



HAWAI'I TEACHERS OF ENGLISH TO SPEAKERS OF OTHER LANGUAGES

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Hawai'i TESOL, the local affiliate of TESOL (Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, Inc.), is a non-profit organization dedicated to building a community of professionals teaching English as a Second Language (ESL) in the state of Hawai'i.

For the latest information about HITESOL events throughout the year, please check our website:

www.hawaiiitesol.org

Bridging the Cultural Gap: Creating Culturally Sensitive Classrooms

by Michael D. Depoe

Introduction

Students entering the American school system from another country often have difficulties adjusting to school life in their new culture. They experience culture shock, anxiety and fear which significantly interfere with their ability to learn a new language. This is compounded by the fact that ELLs (English Language Learners) are expected to learn new subject content at the same time they are learning a new language.

This article will explore how teachers can create a culturally responsive environment where students and parents feel valued and important. The end result will be that students and parents are more prepared to face the challenges ahead of them. This article will also describe some strategies

used to foster parental involvement at Kauai High School.

Cultural Awareness

The need for culturally sensitive classrooms is becoming increasingly

more important in the 21st century. The number of students attending schools from different cultures will soon surpass the general population. These incoming students enter with a variety of different linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Without a basic understanding of the kaleidoscope of cultural differences, our education system will fail to meet the needs of these diverse learners.

Upon entering the school system in America, many students experience some degree of culture shock. Culture shock is a term used to describe the anxiety and feelings of disorientation when people have to operate within an entirely different culture or social environment. Generally speaking there are four phases to culture shock; a) honeymoon phase, b) anxiety phase c) rejection phase and d) adjustment phase. During these phases, feelings may range from happiness to depression and anger. In the most severe cases, people going through culture shock are incapacitated and unable to function. This is hardly a good state of mind for learning a new language or anything else for that

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Hawai'i TESOL Holds 2007 Business Meeting By Masaki Seo

On Friday, April 13, 2007, a small group of dedicated Hawai'i TESOL officers and members gathered at the wonderful campus of Intercultural Communications College (ICC) for the annual business meeting. Attendees enjoyed a delicious Greek dinner from Olive Tree, and spent the first hour of the event socializing and catching up with each other.

During the business portion of the meeting, board members reported on the organization's activities in 2006 and early 2007. After the warm welcome by Joel Weaver, the

host of the event and the director of ICC, Masaki Seo, the president, began with a look back at Hawai'i TESOL's first three events of the year: the annual social on September 26, 2006, September at McCoy Pavilion, the practical workshops on November 8, 2006, at McKinley School for Adults, and the conference on February 17, 2007,



President
Masaki Seo

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Hawai'i TESOL Holds 2007 Business Meeting (cont.)

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at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. Shawn Ford, the conference chair, spoke in more detail about the success of the 2007 conference along with positive feedback on conference evaluation forms. More details of the annual conference can be found in this issue of *The Word* (see page 2). Reports from Nicole Ernst, the membership secretary, showed the organization has 99 paid members, which has dropped from 150 from the previous year. We kept the number of the renewed members, which supported what we have been doing has been benefiting our current members. However, the significant number of new members has dropped, especially in the number of student members. Next year, we will try to recruit more student members from all the major institutions with the TESOL program as well as DOE members where we have not done previously. A report from Jeff Mehring, the treasure, showed our finances in good shape as we close the 2006-2007 fiscal year (\$9221.09 as for March, 2007).



Report from Nicole Ernst,
the membership secretary

Three special reports concluded the business discussion. First, Perry Christensen and Mark Wolfersberger, the attendees of the TESOL Ukraine get-together in Seattle, briefly reported their experience. Later at the business meeting, Shawn Ford added to their comments with details of what they discussed to make our sister affiliate relationship more meaningful. Second, Yukiko Yamaguchi, the Surplus Committee member, reported the brainstormed ideas how we will spend surplus money in our account in order to benefit our members. Third, Jeff Mehring, the Investment Committee member, reported the brainstormed ideas how we will invest the money in our account in order to run our events with a great success.

Finally, Nicole Ernst, the recipient of the Hawai'i TESOL Travel Grant, briefly shared her experience at the 2007 TESOL Convention in Seattle, where she also presented. Her presentation will be available on the International TESOL website shortly along with in this issue of *The Word* (see page 6). Other Hawai'i TESOL members who attended the convention, Perry Christensen, Mark Wolfersberger, and Jason Rice, also shared their

experiences briefly due to time constraints.

