERVIEW OF NBPTS ENGLISH AS A NEW LANGUAGE STANDARDS FOR TEACHERS OF STUDENTS AGES 3-18+[9]

Overview

The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards has organized the standards for accomplished English as a New Language teachers into the following 12 standards. The standards have been ordered as they have to facilitate understanding, not to assign priorities. They each describe an important facet of accomplished teaching; they often occur concurrently because of the seamless quality of accomplished practice. These standards serve as the basis for National Board Certification in this field.

Preparing for Student Learning

I. Knowledge of Students

Accomplished teachers of linguistically and culturally diverse learners draw on their knowledge of human development as mediated by language and culture and their relationships with students to understand their students' knowledge, skills, interests, aspirations, and values.

II. Knowledge of Language and Language Development

Accomplished teachers of linguistically and culturally diverse learners are models of language proficiency in the languages in which they are expected to teach. In addition, they draw on their knowledge of language and language development to understand the process by which students acquire both their primary and new languages, to develop instructional strategies that promote language development, and to modify the curriculum as necessary to accommodate the needs of new language learners.

III. Knowledge of Culture and Diversity

Accomplished teachers of linguistically and culturally diverse learners are knowledgeable about and sensitive to the dynamics of culture in general, and to their students' cultures in particular, which enables them to understand their students and structure a successful academic experience for them.

IV. Knowledge of Subject Matter

Accomplished teachers of linguistically and culturally diverse learners draw on a comprehensive command of subject matter, of language(s) of instruction, and their relationship to each other to establish goals, design curricula and instruction, and facilitate

[9] For full text of document go to http://www.nbpts.org/pdf/ecya_enl.pdf, or see *English as a new language standards* (1998).

student learning. They do so in a manner that builds on students' linguistic and cultural diversity.

Advancing Student Learning

V. Meaningful Learning

Accomplished teachers of linguistically and culturally diverse learners use a variety of approaches that allow students to confront, explore, and understand important and challenging concepts, topics, and issues in meaningful ways.

VI. Multiple Paths to Knowledge

Accomplished teachers of linguistically and culturally diverse learners provide multiple paths to help students develop language proficiency, learn the central concepts in each pertinent discipline, and build knowledge and strengthen understanding of the disciplines. They effectively use the language(s) of instruction to enhance subject matter learning.

VII. Instructional Resources

Accomplished teachers of linguistically and culturally diverse learners select, adapt, create, and use rich and varied resources.

VIII. Learning Environment

Accomplished teachers of linguistically and culturally diverse learners establish a caring, inclusive, safe, and linguistically and culturally rich community of learning where students take intellectual risks and work both independently and collaboratively.

IX. Assessment

Accomplished teachers of linguistically and culturally diverse learners employ a variety of assessment methods to obtain useful information about student learning and development and to assist students in reflecting on their own progress.

Supporting Student Learning

X. Reflective Practice

Accomplished teachers of linguistically and culturally diverse learners regularly analyze, evaluate, and strengthen the effectiveness and quality of their practice.

XI. Linkages with Families

Accomplished teachers of linguistically and culturally diverse learners create linkages with families that enhance the educational experience of their students.

XII . Professional Leadership

Accomplished teachers of linguistically and culturally diverse learners contribute to the growth and development of their colleagues, their school, and the advancement of knowledge in their field.

During 1999-2000 the NBPTS started offering certification for teachers of English as a New Language (ENL). In April 2002 NBPTS certification of teachers of World Languages other than English became available (at present limited to teachers of Spanish, French, German, Latin and Japanese). The first group of foreign language teachers went through the certification procedure in 2002. The NBPTS is the only national standard setting effort that currently also offers an actual assessment process for certification. The assessment procedure for National Board certification is a rigorous process consisting of two components: a detailed teaching portfolio, developed by the teacher seeking NB certification over a period of from three weeks to three months of instruction. The portfolio must include video-taped and commented samples of actual teaching practice, commented samples of student work, as well as

documentation of how candidates work with parents and the larger community. In addition to the teaching portfolio based on actual classroom practice over a specified time period, candidates for National Board certification also must spend a half-day at a designated assessment center where they take formal tests, including six separate assessment exercises of up to 30 minutes each. During these timed exercises candidates must demonstrate their language proficiency, their knowledge of second language acquisition, and their knowledge of linguistics, i.e., how language works. The assessment criteria and procedures used for National Board certification must meet the five so-called APPLE criteria. These criteria require that the assessments must be **A**dministratively feasible, **P**rofessionally acceptable, **P**ublicly credible, **L**egally defensible, and **E**conomically affordable. The performance assessments are scored by trained practicing peers.

Given the investment in time and money, as well as the rewards available for those who meet the National Board standards, National-Board certification can be considered a high stakes assessment. The certification process is expensive (presently $2,300US), but a number of states, school districts and other organizations offer financial support. A major incentive for going through the demanding, time-consuming certification process is that the certificate is portable (i.e., is accepted as evidence of accomplished teaching by other states), and a number of states and/or school districts give salary supplements to teachers who have successfully completed the certification process.

Candidates for National Board certification are unanimous in their praise for the value of the certification process as teacher development.

Similarities and Differences

What do these three national efforts have in common, and in which way are they unique?

Obviously, the standard setting projects described apply to different stages of teacher development. NCATE is concerned with the quality of teacher preparation programs and its standards are focused on developing high-quality entry-level teachers. INTASC standards can be mandated by individual states for all its teacher development programs--or by individual institutions in states that have not joined the INTASC effort--and are applied by teacher education programs to validate the standards for individual teachers, as they seek provisional licensing after one to three years of teaching experience. And the NPBTS standards provide a process whereby experienced individual teachers – after a minimum of three years' teaching experience – can seek to validate their **superior** teaching skills.

FIGURE 6: COMPARISON OF PROFESSIONAL STANDARD-SETTING EFFORTS FOR FL/ESL

NCATE/ACTFL (6)	NCATE/TESOL (5)	INTASC (10)	NBPTS-WL (14)	NBPTS-ENL (12)
Language, Linguistics, Comparison	Language	Content Knowledge	Knowledge of Students	Knowledge of Students
Cultures, Literatures, Cross-Disciplinary Concepts	Culture	Learner Development	Fairness	Knowledge of Language & Language Development
Language Acquisition Theories & Instructional Practice	Planning, Implementing & Managing Instruction	Diversity of Learners	Knowledge of Language	Knowledge of Culture and Diversity
Integration of Standards into Curriculum & Instruction	Assessment	Instructional Strategies	Knowledge of Culture	Knowledge of Subject Matter
Assessment of Languages and Cultures	Professionalism	Learning Environment	Knowledge of Language Acquisition	Meaningful Learning
Professionalism		Communication	Multiple Paths to Learning	Multiple Paths to Knowledge
		Planning for Instruction	Articulation of Curriculum & Instruction	Instructional Resources
		Assessment	Learning Environment	Learning Environment
		Reflective Practice & Professional Development	Instructional Resources	Assessment
		Community	Assessment	Reflective Practice
			Reflection as Professional Growth	Linkages with Families
			School, Families and Communities	Professional Leadership
			Professional Community	
			Advocacy for Education in World Languages Other than English	

Figure 6 presents a summary overview of the various standards described. While at first sight, the NCATE, INTASC and NBPTS documents appear to be quite different, they share many commonalities. All current standard setting efforts involve teachers in the specialty areas, i.e., they are not exclusively developed by administrators or setters of policy and handed down from the top of the administrative hierarchy. All current standard-setting efforts do not just focus on content knowledge (i.e., knowledge about language, culture, and relevant second language acquisition theories), language and teaching skills as did previous efforts, but they include such constructs as dispositions (i.e., teacher attitudes and belief systems that guide their instructional behaviors), attention to individual learners, considerations of diversity, fairness in instruction and assessment, and relationships with the community. All standards also address continuing professional growth and development. All standard setting efforts are anchored in the standards developed for students (National Standards for Foreign Language Education Project, 1996 and Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, Inc., 1997). All are performance-based, and require performance-data from institutions and individuals, heavily depending on portfolio assessment. Reflective approaches that permit teachers to develop their own theories of teaching, foster self awareness and critical thinking skills, and lead to change and continuing self-development are emphasized in all three efforts. And for reasons stated previously, all national standard, curriculum or assessment setting efforts are voluntary. Even if states or individual institutions buy into the NCATE or INTASC efforts, the state or institution will set its own levels of performance.

It should also be noted that both the NCATE and INTASC standards have set the level of Advanced Low, as described in the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines (Breiner-Sanders, Lowe, Jr., Miles & Swender, 2000) as the base proficiency level for the commonly taught European languages, and Intermediate High for the less-commonly taught, non-European languages and Russian.

A close examination of the various sets of standards shows considerable overlap in knowledge, skills, and dispositions required. The only truly distinct addition not reflected in all three documents is the "Advocacy for Education in World Languages Other than English" required by the NBPTS for certification for teachers of world languages. Given the American context, the dominance of English as a world language, and the resulting perceived lack of importance for studying languages other than English in the American educational context, this standard may be a wise addition to support the survival of foreign language education in the U.S.

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Teaching / Learning Centers: The impact of on-site sustained collaboration for ESL / bilingual teachers' professional development [1] [2]

SANDRA I. MUSANTI, DOCTORAL CANDIDATE, UNIVERSITY OF NEW MEXICO, USA

Abstract: This study focuses on an on-site professional development program that used an innovative model of creating Teaching / Learning Centers (TLC) in five elementary school second grade classrooms taught by teams of experienced bilingual or English as a second language (ESL) endorsed teachers. These teaching teams promoted school-wide collegial conversations and collaborative learning and teaching to help peer teachers meet the language needs of diverse students. The study explores the advantages of collaboratively working with peers and the power of collegial conversations as a source for teacher development. In addition, the study suggests that peer collaboration and reflective practices such as reflective writing require learning in order to become effective strategies to further teacher knowledge construction.

Introduction

During the past decade, the discourse in teacher education has included collaboration as a strategic, sometimes essential, component of any promising teacher development approach. Primarily, collaboration among teachers has become a means to overcome isolation and a central part of any reflective teacher development program. Besides furthering the integration of reflection about practice, "shared critique and supported change" (Clark et al 1996, p. 196), teacher collaboration also promotes joint work and the construction of shared visions and values through trusting relationships (John-Steiner, Weber & Minnis 1998). Although there is a broad range of research on the impact of collaboration on professional development for novice teachers, less is known about collaborative experiences for practicing teachers, especially in the area of multicultural education and bilingual / ESL (English as a second language) education. This article examines the implications of creating a learning environment (Teaching / Learning Centers) to foster collaborative teacher interactions with the goal of constructing a new multicultural pedagogical approach to teaching bilingual / ESL learners. The study is part of broader, ongoing research that explores current in-service teachers' interpretations of knowledge, identity and practice as they participate in sustained on-site collaborative professional development.

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[1] This is a refereed article.

[2] This article is based on two papers, one presented at the UNESCO Conference on Intercultural Education, Jyväskylä, Finland, June 15-18, 2003; and a paper presented at the American Association for Teaching and Curriculum Conference. Baltimore, USA, October 2-4, 2003.

This article presents preliminary findings on these themes from teachers' oral and written narratives to understand the nature of their collaboration and its impact on teachers' knowledge.

The Teaching / Learning Centers (TLC)

In the summer of 2000, a local public school district and a southwestern university in the United States initiated a broad project for Educating Linguistically Diverse Students (ELDS). The main goal of the ELDS Project was to improve the education of limited English proficiency (LEP) students by transforming teacher education and practice. It responded to the national and local shortage of ESL / bilingual endorsed teachers and to a local school district's limited requirement for LEP professional development which consisted primarily of 32 hours of video-based training.