At the end of the business meeting, elections were held for the 2007-2008 Hawai'i TESOL executive board. Congratulations to new officers Mark Wolfersberger (Vice President), Sarah Trask (Membership Secretary), Adam Pang (Sociopolitical Action Chair), Hosam El Metaher (Program Committee Chair), Shimaa Aly (Program Committee Member), and Ashwin Pandit (Newsletter Committee). Welcome, Mark, Sarah, Adam, Hosam, Shimaa, and Ashwin, and *mahalo* to all continuing board members (see complete listing on page 12). We thank all of you for your outstanding services to the organization and to the TESOL community in Hawai'i.

Hawai'i TESOL will finish the year with our final event in May: the Language Experience, featuring the French language. Have a wonderful summer, everyone, and see you at the opening social in September!

HITESOL 2007 Conference Report By Shawn Ford (Conference Chair)

More than 200 ESL teachers from around the islands gathered at the lush University of Hawaii campus in Manoa to attend the 2007 Hawaii TESOL Annual Conference on Saturday, February 17. The day-long event also drew a number of mainland and international visitors, all of whom gave presentations to those in attendance.

Conference Day at a Glance

The conference took place in Webster Hall, which is one of the more recently upgraded buildings on the campus. Rooms were clean and spacious, and well-furnished with modern chairs, computers, and a/v equipment. However, tables had to be rented from the Campus Center for registrations, the poster session, and the publishers' exhibit. Apparently, UH Manoa doesn't have a mechanism to provide facilities' support for events such as our conference unless the event is held in the Campus Center.

The day began smoothly, as HITESOL volunteers met early at Webster Hall to set up for the

conference. However, just as the volunteers began to set up registration tables, a large group of state workers arrived to spend the day removing palm trees from the front of the building. Chain saws and wood mulchers interrupted the peaceful serenity of the campus. Panicked HITESOL volunteers quickly relocated the registration area to the side of the building so registration could begin on time.

It began just in time for the mass of eager teachers who arrived seemingly all at once for the plenary address, given this year by Dr. Andrew Cohen of the University of Minnesota. Dr. Cohen's opening talk was on strategy instruction, a research focus of his for many years, and one in which he is considered to be an expert. And he did not disappoint the attendees who filled Spalding Auditorium.

The plenary address was followed by 21 concurrent sessions, including presentations, workshops, and one discussion panel, spread out over four time periods in six different rooms. This year we received more proposals than in years past, so

HITESOL 2007 Conference Report (cont.)

(Continued from page 2)

we ranked the proposals and chose the best ones to provide a diverse mix of topics for our membership. All of the sessions were well attended, and some were even standing room only.

The concurrent sessions were interrupted for lunch, which this year was catered from Nippon Bento. Distribution of the bentos was a bit disorganized at first, but in the end everyone got a lunch and sat around the facility to eat and chat with colleagues, either in the warm spring sunshine, in the breezy shade of the building lanais, or in the cold fluorescence of the building classrooms. The bentos were enormous and very good for the price.

This year we combined student and in-service-teacher poster sessions into one poster session. We received 14 posters in all, which was exactly the same as last year. The poster presentation time was scheduled for the time period just before lunch in a large classroom on the main floor of Webster Hall. Presenters displayed very interesting posters on a wide range of topics.

During the entire conference, publishers displayed their wares in two rooms on the main floor of Webster Hall. This year 10 publishers reserved tables, up from eight last year. The rooms were full of browsers throughout the day, and most of the publishers commented positively about the turnout. Unfortunately, one publisher representative didn't receive her books and other display materials in time for the conference, so she spent time passing out business cards and networking with teachers one-on-one.

The conference concluded with an afternoon workshop on strategies training, led by Dr. Cohen. The 90-minute workshop included handouts, a presentation, and group activities. A nice-sized crowd remained to participate in the workshop until the very end.

Conference Budget Report

This year's conference drew a total of 211 attendees, including students, teachers, members and non-members. This number is down approximately 20% from last year's conference at Kapi'olani Community College. While the number of students from UH Manoa did increase, the number of students from HPU this year was in the single digits for reasons unknown. Numbers from BYUH were slightly lower, as was the number of DOE teachers in attendance.

Income from registrations fees this year totaled \$6097.00, and conference expenses totaled \$3635.44, for a net profit of \$2461.56. The travel grant raffle, which is usually the culminating event at the annual conference, was not organized this year; therefore, travel grant funds were not raised at this year's conference.

Attendees' Feedback

Post-conference feedback about the conference as a whole was overwhelmingly positive. Feedback about the facility was extremely positive for its location. Negative comments about the facility centered on session rooms and lunch. As usual, a few attendees complained about the registration process: disorganization, lengthiness of lines, inability to locate registration booth, loss of information by HITESOL, etc. Feedback about the plenary was overwhelmingly positive in favor of Dr. Cohen and his topic. Feedback about the sessions was also very positive, with a few negative comments about misleading session titles and cold rooms. Attendees' opinions about lunch were mixed. Most responses praised the quality of the bentos, but quite a few attendees complained that there was no central place to sit and eat together. The poster session generated a number of negative comments, mostly about presenters who were not on hand during the scheduled time to discuss their poster ideas. Also, people commented about poorly prepared or poorly displayed posters. Feedback about the publisher's sessions was very positive, except for a few complaints about contributing publishers not having representatives at their tables to answer questions. All of the comments, whether positive or negative, will be considered next year as we plan and organize the 2008 conference.

Towards the Future

Overall, this year's conference was a great success, and it would not have been possible without the volunteerism of 15 or so dedicated HITESOL members, whose names are inscribed on the conference booklet. Your selfless sacrifice to further the mission of HITESOL will forever be remembered in the annals of HITESOL history

With the 2007 Annual Conference behind us, we now turn our attention to 2008. As for next year's conference location, we're taking suggestions. Did I hear someone say neighbor island?



Bridging the Cultural Gap... (cont.)

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matter. However, this is exactly what many of our students experience when entering school for the first time.

Some of the cultural differences include: educational background, parental involvement, role of family, hierarchy and value systems. These differences are generally thought of as obstacles to overcome. However, the wealth of cultural diversity and heritage brought into the schools by these students should be viewed as strengths to build upon rather than problems to overcome.

The 4 R's of a Culturally Responsive Classroom

What are the hallmarks of a culturally sensitive classroom? Over the past few years, the Department of Education has lauded the concepts of "Rigor", "Relevance" and "Relationships" as key components in successful schools. While these concepts are still appropriate, I would like to add a 4th "R" - "Resource". Briefly stated, that means that teachers should draw upon the students' home cultures and experiences as *Resources* for teaching and learning rather than barriers to their education. We need to be able to use the students' home cultures as building blocks to learning rather than stumbling blocks.

To accomplish this goal, teachers must develop cultural competence as well as skill in curriculum, instruction and assessment. Simply stated, teachers and educators need to become more familiar with the different cultures represented by their students and use that knowledge to build upon the strengths of each. In this way, students can become acculturated while at the same time have their home cultures affirmed and appreciated.



Parental Involvement

One of the most significant steps to building a culturally responsive school environment is to get the parents involved. Research has shown that parental involvement is a key to a child's academic success.

However, achieving this goal is much easier said than done. Some of the obstacles to parental involvement include: language barriers, work schedules, fears, perceptions and inexperience. Understanding these obstacles can be a key factor in teachers being able to include the parents in the learning process.

Many of the parents simply don't know how to help their children. In many cases, they are not competent in English and therefore feel unable to help their children. Sometimes the parents feel ashamed of their lack of English and avoid the

school entirely. These parents may be illiterate in their own languages as well.

Another significant barrier to parental involvement is the various expectations about education shared by different cultures. In many cultures, parents are responsible for taking care of their children at home while the school is responsible for the child's education. If parents step over and get involved in the school, that would imply they don't trust the teacher as a professional.

Cultural empathy and understanding is needed to bridge the gap between the community and schools. Here are some ideas that have been explored at Kauai High School.

Increasing Parental Involvement

One of the explicit goals at Kauai High School's ELL Department is to develop stronger lines of communication between families and the school. This is accomplished through parent's meetings, workshops, parent - teacher conferences and home visits. Using these various strategies, we are able to develop a dialogue with our ELL families and begin establishing a mutually beneficial relationship.