One of the initiatives of the ELDS project was the Teaching / Learning Centers (TLC). Five centers were created in which participating teachers developed an in-service curriculum in their schools for enhancing staff knowledge about the needs of LEP students. The TLC was an ongoing, school-based, peer-directed professional development program. At each school site, a team of two teachers (co-facilitators) holding ESL and/or bilingual endorsements shared responsibility for teaching one class (second grade), promoted a range of on-site professional development opportunities for colleagues (guest teachers), and participated in a biweekly seminar jointly coordinated by one university faculty member and two instructors from the school district.

The purposes of the TLC were to:

- Help teachers become more proficient in teaching second-language learners
- Help teachers maximize opportunities to develop all students' competence in speech and literacy—in the students' first languages and in others to which they are exposed.
- Provide teachers the time, structure, and collegial support for sustained joint work and conversations about their teaching practice.
- Extend the teaching/learning approach to the whole school community.

The TLC project was initiated in five linguistically and culturally diverse second grade classrooms at five elementary schools. Each TLC classroom had a different approach to teaching ESL students depending on the students' demographics. Three TLC classrooms were bilingual second grades developing a dual immersion language program. Two TLC classrooms had a broad diversity of ESL students implementing a sheltered English instruction model. Both co-facilitators in each team were

ESL-endorsed teachers. four TLC classrooms had at least one bilingual-endorsed teacher.

Guest teachers at each school site voluntarily visited the TLC classroom throughout the year. Typically these were teachers interested in learning about ESL or bilingual instruction. The visits involved a week of co-planning with the co-facilitators, observing ESL lessons, team teaching with one co-facilitator in the TLC classroom, and meeting to debrief on their teaching or on ESL / bilingual instruction.

Each TLC co-facilitator had to attend mandatory biweekly seminars intended to provide support for the coordination and organization of the TLC classroom, and to enhance co-facilitators knowledge about ESL / bilingual instruction. During the seminars, co-facilitators guided by the TLC coordinators jointly reflected on the TLC's vision and goals, the methodology implemented to launch the TLC at each school site, the guest teachers' visits, co-facilitators' collaboration with teammates, and specific themes related to ESL / bilingual instruction, among other activities. The goal of the TLC project was to cultivate collaborative interaction among teachers at each school; in addition, it helped to shape the quality of instruction for English language learners through the creation of a collegial support system. Each year, all five teams of co-facilitators collaborated with approximately 7 to 10 guest teachers at each school site.

Methodology

This study takes an interpretative and qualitative research approach since the main purpose is to interpret the TLC co-facilitators' voices as documented through their oral and written narratives. As Merriam (1998) notes: "qualitative researchers are interested in understanding the meaning people have constructed, that is, how they make sense of their world and the experiences they have in the world" (p. 6). This study includes a narrative inquiry approach to teachers' stories and voices. As Clandinin & Connelly (2000) have noted: "for us, life-–as we come to it and it comes to others—is filled with narrative fragments, enacted in storied moments of time and space, and reflected upon and understood in terms of narrative unities and discontinuities" (p. 17). For the purpose of this study, narratives are the oral or written 'texts' teachers construct to express their stories, beliefs, ideas, reflections, doubts and questions about what they know and who they are as teachers.

This article focuses on data collected during the first year of the TLC Project. Participants included eight co-facilitators who participated in the project from beginning to end (two years). Three co-facilitators dropped the TLC after the first year and, consequently, a new team of three co-facilitators joined the project for the second year. Data sources analyzed

were the following: (1) The co-facilitators' end-of-semester reflective papers (two papers for each participant, one from January 2001 and one from June 2001), (2) field notes from the researcher's observations of the seminar sessions, and (3) the co-facilitators' anonymous responses to the TLC Project end-of-the-year evaluation survey.

Data analysis has been approached from a qualitative perspective, including thematic coding as well as constant comparative analysis (Merriam 1998). Analysis involves data interpretation (Denzin 1994) and elements of narrative inquiry Clandinin & Connelly 2000) as teachers' oral and written narratives are explored to understand co-facilitators' collaboration and its impact on co-facilitators' development and professional knowledge.

Findings are limited as this study analyzes data from a small sample (eight co-facilitators); and are preliminary, as the analysis is restricted to data collected during the first year of the project. Therefore, findings are not suitable for generalizability. This study is part of an ongoing research; therefore the findings will be enriched as the investigation progresses with the integration of other data sources and further triangulation of the researcher's interpretations.

Findings

Learning about collaboration

Peer collaboration was a central feature of the TLC project as a professional development strategy to change teachers' practices to improve the education of LEP students. Issues of collaboration became a recurrent topic of conversation among the co-facilitators and project coordinators during the seminars. The vision and goals of the TLC were also conversation topics that continued throughout the year (14 occurrences in 20 seminar meetings). These conversations resulted in a document jointly developed by the co-facilitators and TLC coordinators that identified the TLC emphasis on collaboration. The document, "Building a collegial school community for the effective language and literacy instruction of first and second language learners" (September, 2000), refers to collaboration as teachers teaching and learning together to create a school-wide, inclusive community of learners as a means to facilitate and improve the education of English as a Second Language students.

The co-facilitators' participation in the TLC involved the construction of a variety of professional partnerships. At their school site, they collaborated with team-partners and guest teachers visiting their classrooms. During the seminars, they established collaborative relationships with the rest of the TLC co-facilitators and coordinators. Each semester they were asked to write a reflective paper on their collaboration and learning process. In these papers, they defined collaboration as peer in-

teraction, peer dialogue, peer feedback, listening to one another, sharing experiences and ideas, "a team partner to laugh and cry with"(Alice, January 2001), and an opportunity to learn from one another. It seems that co-facilitators perceived collaboration as a means to overcome isolation and, to a lesser extent, as a way to collectively construct knowledge. Co-facilitators valued collaboration because it allowed them to overcome classroom isolation by exchanging experiences, maintaining interesting conversations and building relationships with peers. The co-facilitators' reflections confirmed that "successful collaboration involves increasing our understanding of one another's worlds and roles through shared dialogue" (Clark et al 1996, p. 227). In addition, the TLC provided a collegial and joint task that became the context and reason for shared dialogue among participants. As John-Steiner et al (1998) observed, sustained dialogue is not enough for genuine collaboration; a shared commitment, a complementarity of skills and roles, together with a joint task, are also necessary.

TLC collaboration involved co-facilitators opening the doors of their classrooms and their thinking to 'others' (team partners, guest teachers or other TLC participants), which can be "a source of anxiety and stress, because of the disruption it can create in the involved classrooms" (Christy, Reflective Paper, January 2001). Initially, breaking down the barriers to the privacy of their teaching was challenging and intimidating. Christy's words reflect many of the seminar participant's conversations about this topic: "I was always anxious when the guest teacher would observe me teaching or when I would serve as the primary teacher in the guest teacher's classroom." In addition, co-facilitators emphasized the time and effort involved in becoming comfortable with their new role in the TLC. Reflecting back on her personal progress toward meeting co-facilitator expectations, Laura explains: "it is difficult to find enough time to discuss observations from the classroom and have philosophical discussions too. Both of these discussions are essential to the process" (Reflective Paper, January 2001). Most co-facilitators pointed out that trust was an essential component if they were expected to reach genuine collaboration. For Sonya, one of the outcomes of the first year experience with the TLC was "the relationship of trust that was built with my co-facilitator [referring to her classroom partner]" (Reflective Paper, August, 2001).

For this group of co-facilitators, collaboration required a learning process that included different strategies. Some of these strategies were: long seminar conversations, team debriefing moments, requests for help when things were getting difficult with partners or guest teachers, readings selected by the TLC coordinators to support this process, and different personal strategies to cope with the challenge of learning to work and talk with peer teachers in different situations. Typically, the

co-facilitators' conversations pointed to the complexity of collaboration, its challenges, the skills needed and the impact it might have in terms of knowledge construction. Julie's writing aptly summarizes the co-facilitators' talk on collaboration:

> Collaboration is an art in itself and I felt like it required a whole process of learning new skills on my part. The main issue for me centered on how to integrate ideas that I wanted to try, or felt would work, with the ideas of my peers so that the finished work was truly a collaborative effort. I found that our best work with each other and guest teachers involved the input of everyone involved. …This is something teachers have to learn how to do, but when working with a peer, we have to learn to collaborate, which in my mind is a new way of looking at teaching. The need to listen to [one] another and integrate someone else's ideas is a neglected, but important part of teaching (Reflective Paper, June 2001).

Peer dialogue as a source for knowledge and development

In accordance with research findings on teacher talk (Rust & Orland 2001), co-facilitators mostly talked about themselves and their work, especially their teamwork with guest teachers visiting the TLC classrooms. Research has shown the relevance of peer dialogue and professional conversations for teacher learning (Bruffee 1999, Cavazos & the Members of WEST 2001, Clark et al 1996, Clark & Florio-Ruane 2001, Rust & Orland 2001)."Conversation–direct, indirect, or internalized—makes even solitary tasks into collaborative ones. Once we begin to use speech instrumentally, we work together, whether we work together or apart" (Bruffee 1999, p. 139). Co-facilitators seemed to value collective conversations during the seminars, and they also valued talking to guest teachers and team partners at the school site. They recognized peer dialogue as a source for learning and development. As Mary reflects:

> I think … I would never have got that if I was teaching by myself in a classroom …bouncing ideas off …one another and ...having some kind of support system where you can go and say: "This isn't working"; and "What do you think of doing this?" or just getting ideas from the things that we've read as a group. It has been very beneficial (Mary, Interview Transcript).

At the end of the year, in an anonymous survey the co-facilitators identified examples of personal areas of professional development. A thematic analysis showed that 41% of their responses were examples of development on peer collaboration skills, team building, and professional conversations. The rest of the responses were distributed among different topics related to pedagogical knowledge and ESL and bilingual instruction (See Appendix). During its first year, the TLC professional development outcomes concentrated more on issues of collaboration and peer interactions than on literacy instruction for ESL students. Laura reflects on the relevance of peer dialogue and the possible impact on stu-

dents' learning: "On a school-wide level the TLC opened a new level of dialogue for me with the teachers who participated in the TLC classroom exchanges. … This sustained professional dialogue will benefit our students, parents, and all of us participating in the TLC…" (Reflective Paper, June 2001). Although co-facilitators' responses showed that peer collaboration was considered a new area of development, there was not enough evidence to consider to what extent learning to collaborate with peers was connected to individual or collective knowledge construction, especially in the area of ESL / bilingual instruction.

Collaborative learning stresses peer dialogue, negotiated relationships, self-governance and trusting individuals to oversee their own learning process. Collaborative learning has been recognized as an important part of a multicultural approach to teaching (Davidman & Davidman 1994) because it is a strategy that can foster the empowerment of students and teachers from diverse cultural and language backgrounds through self-directed learning. The TLC tried to foster a collaborative approach to learning by structuring seminar sessions through autonomous group work and collegial conversations and by allowing co-facilitators to participate in TLC curricular decisions (e.g. deciding seminar themes, selecting readings, suggesting guest speakers). The TLC project hoped to empower teachers by providing a diverse learning environment and collegial sustained conversations which enabled teachers to widen their comprehension of cultural diversity and to produce effective teaching practices for ESL / bilingual students. The co-facilitators' conversations and reflective papers clearly revealed teachers' willingness to engage in professional dialogues and to further their knowledge of multicultural education and second language learners' instruction. Further exploration is needed to understand the extent to which peer-collaboration impacted their knowledge to develop a culturally responsive instruction.

Teachers' writing vs. teachers' talk

The co-facilitators' willingness to reflect orally on their teaching experiences was clearly revealed in the seminar conversations. Reflection was interpreted as a consequence of peer-dialogue. One co-facilitator explained in her first reflective paper: "we are able to discuss specifics about students and lessons at a much deeper level than if we are just describing our experiences" (Laura, January 2001). Peer dialogue and reflection are also connected to learning. Another co-facilitator stated that peer conversation "… sets up an atmosphere where we have been able to share ideas and truly learn from one another" (Mary, Reflective Paper, January 2001).