Another promising new area under development is entitled "Family Talk" and is geared toward specific nationalities or people groups. These meetings are used to bring together parents (or guardians) and students to discuss openly some of the challenges faced by both in the educational system in Hawaii. Some of the issues are cultural-specific and are therefore better addressed in these meetings rather than in the general ELL Parent's meetings. The information garnered during these informal discussions has become invaluable in the process of developing schools that meet the diverse needs of every student.

Conclusion

In conclusion, a culturally responsive classroom shares the following characteristics. Understanding and respecting cultural differences and using those differences as resources rather than obstacles. Teachers and administrators sincerely care about the students as individuals not as test scores or numbers for a weighted student formula. And finally, there is a concerted effort to involve the parents and community in the education process. Creating a classroom environment that is open and encouraging to ELL students and their families will go a long way in helping to bridge the cultural gap and ensure that every student has an equal opportunity to a quality education.

About the Author

Michael Depoe is a graduate of UH with a MA in ESL. He has over 20 years of experience teaching in Hawaii, China and Japan. He is currently teaching ESL at Kauai High School where he was named the State ESL Teacher of the Year for 2005-06.

TESOL-Ukraine Conference Is the Blood Vessel of English Language Teaching in Ukraine (personal indelible impressions of the XIIth TESOL-Ukraine Conference) By Olexander Kurdish

In a completely rational society, the best of us would be teachers and the rest of us would have to settle for something else.

Lee Iacocca

For the second time running, April showers have managed to bring not only May flowers but also a long-awaited annual TESOL-Ukraine conference.

This year the National Academy of Management, which ranks fifth in compliance with the rating of higher educational establishments of Ukraine (*classifying group – managerial economics and marketing*), played host to the XII TESOL-Ukraine Conference “Humanistic and Pragmatic TEFL” (April 21–22).

Frankly speaking, I had high expectations of what the yearly conference had to offer, and I must admit the regular long-expected convention didn't fall short of them.

The 2007 annual conference saw nearly 200 participants. The long-expected convention offered its participants a wide variety of activities, including demonstrations, presentations, workshops, a book exhibition and what not. There were lots of welcoming, appreciative and understanding people in the conference team. A fleeting glance was enough to tell that the convention was organized by skilled and conscientious friends committed to their job.

At the opening plenary the participants of the convention were given a cordial welcome from Professor Serhiy Yerokhin, Rector of the National Acad-



emy of Management, who briefed us on the activities of this highly respected higher educational establishment, the high standards for academic progress the Academy set for its students and expects everybody to comply with. He expressed sincere hopes that the conference would open new horizons for exchanging information and promoting the pursuit of knowledge of the current trends in language education. The greetings from Dr. Lisa Harshbarger, Regional English Language Officer for Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova, Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia were warm and friendly. She congratulated us on an excellent opportunity to come together and share our ideas and resources as well as problems we face in our daily job as educators and called on us to contribute our might to a language education reform in Ukraine. I must say Dr. Lisa Harshbarger has an impeccable reputation, and she invariably keeps her part of the bargain. She promised to invite two brilliant English Language Specialists, Christine Canning and Dr. Lisa Morgan, and so she did. It was thanks to Lisa Harshbarger that we had the pleasure of learning more about the newest practices in language testing from Christine Canning and current trends in language education from Dr. Lisa Morgan.

Christine Canning's analysis of the existing tests will help our students avoid common pitfalls; it will boost their confidence and increase their chances of exam success because now we have a clear, detailed picture of how to prepare our students for updated tests.

Dr. Lisa Morgan's completely new approach to an impact of Voiceover Internet Protocol on the English language proficiency levels of our students kept the audience interested from the outset. The material was specifically designed to focus on those areas which are most likely to cause problems for both teachers and students. Her invaluable advice gave us the real confidence and know-how to tackle highly complex reading and writing material.

Well-renowned scholars and educators professor Svitlana Bobyr, professor Nina Fillipova, professor Tetyana Pavlova, and Dr. Kristina Gray channelled the work of four sections of our conference into achieving 24-carat success.

Unfortunately, I couldn't attend the workshops and demonstrations of Jennifer Herrin, Nina Lyulkun, or John Silver, to name but a few, and it's really disappointing because to work for a time close with great minds is the best kind of education.



I want to give my heartfelt thanks to the intelligent and smart staff of the National Academy of Management who always tried their best to make what they could of the unfavourable situation. My warmest thanks to Svitlana Radziyevska, the TESOL-Ukraine President (*I know Svitlana doesn't like to be acknowledged, but I'm sure most conference participants will agree that it would be fundamentally unjust not to say a few nice words about the role she played to make this conference happen.*) Svitlana is very meticulous in everything she does. She knows how to gain the respect and affection of her colleagues.