As willing as co-facilitators were to reflect orally about their practice, they were reluctant to comply with writing assignments such as

writing journals and reflective papers. Delays in turning in papers were common, and journal writing was progressively postponed and later completely abandoned. The co-facilitators' resistance and difficulties in writing about their reflections were also evident through the quality of the reflective papers that showed a tendency to be short and more descriptive than analytic. The lack of depth in their written reflections contrasted with the intensity and depth of the seminar dialogue. Co-facilitators' writing, with only two exceptions, focused on describing events or feelings, story telling, stating facts or actions, or attributing value to an experience (Manouchehri 2002), e.g. "this was a memorable experience", "I am thankful for the support system [provided]", " Our classroom with three teachers works amazingly well" (Co-facilitators reflective papers, January 2001).

Reflection and writing about reflections are complex processes that involve thinking about learning and learning about thinking. Reflection has been recognized as an important element in teacher development, and it has been defined as the possibility to recapture experience and to think about it (Louden 1991, Loughran 1996). Writing is a way to recapture reflections, and it requires learning and scaffolding. The content and quality of co-facilitators' writing raise questions about: (a) the instruction and scaffolding they received to develop reflective writing skills, and (b) the connection between reflective thinking, oral reflections and reflective writing, if any.

Final Reflections

This study provided several important insights into peer-collaboration for teacher development: 1) Peer dialogue appeared as a central attribute of collaboration. Co-facilitators perceived collaborative relationships with colleagues as a way to overcome isolation, and they valued shared dialogue as a means to foster in-depth reflection and to advance their learning. 2) Collaboration was a matter of learning. During the first year of the project, peer collaboration was a prevailing area of teacher development, an area that required teachers to learn to build relationships and to establish dialogue with colleagues. However, the relation between peer dialogue, collaboration and the construction of teacher's knowledge appears problematic. It is not clear whether learning about collaboration was a stage of teacher development to approach a collegial construction of knowledge, or whether it became such a central aspect of the co-facilitators' development that they neglected to focus on the second language learners' education. 3) While embracing reflective dialogue, teachers resisted writing about their reflections. Reflective writing and peer collaboration involve learning and both seem to be related to the construction of knowledge. The study calls for further exploration of the relationship among teacher talk, teachers' writing and

reflective thinking. Although data was inconclusive on the impact of collaboration on teachers' knowledge in multicultural education and ESL / bilingual instruction, the study showed that teachers valued the advantages of collaboratively working with peers and the power of collegial conversations as a potential source for learning.

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Appendix

TLC Co-Facilitators Anonymous End-of-the-Year Survey

Frequency of responses to the question: Give two specifics examples of your professional development this year.

Collaboration		**ESL and Bilingual Instruction**		**Pedagogical Knowledge**	
Themes	#	Themes	#	Themes	#
Professional conversations	6	Sheltered instruction	3	Assessment	2
Peer collaboration for professional development	5	Issues of Second Language Learner Instruction (reading, vocabulary, math, etc.)	4	Classroom management	1
Team building and team teaching	1	Bilingual Education	2	Teacher as learner	2
				Literacy instruction	2
TOTAL	12		9		7

Integrating Bulletin Board Systems (BBSs) as a tool in face-to-face English courses[1]

JOSÉ MIGUEL RODRÍGUEZ, UNIVERSIDAD DE COLIMA

Introduction

CMC (Computer-Mediated Communication), although not intended for the language classroom, can be exploited for the language classroom with many advantages over paper and ink. This work explores the nature and use of BBSs (Bulletin Board Systems) and revises some of the work that teachers around the world have been carrying out to implement them in their curricula and to give their students the opportunity to interact with other learners around the world. Some of the work that was done with students at the College of Telematics at the University of Colima, Mexico will be described. Finally, a critical evaluation of the experience will be presented.

1. CALL and CMC

Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL) has existed for nearly four decades. In the 1960s and 1970s, it virtually existed for only an intellectual elite. The reason for this was simple: as computers were very expensive, only a select number of institutions, universities and government programs could afford them. Nevertheless, the foundations for CALL, based on Skinner's behaviorist theory and structuralism, were set at that time (Skinner, 1957; Chomsky, 1965). Due to the influence of structuralism there was a belief at the time that language consisted of a limited number of rules. If one could learn those rules, one could apply them to an infinite number of situations, although exactly what the rules are and how they can be determined is still an issue. Exercises were designed to teach or test the structures of the language through repetition (conditioning). Although voices questioning the validity of a behaviorist model for CALL have been raised throughout the years, it has not been entirely rejected because it continues to produce results in appropriate circumstances and with some specific activities, such as vocabulary acquisition and grammar drills. One remarkable case is the American Army language training programs during World War II which succeeded under a behaviorist philosophy.

CALL was significantly transformed with the advent of the personal computer (PC). It is then that individual teachers, and eventually companies and institutions, started creating CALL software en masse. The communicative approach that emerged in the 1970s and has since prevailed in language education has also permeated into CALL design, alt-

[1] This is a refereed article.

hough most CALL software is still predominantly behaviorist. It was hoped that the so-called communicative CALL, with the technology available in the 1980s, would make content more meaningful, but it actually did not come close to being communicative in its purest sense. In this mode, computers acted as "the teacher," and the only feedback they were able to provide was "right" or "wrong." (See, for example, any of the programs developed in the 1980s, such as *Hangman, Skull* or *Grammar Master*. *Storyboard*, however, did allow for more creativity, and newer versions have been released by its publishers. It is interesting to note that even today, many programs still provide predominantly behaviorist feedback.

Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC) emerged outside both CALL and the English Language Teaching (ELT) field. CMC was born and has grown with the Internet. It is difficult to tell one from the other at times. The first Internet tools could be defined as CMC. Telnet, for example, allowed the intellectual elites to communicate through text at a fraction of the cost of a phone call. These technologies, still in use, but now surpassed by more visual interfaces, allowed individuals to interact with each other (rather than with the computer alone); initially only through text, and eventually other media were incorporated. CMC is concerned with "communication that takes place between human beings via the instrumentality of computers.'' (Herring, 1996, p. 1) Today with the rapid expansion of the World Wide Web (WWW), computers communicate with each other all the time, and people behind the computer screen can also communicate with each other, form communities, and create and maintain relationships. In the end, it is not the computers that communicate, but rather the people behind the screens that have developed complex ways of meeting and communicating through CMC.

Although the Internet is thought of as a rather new tool, it actually emerged from the interconnection of smaller networks. Local networks were already available in the 1980s. Known today as LAN (Local Area Networks), these computers were connected with each other within a computer room or even within a whole university campus. Communication was first possible only within these networks, but gradually they gained popularity as computers became widespread in more homes, schools and offices (Hiltz, 1994).

Some of the CMC tools are: e-mail, IRC (Internet Relay Chat), Videoconferencing, MSN (Microsoft Network), MOO (Multi-User-Domain, Object Oriented), BBSs, etc. These tools were not specifically created with language learners in mind; yet, since they have the potential for providing opportunities for meaningful interaction, they have been and are being used for educational purposes.

Computer-Mediated Communication can be synchronous (chat, MOO, videoconferencing) or asynchronous (e-mail, BBSs). The former means that interaction takes place when individuals who participate in the exchange are physically present at the different terminals at the same time. The latter means that communication occurs at intervals. These intervals can be very short (a few minutes), or they can take days, or even longer.

For most circumstances and for most people, the best form of interaction is synchronous because there is the possibility for negotiation of roles and meaning. The best form of synchronous communication is obviously face-to-face interaction. As a consequence, there is a tendency of technology to try to bring people as close as possible to face-to-face interaction. CMC represents a second-best solution to the problem of people not being physically present at a given place and at a certain time. There are several advantages of CMC when used in certain contexts. Some research has suggested that students who normally would have remained silent in the classroom contribute more in this kind of communication. Students are less afraid to "lose face." In a review of literature Abrams (2001) found that "Several studies in second language acquisition have already examined the ability of computer-mediated communication (CMC) to provide learners with a forum in which they can 'produce more language' (Kern and Beauvois) and 'more diverse discourse functions' (Chun, 1994) than during in-class discussions, and in which they can become the initiators of discourse instead of mere followers of teacher-directed interaction." (p. 490)

When comparing synchronous with asynchronous CMC, we find that both modalities can be beneficial, but in different circumstances. While immediacy may be required during a board meeting, in an educational context (usually a synchronous meeting), asynchronous communication would be more suitable for a situation in which students are required to present their ideas in an organized way. In this situation, real-time interaction is "neither necessary nor desirable." (Hoffman, 1996, p. 73) In synchronous communication, negotiation is possible, whereas it is more difficult in asynchronous communication. On the other hand, synchronous communication gives little time for reflection and the organization of ideas. These two modes of communication can therefore be complementary.

Computers in writing

Traditionally, writing has been an important part of language classroom instruction-- sometimes in the form of very controlled exercises. In many cases, however, writing allows students to express themselves more or less freely in the target language. Because of its non-objective nature, writing has had problems in being incorporated into CALL, or

even CAT (Computer-Adaptive Testing). Recently, the Educational Testing Service (ETS) developed an Internet-based writing evaluation tool, which is one of the few cases of incorporating writing in CALL or CAT.

Evaluating writing by means of a computer remains a difficult task, since writing is essentially not a behaviorist activity. Writing involves creativity which cannot be evaluated objectively. "The early studies of computer use in composition focused almost exclusively on word processing… The promise of the computer as a writing tool seemed to match the newly strengthened emphasis on the writing process in English composition and rhetoric." (Phinney, 1996, p. 137)

The early research on CALL envisaged the "computer-teacher." That is, based on the student's responses the computer should be able to intelligently guide the student to further questions or exercises. However, there has been a shift to viewing the computer as a tool, rather than as a teacher. CMC is a perfect example of the computer not intervening in, or evaluating what the user types. Yet, learning occurs through the interactive process that the student engages in with other individuals.

As stated above, CMC is not limited to the learning of languages. It is not even tied to specific learning at all, because it is a creation of mainstream technologies which have been made available to individuals around the world. Indeed, most research on the use of CMC involves groups of learners in a wide range of contexts and ages, from K-12 to university undergraduate and graduate students. Many studies have been carried out with MBA students (videoconferencing); other studies involve history, math or biology students, and, of course, language learners. Sharda, Romano & Lucca, (undated) talk about several cases in which e-mail and bulletin board technologies "have been used to support group learning projects and group discussions…." (p. 2)

Empirical studies

Many articles have been published on how to use CMC tools, especially e-mail and videoconferencing, as well as MOO and BBSs (see Warschauer, (1995); Liaw & Johnson (2001); Hanna & de Nooy, (2003), Backer (2001) for example).The range of efficacy and results is incredibly varied. Mostly, researchers have an optimistic bias, even when results may not be encouraging. There is a plethora, for example, of cases of "e-mail pen pals." In these studies, students sometimes fail to respond to messages, or they do so after a long period of time, and only upon a second request. There are, of course, dozens of possible explanations, but the most logical one may simply be a lack of interest on the part of the students.

Abrams (2001) investigated the participant roles that learners adopted in the two different writing environments: synchronous computer-mediated communication (CMC) and pencil-and-paper group jour-

nals. The results indicated that while some social roles appeared in both writing contexts (speaker, respondent, scolder, creator of in-group identity), others were found only in CMC (attacker, challenger, supporter and joker). Not only did learners adopt a greater variety of participant roles during CMC than in group journals, these roles were also more interactively negotiated in the CMC environment.

Liaw and Johnson (2001) studied the e-mail interaction between two groups of students, one in Taiwan, and the other in Texas. They found that "curiosity toward the other culture was a motivating factor for on-going correspondence, but cultural presumptions were sometimes a hindrance to communication … cross-cultural e-mail correspondence sensitized the participants to cultural differences and served as a learning experience for better cross-cultural understanding." (p 235)

Recent studies have found that in addition to enhancing learner's linguistic development, CMC has "equalizing social effects" (Abrams, 2001). This happens because in a normal classroom setting, it is the teacher who presides over interactions and it is the teacher who decides who will talk and when. At the same time, there are students who feel intimidated by the presence of their peers. In CMC, students feel freer. They can create their own roles and negotiate their own interactions. Why many students do not exploit this advantage remains to be considered. But for the sake of those who do, it is worth the effort it takes to implement CMC.

The most important ingredient for interaction to take place is a special appeal. It might be the very fact that their peers are from the other side of the world, or it may simply be that the choice of topics interests them; it may even be the fact that communication is taking place through a computer. However, this latter argument/situation may be rather weak because once the novelty factor of computer communication vanishes, interaction may disappear after a few responses if the topics are not interesting enough and if a solid enough relationship has not yet been built. An ideal interaction would be like that reported by Drave (1993) in which "Students are reading and writing in English as part of a negotiation process so enthralling that they forget they are using a foreign language."

Constructivism and Cooperative Learning

Constructivist theory, most notably established by Dewey (in Campbell, 1995), Piaget (1967) and Vygotsky (1978) states that learning is "constructed" by learners as they interact with each other and the environment, rather than "discovered," as in the Platonic idea of knowledge that exists independently of the individual. Moreover, Vygotsky argues that language and learning are "intertwined." Cooperative learning fits well within the constructivist model in that it "maximizes

opportunities for authentic and communicative language practice in a motivating, supportive, and stress-reduced environment." (Ghaith, 2001)

2. BULLETIN BOARD SYSTEMS (BBSs)

This work focuses on Bulletin Board Systems (BBSs), which are a CMC tool. The web site Cooinda[2] (which is not an ESL/EFL page) defines a BBS as follows:

> A BBS is a place where people with a computer and modem can come together and share files, messages and ideas. BBSs are usually free, labours of love by those who run them. Some BBSs may charge a small fee to help with the expenses, but most don't.
>
> Some BBSs are devoted to specific interests; others offer a more general service. BBSs are like virtual communities, a place to meet new people and make new friends. You can meet James from another town, or Rosemary from over the road. You can exchange ideas with people that have similar interests, or learn new interests from others. You can play on-line games, competing against your friends and neighbors.

BBSs have an enormous potential for meaningful language practice. There have been many text-based BBSs and many styles have evolved over the years. We are at a stage in which BBSs can be found virtually everywhere and on any topic. They are "topic free." The kind of BBS that we will describe here is as it appears in its most recent and widely used interface: PHP (Hypertext Protocol). It is programmed by using databases. It is more user-friendly than its predecessors and it works almost like any other web site. That is, any literate Internet user can navigate through it easily without any further training because there are no special codes to learn. For the most part, its interface is much like e-mail. The most important thing is that one does not need to know how to write programs to make use of them. There are hundreds of BBSs available in many languages that cover many different topics. Nevertheless, becoming a BBS moderator does require more than just knowing how to use it; still it is not really very complicated.

Hoffman (1996) proposes various principles for establishing successful interactions. These are:

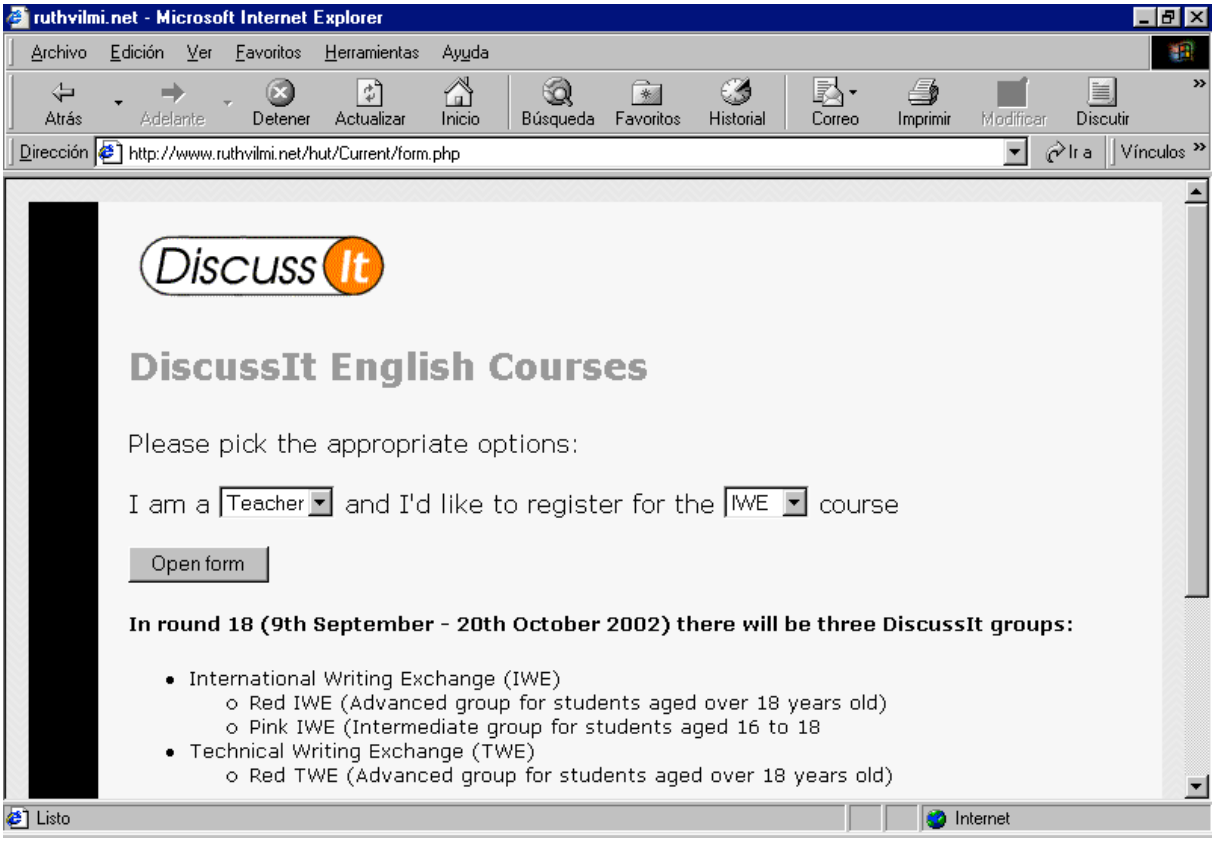
- A successful initial contact;
- The novelty and excitement of quick and efficient global communication;
- The need for a common purpose to facilitate a depth of authentic communication that includes creativity and originality; and
- Students' guided reflection, aided by the teacher, on their performance as individuals and as members of the group. (p. 74)

[2] http://members.ozemail.com.au/~cooindabbs/bbsindex.html

BBS Projects

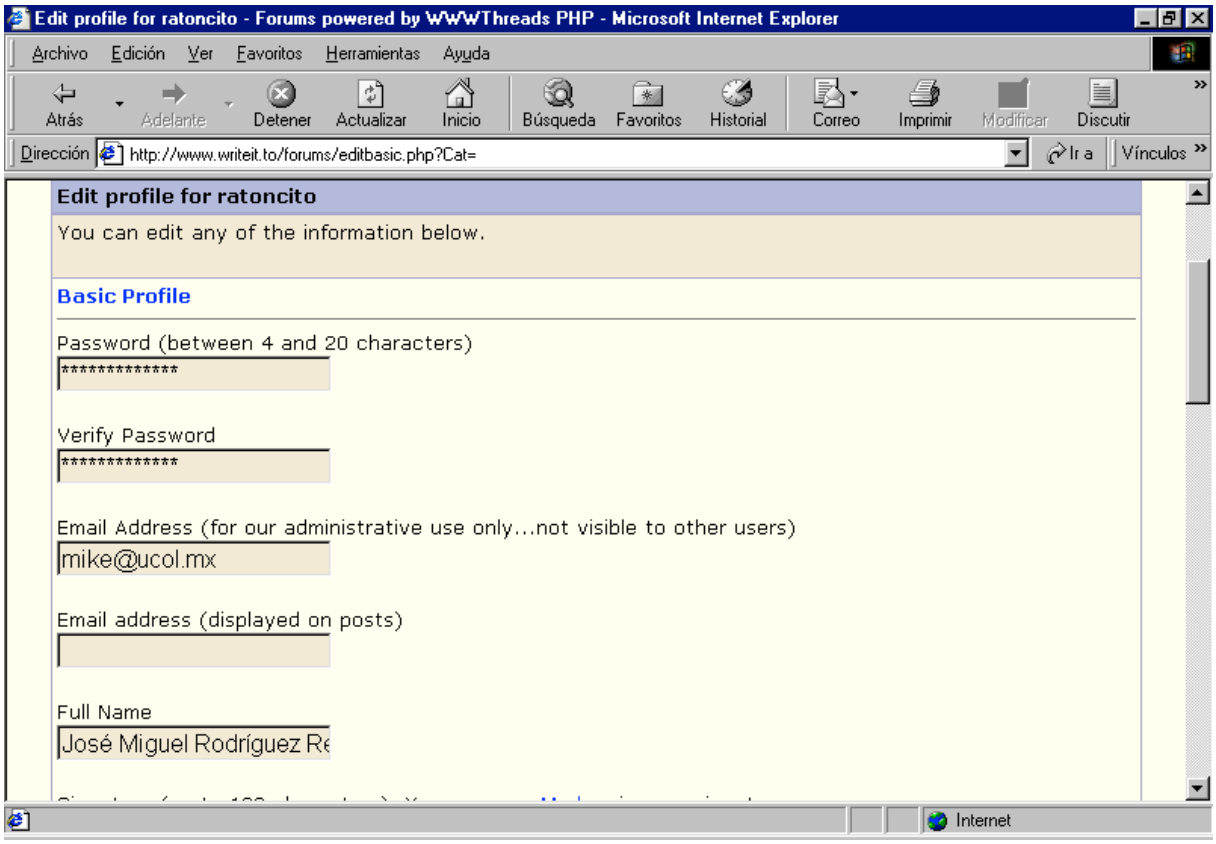
Ruth Vilmi (http://www.writeit.to/) maintains an interesting site that contains various tools to aid her students. Her forums are open for other teachers to join. The limits she sets are realistic even for most Mexican contexts with large classes (my own classes have 36 students). In her forums, one can register as many as 50 students per institution. Teachers can register at http://www.ruthvilmi.net/hut/Current/form.php The requirements, as well as every detail about the discussion rounds, are stated in the guide you will receive by e-mail upon registering, which you can normally do at: http://www.ruthvilmi.net/hut/Current/iwe_intro.php As part of my research on the uses of BBSs, I registered one of my classes for the "18th round," which helped me have a better idea of how this site actually works.

IMAGE 1. THIS IS WHAT THE REGISTRATION PAGE LOOKS LIKE:



After registering, users are given a login and password, which will allow them to identify themselves and contribute to the forums with their postings. Students have control of their profiles. They can always access the information they have provided and change it. They can refer to their pictures and provide a short autobiography, etc.