The XII TESOL-Ukraine Conference is history now; may success attend the XIII convention!

About the Author

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Pigs, Blue Bags, and MySpace: TESOL 2007

By Nicole Ernst

As I walked through the busy streets of Seattle, taking pictures of statues of pigs and kung fu hopefuls, I was taken aback by the tremendous amount of people carrying those book-sized blue bags reading "Spanning the Globe: Tides of Change – TESOL 2007." There were English teachers everywhere! And people associated with English teachers! It didn't seem to matter where I was in the city; those blue bags were all around me. I never imagined the conference would be so big.

In February, I was fortunately awarded the Hawaii TESOL travel grant to attend the 2007 TESOL conference in Seattle. I had never been to a TESOL conference, and I was thankful and excited to have the opportunity this year. Not only was I attending the conference, but my main focus in going was to present. My friend and colleague, Carol Foye – a former Hawaii TESOL member and board member, and I were accepted to present our research, titled "MySpace: A Cautionary Tale for ESL Learners" at the conference. This was the same research that we successfully presented at the Hawaii TESOL conference in February. Despite having done the presentation once before, upon seeing the giant pools of blue bags, I began to feel a little nervous.

Our presentation was on the last day of the conference. Our talk was about the increasing popularity of MySpace, and we focused on the use for ESL students in particular. After some disturbing incidents that we had heard about among our students, we created a fake profile for a "typical" female at our school. With this profile, we did not initiate anything, but recorded how many

people contacted us, made friend requests, sent messages and left comments. The results were astounding. The majority of those who contacted us were males in Hawaii. They were interested in learning Japanese and helping us learn English. At no surprise to us, everyone seemed to have the same story. Most people wanted to meet us and made multiple requests to chat further through instant messenger or the phone and/or to hang out, pointing out that the best way to learn a language is to practice using it. One of the interesting things we found was that many of the males who became "friends" with us had, on their pages, nearly all young, Asian female friends. These men were obviously seeking out a particular type of girl.

The purpose of our project and presentation was not to discourage or encourage the use of MySpace, but to raise awareness. MySpace is a great tool for ESL students for many reasons, perhaps most importantly that it provides a 24/7 venue for practicing English. Isn't it, after all, an ESL teacher's dream come true to hear that their students are practicing English all the time?! However, users must be aware of the dangers, and the dangers tend to reach far beyond what many would ever conceive from people.

When the last day of the conference arrived, Carol and I walked up to our room only to discover that it was twice the size of the room we had previously presented in...and we were being web-casted! While we should have been informed of this earlier to give authorization, it would have only intensified the nerves. We did give authorization then,

and our presentation should be available on the TESOL website soon.

Our presentation was, I feel, once again successful. We succeeded in getting our message of awareness across to a very large audience with both the conference presentation and the web-cast. The audience that day did not fill the room but had many important questions and insights of their own. Many commented on further research that they would like to do on the topic and showed interest in further research that we might do. Overall, I felt it was a meaningful talk for the members of the audience and us.

The TESOL Conference turned out to be an amazing learning opportunity for me. In the days preceding my presentation, I had the opportunity to network with people and learn about other job opportunities within the field as well as learn from the presentations of others. At the end of the four days, I felt relieved to be free from my presentation and the blue bags. I can say without hesitation that the experience of attending and presenting at the conference was rewarding, and while I spent a significant amount of time feeling nerve-wracked and anxious, given the opportunity I would do it all again. I am very grateful to Hawaii TESOL for helping me achieve such satisfaction this year.

About the Author

Nicole Ernst is an assistant professor at TransPacific Hawaii College. She has been a member of Hawaii TESOL for several years and has served as Membership Secretary for the past three



HITESOL/ TESOL Ukraine Sister Affiliate Luncheon

By Shawn Ford

During the 2007 International TESOL Convention in Seattle, Washington, three HITESOL members met with three representatives from TESOL Ukraine to further our sister affiliate status. Perry Christensen and Mark Wolfersberger, both HITESOL members from BYUH, along with HITESOL member Shawn Ford – of the KCC Fords – treated Jenya Pronoza and Dr. Olya Yashenkova, both TESOL Ukraine members, and Alyona Sukhinina, Regional English Language Officer at the U.S. Embassy in Kyiv, to lunch at the Rock Bottom Brewery.