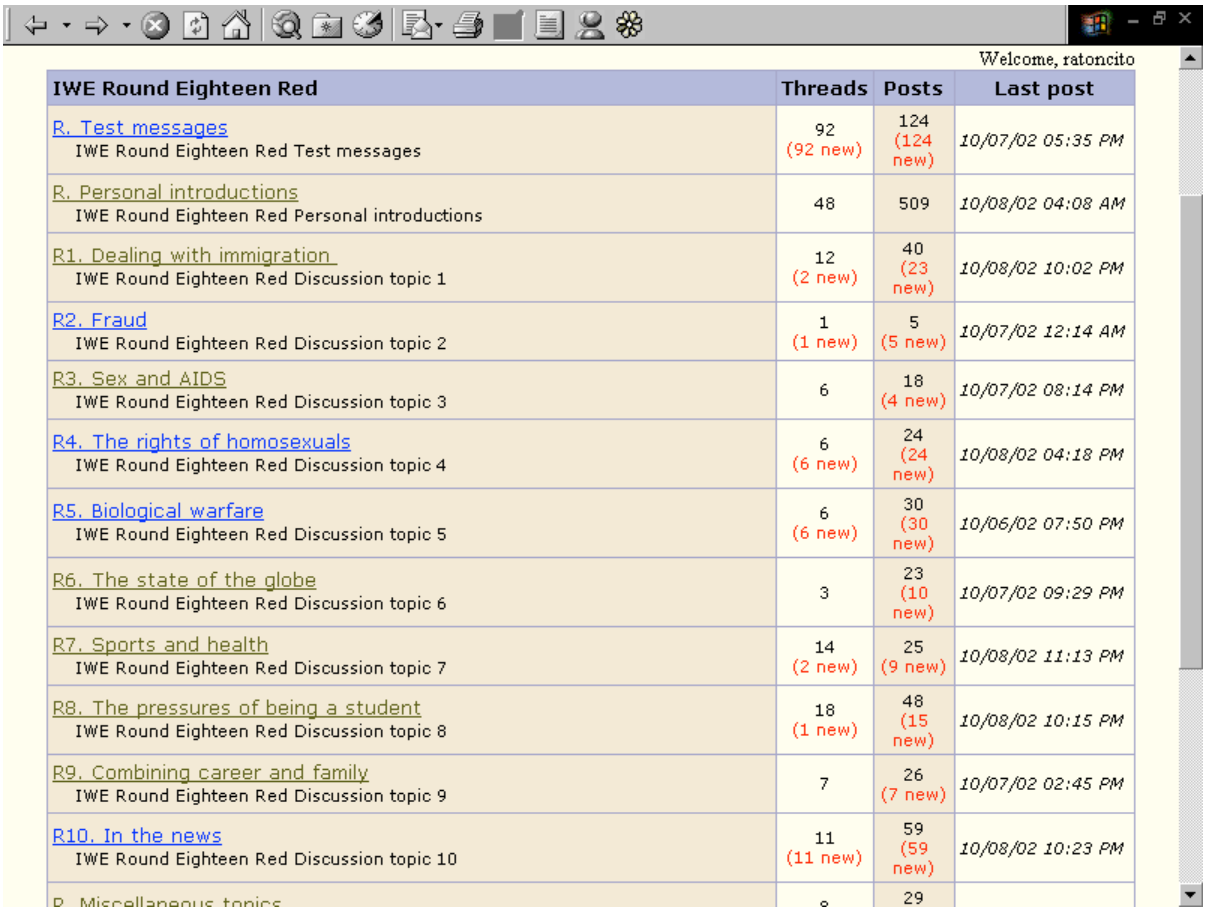
IMAGE 2. EDITING YOUR PROFILE



The main purpose of a BBS is to have people write something, and it is this very specific characteristic that makes it unique for language practice. All forums have a core topic. Users will post questions to the community and other users will respond to them. There is great liberty regarding what can be posted in a forum. Normally, though, there is a certain netiquette as to what cannot be posted: e.g., offensive wording, vulgarities, etc.

There usually is a moderator. The moderator determines the topics although sometimes, the participants themselves set the topics. In the case of language courses, the moderators tend to set the topics for the students.

IMAGE 3. A SAMPLE LIST OF TOPICS IN RUTH VILMI'S FORUMS. THREADS ARE ALL DIRECT RESPONSES TO A POSTING; THESE NORMALLY RESULT IN FURTHER DISCUSSION.



Welcome, ratoncito

IWE Round Eighteen Red	Threads	Posts	Last post
R. Test messages IWE Round Eighteen Red Test messages	92 (92 new)	124 (124 new)	*10/07/02 05:35 PM*
R. Personal introductions IWE Round Eighteen Red Personal introductions	48	509	*10/08/02 04:08 AM*
R1. Dealing with immigration IWE Round Eighteen Red Discussion topic 1	12 (2 new)	40 (23 new)	*10/08/02 10:02 PM*
R2. Fraud IWE Round Eighteen Red Discussion topic 2	1 (1 new)	5 (5 new)	*10/07/02 12:14 AM*
R3. Sex and AIDS IWE Round Eighteen Red Discussion topic 3	6	18 (4 new)	*10/07/02 08:14 PM*
R4. The rights of homosexuals IWE Round Eighteen Red Discussion topic 4	6 (6 new)	24 (24 new)	*10/08/02 04:18 PM*
R5. Biological warfare IWE Round Eighteen Red Discussion topic 5	6 (6 new)	30 (30 new)	*10/06/02 07:50 PM*
R6. The state of the globe IWE Round Eighteen Red Discussion topic 6	3	23 (10 new)	*10/07/02 09:29 PM*
R7. Sports and health IWE Round Eighteen Red Discussion topic 7	14 (2 new)	25 (9 new)	*10/08/02 11:13 PM*
R8. The pressures of being a student IWE Round Eighteen Red Discussion topic 8	18 (1 new)	48 (15 new)	*10/08/02 10:15 PM*
R9. Combining career and family IWE Round Eighteen Red Discussion topic 9	7	26 (7 new)	*10/07/02 02:45 PM*
R10. In the news IWE Round Eighteen Red Discussion topic 10	11 (11 new)	59 (59 new)	*10/08/02 10:23 PM*
R. Miscellaneous topics	8	29	

Another project that has been available is Masahito Watanabe's Ibunka project: http://www.wata-wbb.com/ (You may need a plug-in to visualize this page)

This BBS includes some unique characteristics I have not found elsewhere. For example, there is a photo album of every class participating in the rounds, as well as video albums whenever possible:

IMAGE 4: A VIDEO ALBUM.

Another characteristic of the Ibunka project is that it gives teachers administrator privileges. This means a lot when dealing with administrative affairs. You can know whether your students actually posted anything on the forum and what it is they posted. You can also control their individual profiles--this is very useful when students forget their passwords, etc.

The most appealing characteristic of the Ibunka Project is that its moderator publishes a monthly newsletter in several formats that rescues the work of the term and encourages individuals to continue contributing.

At the end of a "round," critical and constructive evaluation is both encouraged and required of students and teachers alike.

3. BBSs IN THE COLLEGE OF TELEMATICS

The initial purpose of using a forum and integrating it into the classroom at the College of Telematics was to allow students to make their writings public. The rationale is that people write to be read in the real world. There is no reason why, then, writing in a foreign language should be different. While it had been possible for students to publish

selected pieces of their writing through different media (a class board, a newspaper, an oral presentation), the BBS forum provided a unique opportunity to make more of what students wrote available to their peers.

We used a platform that is available in our university: http://ciam.ucol.mx as well as other external platforms. Due to space constraints, the details of this experience and its development will be the object of another article. In the following sections we describe some of our findings:

Normally, students are required to hand in a composition every other week. Word processing is encouraged, if not actually required in their assignments. Since we believe that writing compositions is a valuable learning experience, composition writing has long been present in our language programs. In the past, students submitted handwritten compositions, but as computers became available to everyone on campus and the advantages of word-processing became evident, all students have been encouraged to use them. With the use of the BBS students were able to save money on paper, avoid printing problems and make sure their work had actually been posted and that the teacher would therefore see it.

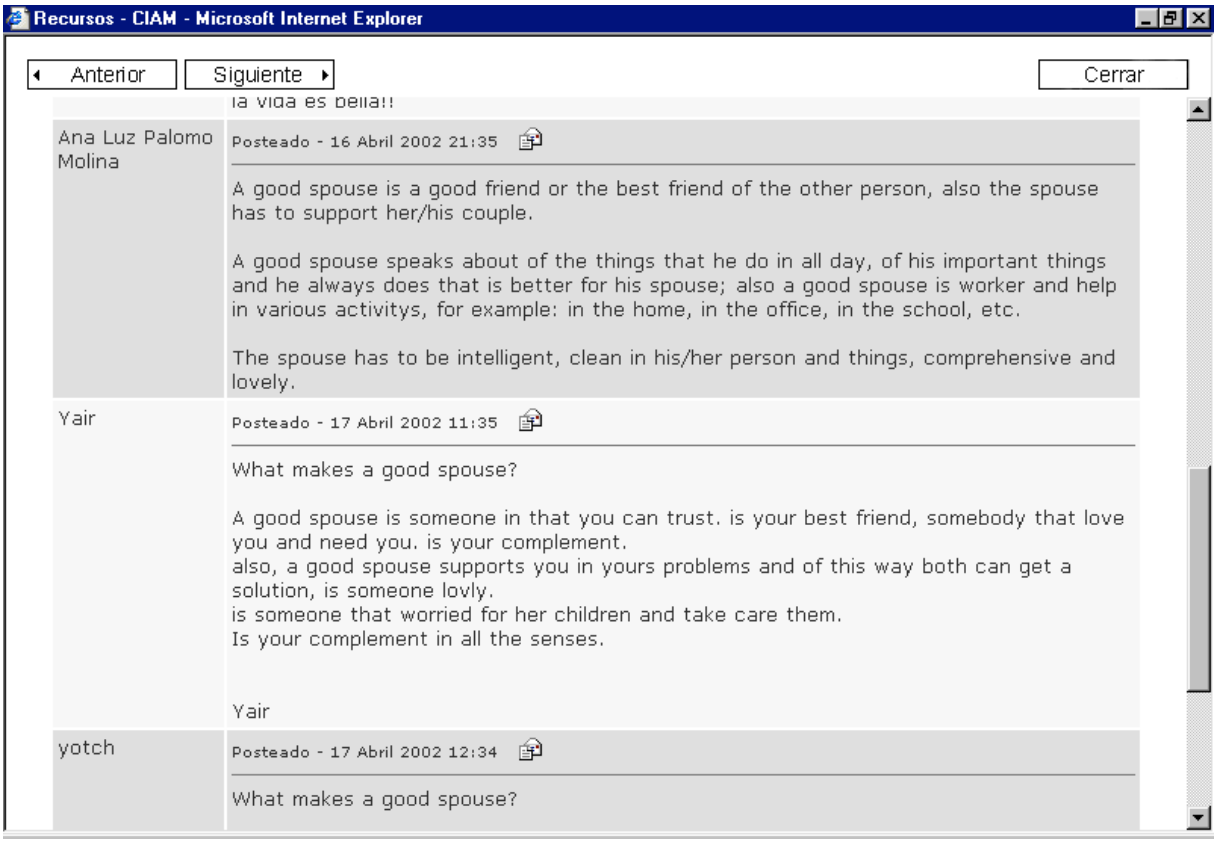
In our case, printing had always been a problem. The computer lab staff was not always available. We explored other ways of delivery. We accepted word files handed in on a diskette or sent through e-mail. Neither was absolutely reliable. Diskettes were often damaged and e-mail did not always arrive. So, to avoid these problems, the BBS proved to be a reliable delivery option for students' writing tasks. They could always verify that their work had been posted and delivery depended on them alone and not on external administrative limitations. This form of delivery proved to be ecological as well, since hundreds of sheets of paper were saved.

Instructions for any given assignment were made as clearly as possible.. If students did not attend a class, the only thing they had to do was log in to the forum and read the instructions for the assignment. In our experience if a teacher does not explain the task clearly to the students, they tend to produce differing outcomes. Normally, instructions should be given in print. In the case of the forums, instructions were written as clearly as possible so that students knew exactly what they were expected to do.