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Sister Affiliate Luncheon (cont.)

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During the two-and-a-half-hour meeting, the six representatives focused on things that the affiliates could do to bring the sister affiliates closer together. Here are some ideas that they talked about:

- Continue the annual lunch meeting at the TESOL International conference to maintain affiliate status and exchange ideas and information. The more purposeful our meetings, the better, which means having an agenda beforehand of discussion ideas from both affiliates. An overriding, broad topic can always be "How can we make our sister affiliate status more meaningful?"
- Continue the article exchanges for affiliate newsletters. While we currently exchange articles, can we expand the number of articles exchanged in each newsletter? Can we expand the Ukraine section of *The Word*?
- Satellite broadcast the HITESOL Practical Workshop (from KCC or UH Manoa). We have details about satellite broadcasting through UH. KCC has recently acquired some sort of satellite broadcasting capability from UH. Perhaps KCC could become a partner in a communication exchange project between the sister affiliates.



- One major concern with simulcasting our workshops is the time difference; Hawaii and Ukraine are 12 hours apart. The solution for simulcasting would be to have our workshop at 8:00 on a Friday evening so they could view it at the main university in Kyiv at 8:00 am on a Saturday morning, or have it at 8:00 on a Saturday morning so they could view it at 8:00 that evening Kyiv time.
- Send videotapes or podcasts of select HITESOL annual conference sessions to be played at the Ukraine TESOL annual conference. Our conference is in late winter, and their conference is now in late spring. We would tape or podcast certain sessions at our annual conference. If taped, we would send the tapes plus any session handouts to Ukraine, and they would play them in a special session room during their conference. If podcasted, we would archive them and place them and any session handouts on our webspace so Ukraine could download the podcasts and handouts for their conference. They would have a moderator on-hand who will have talked via email or Skype to the session presenters. This moderator would pass out any session handouts, play the tape or podcast and answer any questions afterwards.
- Also, send videotapes or podcasts of select Ukraine TE-

SOL annual conference sessions to be played at the HITESOL annual conference. Same process as above, but most likely just videotaped; they are concerned about having the ability to podcast and archive sessions electronically. Videotapes would be mailed to us, and associated handouts would be emailed.

- Establish a discussion board on the HITESOL website. To get it started quickly, we could use a discussion board hosting website and provide a link from our HITESOL website. For more permanence and flexibility, we could get a simple discussion board program and install it on HITESOL website. Discussion categories could be released in stages over several years, for example:
 1. HITESOL and Ukraine TESOL teacher information exchange
 2. HITESOL and Ukraine TESOL teacher materials exchange
 3. Hawaii and Ukraine teachers-in-training info exchange
 4. Hawaii and Ukraine ESL student information exchange
 5. Hawaii and Ukraine teachers-in-training/ ESL student tutoring exchange
- In the future, exchange teachers between HITESOL and Ukraine TESOL. For one month to a semester at a time, the two affiliates could exchange teachers to observe/ co-teach in affiliate institutions.
- In the future, exchange participants for HITESOL and Ukraine TESOL annual conferences.
- In the future, provide teacher training for Ukrainian teachers in Hawaii teacher-training programs: BYUH, HPU, KCC, UHM.

These ideas have since been forwarded to the HITESOL board to decide which ideas are realistic and to prioritize the realistic ones for future action.

Overall, our sister affiliate meeting was extremely positive and productive, as the previous list of ideas and the glowing photos attest. Let's continue to support the HITESOL and TESOL Ukraine sister affiliate relationship by implementing some of these ideas and thinking of further ways that we can bring our groups closer.

Shawn Ford is a lecturer in the ESOL program at Kapi'olani Community College, where he teaches immigrant and international students from the beginning to advanced levels. His current interests include purposeful reading and writing, input grammar, and teacher training

Critical Reflection: Collaborative Efforts to Bring ESL Students and Native Speaker Students Together to Promote Mutually Beneficial Interaction

By Sherri Leibert Fujita

What are some of the most common complaints you get from your ESL students? A common complaint that we used to receive at the Intensive English Program (IEP) at Hawaii Community College was that the students were not getting enough time to communicate with other college students or the local community.

The Problem

Here are some examples of comments that students made in our program evaluation.

- More conversation.
- We need conversation to we want to talk to foreigner (*non-Japanese*) more
- L/S (*Listening and Speaking*)class too many (*students*), less chances to speak.
- To speak local people.
- I want to learn Hawaiian community.
- I want to talk with American more, so I hope you make more chance to speak them.

(italics were added to clarify the comments)

Despite the fact that we were providing our ESL students with a conversation partner for one hour, once a week in our Conversation Partner Program, and several chances in each 8-week session for students to interact with community members, they were asking for more!

On top of the demand from our students to provide more conversation and interaction, we were facing an administrative nightmare. Administering our Conversation Partner Program was time-consuming and expensive. We had to advertise for student workers, interview them, get them formally hired and orientated. Someone would then have the daunting task of making a schedule to pair up to 30 international students with conversation partners (CPs) for weekly meetings.

When we evaluated our Conversation Partner Program, we got feedback like this:

Typical complaints from IEP students:

- I didn't like my schedule.
- My CP was late, did not show up, brought her boyfriend with her.
- When my CP cancelled it was hard for me to contact him/her to reschedule.
- My CP had different interests, so we ran out of things to talk about.
- My CP only talked about what he/ she was interested in.

- My CP wanted to date me.
- It was boring.
- I dreaded it.

Typical complaints from CPs:

- My student was late, did not show up
- When my student cancelled it was hard for me to contact him/her to reschedule
- It was hard to keep a conversation going for 6 weeks

Solution

Because of the problems we were encountering, we set out to research what other IEPs in Hawaii and on the US mainland were doing with regard to conversation partners. We found that there are many Conversation Partner Programs in existence and that almost all of them were part of a service learning program set up on campus which gave the local students who participated credit in their regular classes. We also found that a number of schools opted for "conversation lounges" or "international cafes" where students would meet together in one space and break up into small groups.

We decided to see if there were any departments on the shared campuses of Hawaii Community College and the University of Hawaii, Hilo (UH-H). With great luck, we managed to begin an email exchange with Dr. Yumiko Ohara and Dr. Scott Saft of the Linguistics Department at the University of Hawaii, Hilo. We began slowly with a cultural exchange project in which IEP students visited the Linguistics classroom. The students from both sides came armed with questionnaires, so there was plenty to talk about from personal topics to questions on experiences learning a second language.

Comments from Linguistics Students:

- We should do this more often.
- I wish we had more time to talk to them. They were great. We learned a lot about language acquisition.
- At the beginning, we had to adjust our speech a little but we had great time. I cannot wait till next week.
- It was sooo much fun. It was the first time I talked with ESL students and I really learned a lot about what they think about learning English, living in a foreign country, etc. Thank you.
- When I was in Japan past summer, I really look forward to working with native speaker volunteers who came to talk to us and I am glad that we were able to do this for the ESL students at Hawaii Community College.

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Critical Reflection... (cont.)

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From this experience, spontaneous study groups and language exchange partnerships were formed between the Linguistics students and IEP students. It seemed that because there was so much shared interest, the love of learning languages and about other cultures, these students naturally had a great deal in common. From the Spring Semester of this year, we began experimenting with having Linguistics students work as volunteer tutors with IEP students who were struggling with their classwork.

Finally we completely revamped the Conversation Partner system and tried out the concept of a Conversation Lounge. Now all the IEP students and Linguistics students meet at the same time and place each week, and students are paired with different partners each week. If someone doesn't show up or if someone is late, it doesn't matter because there is always someone to talk to.

Comments from IEP Students on the Conversation Lounge

- Fun time, always change partner, so hard if only one partner.
- Change a partner is good.
- The IEP conversation lounge is very good.
- Enjoying this time, I want more time like this.

Conclusion

Overall, we have had an extremely positive experience working with the Linguistics Department on this project. Many

of the problems that we encountered with the old system have been solved just by working with this select group of students.

The Linguistics students have a proven interest in international education and language acquisition. This benefits our students and the experiences our IEP students have enhances the understanding the Linguistics students have of second language acquisition. We hope to continue working with the UHH Linguistics Department on this project for the mutual benefit of both our student groups.



About the Author

Sherrri Leibert Fujita has been teaching ESL/ EFL for over 15 years and is the Coordinator of the Intensive English Program at Hawaii Community College. Sherrri's professional interests are in testing, content-based curriculum development and writing materials based on authentic sources.