IMAGE 5: INSTRUCTIONS

By being able to look at other students' writings, students get a better idea of what they are expected to do. Sometimes, as clear as the instructions may be, especially during the first stages of a project, students do not have a clear idea of exactly what they are expected to do to meet the teachers' requirements. They feel more reassured when, after looking at other students' responses, they see that they have written similar texts. This is critical for students' gaining confidence that they are doing what they are expected to do--or at least if they are wrong, so are the others! It also helps set a standard for the kind of work expected of a class.

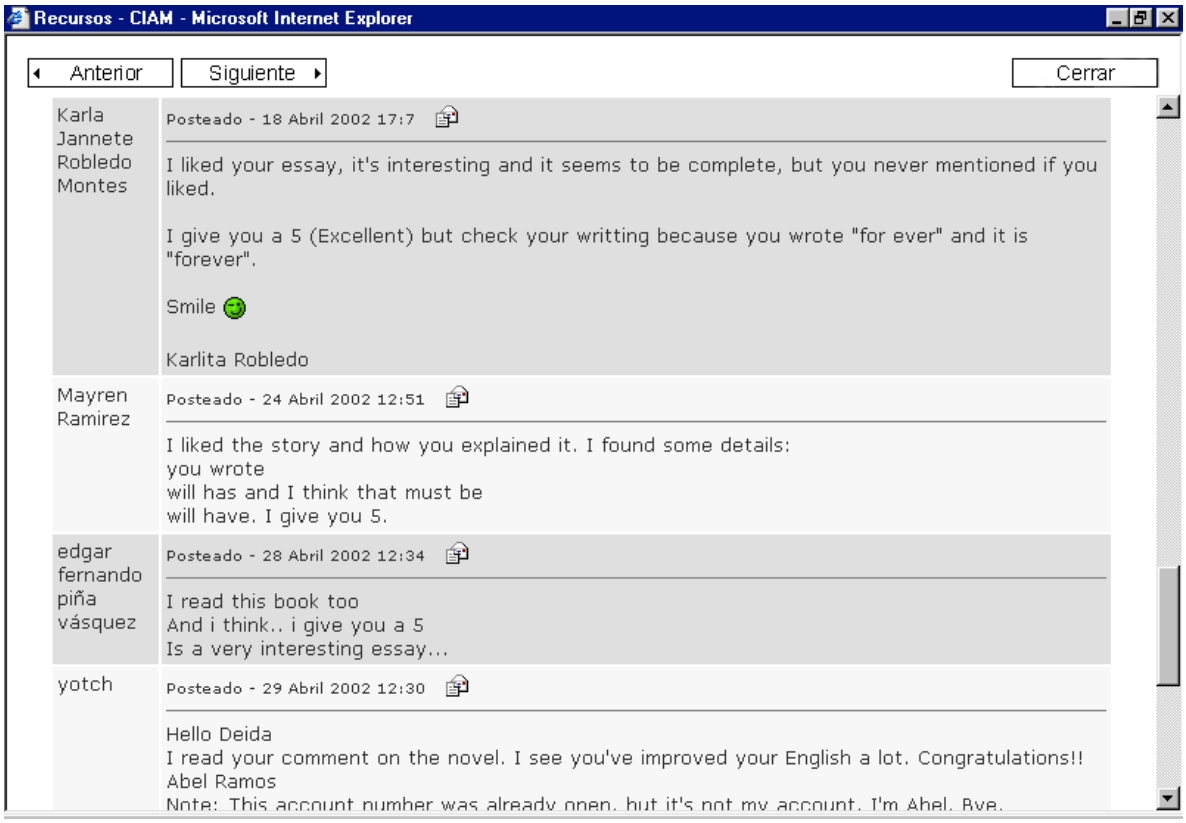
IMAGE 6: SIMILAR ASSIGNMENTS.



Because this form of delivery keeps a record of all relevant information, administrators can always find out which students comply with their assignments. Cookie-enabled browsers (cookies are small packages that will keep information about as many details as the site administrator needs about its visitors) allow administrators to track all the relevant work a student does while logged on: Whether they read other students' articles or not, how long their visit lasted; how many articles they read; how many replies they gave and how many replies they received, etc.

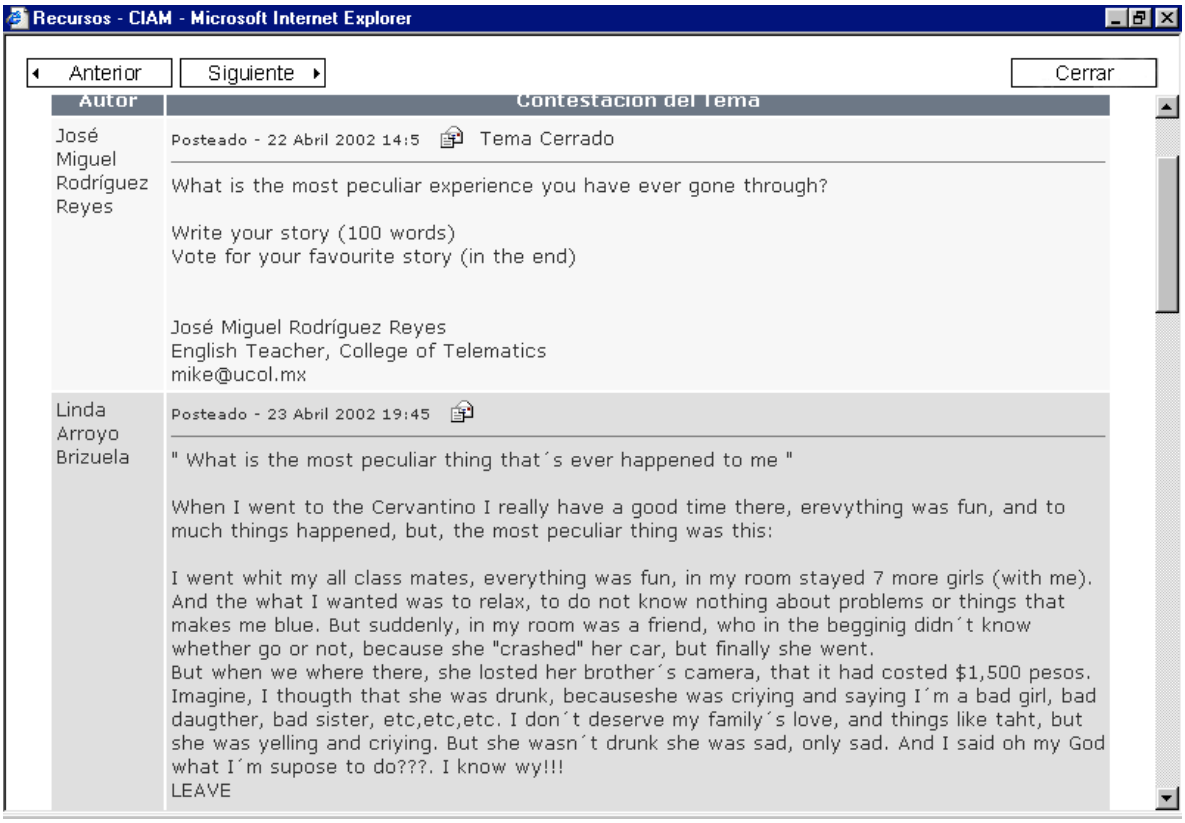
Peer correction and group correction have a place in BBS-enhanced writing experiences. Administering them is complicated at first, but once the students (and above all, the teachers) understand the basics and form a scheme of participation, there can be writing exchange programs which are not limited by space constraints. Students can cooperate with international partners to support each other in their writing progress. They read someone else's work and return it with feedback. The original writer will reciprocate (that is, read their work and return it with feedback). This scheme gives any individual student the possibility of providing comments and feedback on any other text.

IMAGE 7 PEER CORRECTION



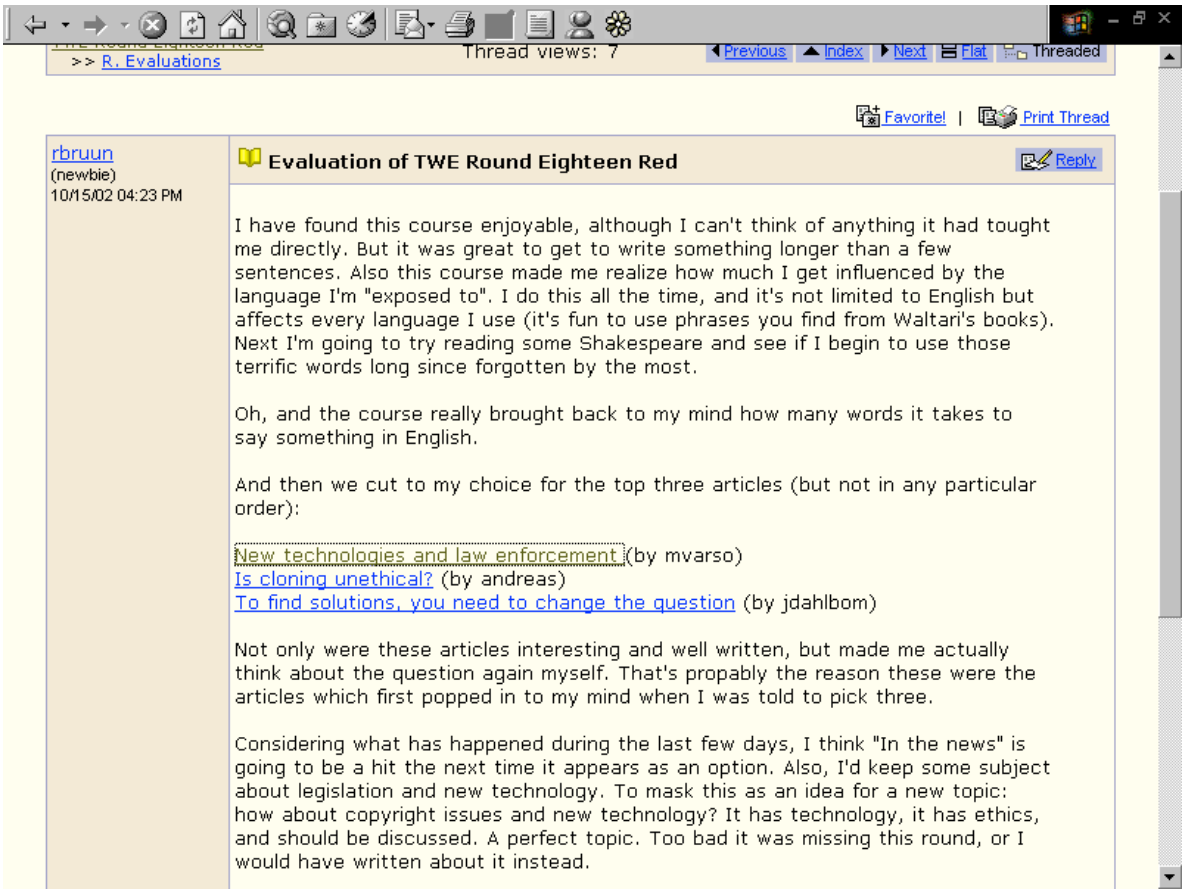
BBSs are normally closed communities. However, some are open in the sense that everyone can read postings on them. Also, forums can be created for open writing contests. There are some forums where outsiders can fill in a short, objective evaluation form after reading a given article by a student. In the end, students with the highest grades enter "the hall of fame." Classmates can also be asked to participate in the selection of the best writings. This activity encourages the involvement of students in actually doing their best when writing for a contest and also motivates them to read other students' writings..

IMAGE 8: WRITING CONTEST WITH INTERMEDIATE STUDENTS IN COLIMA



As can be seen in image 8, the text is full of mistakes. These were taken advantage of for group analysis. The screen was projected in the classroom, and students were asked to identify the mistakes and prepare an explanation which would lead to correction. This helped reduce the students' average number of errors from over 30 (in a 100-word composition) to around 15 by the end of the semester. Regrettably, I did not keep statistics, although I still have all their postings on a disc, which could be studied for further analysis. It was obvious that at the end of the project students were paying more attention to their own writing and correcting their initial errors.

IMAGE 9: A SAMPLE EVALUATION IN RUTH VILMI'S FORUM



To conclude this list of the advantages of Bulletin Board Systems, let us add that students who use a BBS have an opportunity to use the target language in a meaningful context and to meet real people from a background different from their own: an opportunity, which in many cases they may not otherwise have. The fact that students who participate in these exchanges are mainly non-native speakers adds to the value of this cooperative experience, since they are more aware of the great barrier they have to overcome on their journey towards acquiring the target language.

"Possibly the most compelling appeal of computer networks is their ability to link language learners with native and other non-native language users. This dimension of networking can offer learners the exposure to authentic communicative language use that is so often missing in the micro-world of the classroom … It offers an economical and convenient alternative to travel." (Hoffman, 1996 p. 68)

We did however, encounter several drawbacks to the use of BBSs. Though they are outnumbered by the advantages, they deserve some consideration before introducing BBSs into the classroom.

There is a dichotomy when using a BBS that has to do with flexibility. Since it is an open activity with only some control, it is expected that students contribute freely and as many times as they wish. However, some students fail to participate at all or do so only after the activity has ended, thereby no longer being able to receive feedback in the form of peer responses to their texts. This problem was partly solved by giving students strict deadlines for their participation in a certain activity. After a given date, a forum thread would be closed for participation, which meant that all the students were forced to participate before the specified date.

It is surprising that, while they are easy to operate by experts and regular Internet users, BBSs can be a frustrating experience for newcomers. Students may already feel nervous or insecure about their own language proficiency, and the additional anxiety involved in working with new technology may only add to the problem. Careful consideration needs to be given to the proper training of students in the basic operation of a BBS. That is, besides providing a detailed printed guide, the teacher should also be present the first time the students sign in, log in their data and engage in their first contribution to the forum. Otherwise, as Hoffman (1996, p. 69) states: "If the systems are difficult to use, the technology will overshadow the communication, sometimes blocking it altogether."

4. CONCLUSION

We have seen what BBSs are and presented some of the uses teachers have made of them. It is evident that a lot can be achieved through Bulletin Board Systems in terms of variety of activities. We can envisage many different student populations and many kinds of interaction (one-to-one, one-to-many, etc). We can work with individuals within a small community, or link two or more of these communities together. Distance is not an issue, since groups or individuals can be located anywhere there is an Internet connection and a PC available. The main contribution of BBSs (as well as other CMC tools) is that they give students the opportunity to meet other learners from around the world. Teachers can also take advantage of this and cooperate with partner teachers.

We have seen that becoming a BBS moderator is not a simple task, that planning is required and that careful consideration should be given to several details when starting a BBS community, especially to getting students to master the technological details. Of course, as Hoffman (1996, p. 69) says "Merely putting language learners in contact with one another is no guarantee that learning will occur." I think we have come to a time when teachers (and administrators) no longer naively believe that making an addition or change in the curriculum will provide miracu-

lous effects just as building a language laboratory, or using technology just for the sake of it, or buying a new book, etc. will not necessarily produce miraculous effects.

Regrettably, it is a fact that for most teachers it is still impossible to participate in such projects and even for those who do have this possibility, some may still wonder: Why bother? Yet, it is also a crude fact that most language teachers around the world are isolated, that having the opportunity to talk to "real people" in another language directly is not usually possible for most and that students find the majority of their class activities boring since they do not appeal to a real need for communication. BBSs may be a practical tool that can serve as a bridge between isolated teacher and student communities around the world and they can provide them with opportunities for meaningful and purposeful interaction.

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Posters as a Resource for Learning and Research

MA. GUADALUPE SANTOS ESPINO, UNIVERSIDAD DE GUANAJUATO

Introduction

As teachers we are responsible for the education and general development of our students. Including the preparation and presentation of posters in a teacher training course (or even in a language classroom) can be a valuable and important educational tool.

As the creation of posters was yet to be covered as part of the students academic program, I decided to incorporate this activity into the upcoming Regional MEXTESOL Convention, which of course also served as a motivating factor for the students training to become better qualified teachers. I knew that it was going to be a gratifying experience and leave a mark on my BA students' future professional lives.

In this paper I will mention how my students went through the process of creating the posters, meeting the requirements of the organizing committee, and presenting their posters to those attending the conference. I will also point out some of the advantages of using posters.

What Is a Poster?

A poster is very different from a paper or a talk, and so different techniques need to be used in its preparation. A poster is not a conference paper - it is a visual presentation comprising whatever the contributor wishes to display on the poster board, wall, tripod etc. The purpose of a poster is to outline a piece of work in a form that is easily assimilated and stimulates interest and discussion. The ultimate aim is a fruitful exchange of ideas between the presenter and the people viewing the poster. By using posters students have the opportunity to process and reproduce the information they have learned about a particular subject, thus being able to include influence of their own culture or other cultures, in addition to content and ideas expressed through the target language. Posters can be a great source of information, simply because the more exposed students are to the written material they are handling, the greater their understanding of the topic presented in the poster's content. Posters can be made in many styles. Roll-up single piece units, individual boards (which is the option my students chose), hinged boards that fold together. The style of poster is left up to each individual presenter or to the organizing committee.

SAMPLE OF A POSTER LAYOUT.

MORELIA'S MEXTESOL REGIONAL CONVENTION MARCH 6TH, 2004
BA STUDENTS

People Learn Through Reading

Posters can be an eye-catching valuable tool to introduce any given topic. For those who are not familiar with a certain academic subject, for example chemistry, sociology, linguistics, etc. it can be introduced in a condensed and imaginative way through a poster. According to Paul Sanderson (1999) this in turn can play an important role in the process of motivating the viewers of the posters, to read of their own accord outside of the classroom, thereby extending their contact with English and with the subject matter presented.

Organization And Presentation

Nowadays, the conventional structure of any scientific congress, workshop, symposium, seminar, etc. includes a poster session. Some schools who have continuously used poster exhibitions in our university, are the Instituto de Investigación en Educación de la Universidad de Guanajuato, in which I had the opportunity to participate with two posters on different occasions "Multiple Intelligences" and "Abortion", the School of Environmental Engineering, and the Chemistry school to mention a few. Therefore many scientific societies reserve big spaces for their presentations. (Search for "poster presentations" on the web.)

It is the organizers' duty to facilitate and establish the minimum requirements and limitations for the poster presentation itself, which requires the participants to demonstrate their creativity in the design and presentation of their work.

The layout of a poster must generally include the following parts:

The Introduction presents the problem/topic/subject matter as understandably as possible; the poster will fail in its objective if the theme is not stated clearly from the beginning.

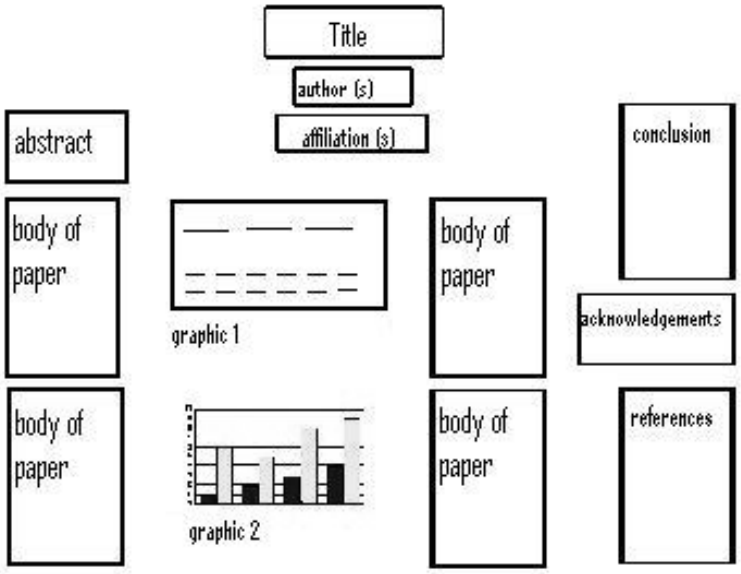
The main body should be brief, maybe one paragraph or possibly two.

The results will be the key point of a well-designed poster.

In addition, a reference section, if required, should be reduced to a minimum.

- The title must be short and visually attractive.
- Radel (1999) advises that it must be legible from a distance of one meter (around three feet). According to Mandoli (2004) when your ideas are presented clearly, they will flow from one line to the other avoid misspelled words.
- Printed characters must be thick and black (about 3 cms. high).
- Each illustration must have a short title or explanation.
- The diagrams, drawings and similar visual elements must be clear and concise without unnecessary details. Mandoli further states that spatial organization makes the difference in reaching ninety five percent instead of five percent of your audience.
- The sequence of the presentation must be from left to right, and it must orient the reader with either numbers or arrows to show the sequential order they have to follow upon reading. The poster must have a visually pleasant flow to it.
- When preparing the text of a poster, use an informal or colloquial register in order to suit any type of potential reader. Avoid unknown abbreviations (or if they are truly necessary, explain them at the very beginning).

TAKEN AND ADAPTED FROM: HTTP://WWW.LCSC.EDU/SS150/POSTER.HTM



A visual disarray of elements will disorient possible readers; it is therefore recommended to visually highlight the key concepts to facili-

tate the functions of informing, persuading and helping the viewer to remember.

The Right Color: A Must For A Successful Poster

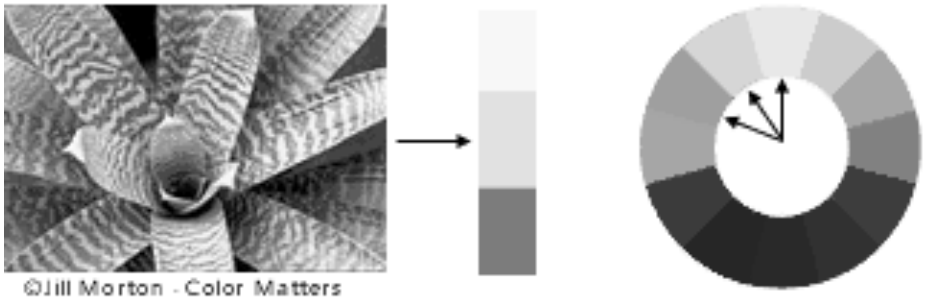
What we see and interact with is in color, and this includes color in both natural and man-made environments. According to Khouw (2004), about 80% of the information which we assimilate through the senses is visual. Moreover, color does more than just give us objective information about our world; it affects how we feel about what we perceive. Color becomes even more important in an interior environment, since most people spend more time indoors than outdoors. The students in my class were advised that color is the most powerful component of all visual imagery and therefore they had to be careful with the combinations of colors they were going to use on their posters. "The right colors communicate meaning and please the eye. The wrong colors can be unpleasant and even unsettling. Color can be a subliminally persuasive force. As a functional component of human vision, color can capture attention, relax or irritate the eyes, and affect the legibility of text. The right colors empower and contribute to the success of a product: a service or even an interior space" or in our case a poster. The wrong colors could be a costly mistake. (http://www.colorcom.com/)

In other words we must use color harmony, which is defined by Morton (1995-2002) as a pleasing arrangement of the colors one sees and therefore pleasing to the viewer, involving the person plus creating an inner sense of order. The human brain will obviously reject understimulating information and also that which it can not organize nor understand.

Some Formulas for Color Harmony

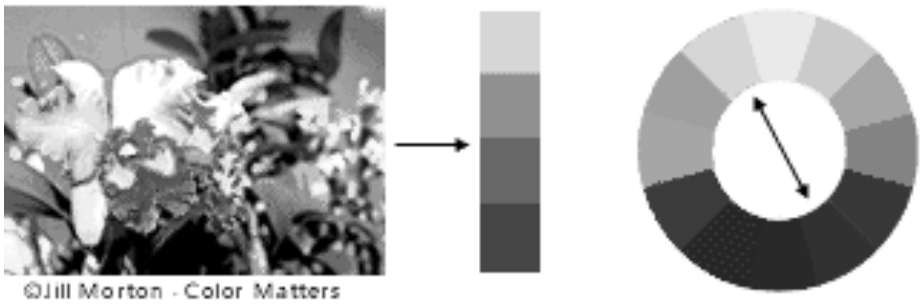
'There are many theories for harmony. The following illustrations and descriptions present some basic formulas.

A COLOR SCHEME BASED ON ANALOGOUS COLORS



Analogous colors are any three colors which are side by side on a 12-part color wheel, such as yellow-green, yellow, and yellow-orange. Usually one of the three colors predominates.

A COLOR SCHEME BASED ON COMPLEMENTARY COLORS



Complementary colors are any two colors which are directly opposite each other, such as red and green and red-purple and yellow-green. In the illustration above, there are several variations of yellow-green in the leaves and several variations of red-purple in the orchid. These opposing colors create maximum contrast and maximum stability'. http://www.colormatters.com/colortheory.html

One more tip on color combinations for posters is given by Radel (1999) when he says that what is generally advised is that softer colors (pastels, greys) work much better as a background, they are easier to view for hours at a time, and offer the best contrast for text, as well as graphic, and photographic elements.

Posters Enhance And Motivate Group Work

As teachers we all know that students are expected to take an active part in their learning process. As Fraida Dubin et al states (1986, p. 56) students are placed in situations in which they must share responsibilities, make decisions, evaluate their own progress, develop individual preferences, learn to do group work, become initiators, etc. It is also worth mentioning Cunningsworth's belief - that students need to be encouraged and stimulated as they progress, and course materials can help by using subject matter that is intellectually stimulating and to which the students can relate personally (Cunningsworth, 1984).

While students work at putting their posters together, they will encounter and resolve those variables mentioned above, and more. See the attached students' comments about the outcomes of their posters (Appendix 1)

What We Did

- I organized teams from five to seven students, and they had to come up with one poster on the subject they had already presented in class (or were going to present).
- Students were told to prepare well, because each one of them was going to take turns presenting their topic and poster to the English teachers attending the MEXTESOL Regional Convention in Guanajuato on November the 8th 2003.

- Students' posters were graded by a third party and not by the teacher. The third party was conformed by two teachers - one from Dolores Hidalgo and the other one from our School.
- The posters were exhibited at the MEXTESOL Regional Convention. A classroom was set aside in order to have them displayed all day throughout the convention.
- A winner was selected. This made the whole event more meaningful, and the students' work had the chance to shine in the healthy spirit of competition.
- The main topic of the class was "Applied Linguistics" the subtopics covered and presented in the posters were the following:
    a. The origins of language
    b. The properties of language
    c. Animals and human language
    d. The sounds of language / The sound patterns of language
    e. Words and word-formation processes
    f. Language history and change

WINNING POSTER

TOPIC: LANGUAGE HISTORY AND CHANGE

What To Do During A Poster Presentation

At least one of the authors must be at the assigned space during the designated time to discuss the work presented. Presenters should be capable of responding to questions concerning all aspects of the poster.

My students were advised to plan carefully what they were going to say and how they were going to say it, so that they would feel more confident when being approached. They also had the initiative to invite passers-by to come and see their work. During our MEXTESOL Regional

Convention they were allotted a certain day and time to be present and available the students took turns answering questions.

How To Evaluate A Poster

The criteria for evaluating a poster can be left up to each individual teacher, according to the level of the students and the aims of the poster sessions.

Tests are not the only instrument teachers have to assess their students' work. They may also use a poster in which students are forced to study a theme from the syllabus more deeply. Furthermore, they acquire the skills of summarizing and putting together the information they have learned in class and in their outside investigation in a visually concise way. I am including a format that I used to evaluate the posters produced in the linguistics class (Appendix 2).

Advantages Of A Poster Exhibition

1. As Radel (1999) states a poster helps to show the results of experiments carried out in any kind of research or academic study.
2. The visual stimuli can help visual learners remember the material better than would a simple verbal exposition.
3. It allows for easy reading in a specific event and for the targeted audience.
4. It allows for studying the presentations of images and detailed diagrams at the viewers convenience and time.
5. The author can also distribute, if s/he wishes, handouts or pamphlets with more detailed information.
6. It allows for presenting various types of illustrations: photographs, graphics, drawings, paintings, etc
7. A poster exhibition can be revisited as many times as the audience attending wishes to do so and according to the program guidelines.
8. Levine (1997) claims that "For many researchers, the poster format is superior for the presentation of their data. Many panel presenters, even those who use overhead transparencies, still do not provide the audience with enough time to assimilate the statistical data or link it with other data. A poster can allow for a clearer and more reflective process of presentation, especially of statistical or visual information. Papers traditionally presented in areas such as geography, demographics, linguistics, economics, art history among others, can be perhaps better presented in the poster format. In addition, the narrative of every poster, including main points and conclusions can be highlighted and therefore

absorbed at every person's own pace as they view the poster" (http://www.Icsc.edu/ss150/poster.htm)

Posters Can Be Used For Any Academic Subject

I have mentioned what my BA students did and enjoyed. However these pedagogical posters can also be applied to a regular English language teaching class at any level. They would be useful for English students in presenting something related to language for example how they have learned vocabulary, grammar, listening, giving tips to others on how to read and understand an academic issue, topic, concept, etc.

Here are some ideas pointed out by Sanderson (1999) that one can engage language students or any student in when using posters:

- Ask the groups to display their finished posters around the room.
- Ask all your students to circulate and look at each other's work.
- If you teach regularly in the same classroom, you may be able to leave the posters up on permanent display. Of course, you can use the posters with other groups by asking them to come and see the poster display.

Transporting Posters

Transporting a poster can sometimes be a problem. Rolling the paper into a cylinder is the most commonly used method, so that afterwards the poster can be set up on a board, wall, etc. according to the specifications provided by the organizing committee.

My students used different materials to protect their final work: Plastic and brown wrapping paper.

End Results

My students were very excited and frightened at the same time about participating in the poster session, because for the majority of them it was the first time they were going to be speakers at a convention.

It required a lot of team work, patience and perseverance. Ninety five per cent of our student population is already working, so this particular assignment required extra scheduling on their part. Nevertheless they managed to do so.

It gave students more confidence about their roles as teachers, and about their chosen degree. The environment that was created when working as a team was not competitive but rather cooperative; students learned that while helping each other, they were helping themselves as well. As mentioned by one student (Appendix 1) this event in particular, made the students feel more as part of the Language School and the University of Guanajuato.

Posters require a lot of demanding work not only from the students but also from the teacher; nevertheless they are well worth all the work and investment of time and energy!

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Appendix 1

Students Feelings And Experiences In Producing A Poster

Posters

All the process required hard work and communication among the members of each team. I would say it showed us, that teamwork requires commitment and responsibility, since nothing can be complete if one part is missing. In my team we understood our topic, but in order to produce something clear and attractive, we had to do more reading. We all came up with ideas that were discussed, negotiated, discarded, accepted, and agreed. We invested a lot of time in the making or our poster, but in the end, we were satisfied with our ideas and our hard work.

When I realized the great variety of ideas and the abundance of creativity that the members of my team had, I thought it would be hard for the other teams to beat our poster. I realized I was wrong the moment I saw the other posters, creativity and hard work were present in all of them.

The day of the presentation of the posters, we were very excited and eager to explain our posters to the visitors, who seemed to be pleased with the work of all the teams. The members of my team took turns explaining our work. We were very proud to present our poster and topic to the visitors, not because our poster was beautiful, but because it was the result of the hard work of our very hands, and because we were satisfied with our working hard.

Some visitors voted and decided that the best poster was the one of "The History of Language". I agreed with their decision. That poster was well thought, neat, original, clear, and beautiful. Another thing that was difficult and that I admire was the fact that the members of that team had not presented their topic in class, which could represent a disadvantage since the rest of us knew more about our theme.

It was the kind of experience that stays with me forever. I hope I do not forget what I learned from it.

--Antonio Navarrete Mosqueda

Making The Poster

It was a very good experience to make a poster about the topics we had seen in class. I think it helped us a lot to understand more clearly what language is in reality.

During the process of making the poster, we had to deal with the importance of having the right perception people would have when they saw it, how understandable it had to be, as well as attractive and clear.

To do so, we had to share all kinds of opinions and disagreements about our topic: "Animal and Human Language".

It became a very attractive topic; we got involved with it and with our poster, we wanted people to feel the same way.

I could say I am pretty comfortable with what we did, maybe we missed some details, but I think it as a well done poster, as well as the rest of my classmates. It was very satisfactory to see the different posters, and everyone making groups. Although, there was a little detail missing: a better organization, at the time of showing the poster. I think the reason of this is that we did not expect it to be such a big event for the school, or just in my opinion. I was surprised by the interest people had in seeing our work.

I also think it has given us more confidence about our role in this career, it is always a little hard to be in the first semester, and with this event, we are becoming part of this institution.

--Paulyna Ducoing Valdepeña

Impressions About The Poster Exhibition

I have to tell you that doing this project involved so many things, like effort, team work, money, and the desire of doing a good job.

The first thing we had to do was to understand our topic well, which was easy and all the team agreed. Then we had to think what we were going to write, summarize. The third step was to design it. We were all very excited and nervous at the same time, because we wanted to do an excellent work. When we saw it for the first time we were very proud, we thought that all our work was well worth it.

The day of the MEXTESOL Regional Convention I had to explain the poster several times, and I realized that I had really learned so much in this class. I think that every person that I explained it to understood me very well. The topic was: "The Properties of Language". It is an easy topic, because it is about the properties that humans have when we use language, like arbitrariness, duality, rapid fade, etc. It was such an exciting day.

--Liliana del Carmen Pérez León

APPENDIX 2
UNIVERSIDAD DE GUANAJUATO
ESCUELA DE IDIOMAS
LICENCIATURA EN LA ENSEÑANZA DEL INGLÉS

LIN-100 Lingüística Aplicada a la Enseñanza del Inglés

Teacher: Ma. Guadalupe Santos Espino

POSTER REQUIREMENTS:

1. You will need a tripod (get together with the rest of the class so that the measurements are exactly the same for everyone). This tripod can be a simple wooden one but sturdy enough to hold your poster upright.
2. Size: 100 cm high x 80 cm wide (1.2 m de ancho x 2.0 m de alto)

YOU WILL BE GRADED ON:

a. Creativity
b. Originality
c. Cleanliness
d. Eye-catching
e. Colorfulness
f. Understandable summary – Please be sure to use your own words, which must include appropriateness, coherence and correct spelling.

The grade awarded as a team will then be reflected on an individual basis.

REMEMBER:

You will be creating an informative poster, not a book nor an article. It will be graded by an outside committee. Which will be conformed by: the local MEXTESOL Chapter miembros de la Mesa Directiva.

With the elaboration of this poster you will get a *grade* and you will also get an official *written document as a speaker* in the Local MEXTESOL Guanajuato Chapter.

All posters will have to be turned by OCTOBER 31st, 2003 so that the committee can evaluate and grade all of them.

Remember the MEXTESOL Regional Convention will take place Saturday November the 8th. We would like to display all the posters on that day.