The Pacific Educational Conference (PEC) will be held in Honolulu, July 9-12, 2007 at McKinley High School.

The PEC is one of the largest educational conferences in the western Pacific and a major source of professional development opportunities for educators. This year, it is being co-hosted by the Hawaii Department of Education, Pacific Resources for Education and Learning, and the University of Hawaii-Manoa College of Education. The theme of this year's conference is Language Acquisition: Knowledge that Empowers.

Early registration is \$125 if postmarked by May 31, and student registration is \$50. Online registration is available at <http://pec.prel.org/cs/peccpublic/create/pecreg?x-template=step1.form>.

Featured speakers will include experts in ESL, indigenous education, and reading:

- Ann Cunningham of UC Berkeley
- Gerald Duffy of UC North Carolina
- Jana Echevarria of UC Long Beach
- Michael Kamil of Stanford University
- Robin Scarcella (the Director of the ESL Program and Lecturer of the ESL Program/Linguistics Department of the University of California, Irvine) will be one of the plenary speakers.
- Graham Smith (the Distinguished Professor in Education & Visiting Scholar in Indigenous Education), Department of Educational Studies of the University of British Columbia
- Dorothy Strickland of Rutgers University

More information about the PEC and online/downloadable registration and presenter forms can be found at the previously mentioned website or contact Gloria Kishi and the Conference Organizing Committee via email at pec2007@hawaii.edu.

Reading British and American Press in University Classrooms

By Yulia Yaremenko, Maryna Denysenko

Without a doubt the press is the most powerful means of new vocabulary introduction. Besides, it provides the readers with extra-linguistic information, familiarizes them with different culture points, creates motivation, develops critical thinking, and encourages acquisition of real-life skills.

News Roundup is designed to develop linguistic and pragmatic competences of Ukrainian university students. The material is compiled to enable students to dynamically develop three of the four language skills: reading, speaking and writing.

The textbook consists of 26 newspaper articles, each based on a particular topic (Education, Travel, Sport, Space Exploration, Festivals, etc.) and accompanied by a set of exercises or five closely related activity sections, each focused on a particular aim. The main purpose of the aforementioned exercises is to introduce and analyze in as great detail as possible the newly coined words, word combinations, idioms, and grammar structures, which have sprung up in the English vocabulary, both British and American.

Treating a newspaper article as an educational instrument, we should develop our students' learning strategies as well. We should teach them to build understanding of what is being read with the help of context rather than a dictionary because word meaning tends to have fuzzy edges like "stretch pullovers". So creating *News Roundup*, we tried to emphasize the following abilities:

- recognizing and understanding standard codified forms (acronyms, abbreviations, initials, special terms);
- using contextual clues and applying knowledge of word formation processes recognize unknown vocabulary;
- using linguistic and non-linguistic knowledge to identify type (genre) of text, predict nature and topic of the text;
- comparing a number of texts for different purposes.



Here is text 17 (the shortest one), accompanied by a set of exercises taken from *News Roundup*.

NEWS IN BRIEF INTRODUCTION

What's the news of the day? Work in groups of three or four to make a list of seven important events.

READING

Boys Rescued from Cliff Collapse

SEVENTEEN people, including two eight-year-old boys, had to be **rescued** yesterday after about 750,000 tons of mud and rock **collapsed** from cliffs onto a beach in Dorset. The boys were on a cliff path at Charmouth when a section about 500 ft long by 120 ft wide **gave way**. They slid down to the beach where they became **trapped up** to their chests in the mud. Coastguards **pulled them out**.

'UN role' for Blair

BILL CLINTON believes that Tony Blair would make a good secretary-general of the United Nations. He said that he had told Blair there was "a lot of good you can do in the world" after leaving **No 10**.

Saddam Judge Quits

THE chief judge in Saddam Hussein's trial **has resigned in protest at pressure** from the Iraqi government. Officials are trying to talk Rizgar Amin, a Kurd, out of his decision. Amin has been accused of being too **lenient**.

Thousands Queue for Harry Potter Part

ABOUT 15,000 teenage girls queued at a hall in central London yesterday in the hope of securing a part in Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix, the latest film in the J.K. Rowling series. Some began waiting on Friday night at the hall in Westminster to audition for the role of the **trainee** wizard Luna Lovegood. Only a few **got through** to the next round. Production is due to start next month.

Ambulance Crash

A MOTORIST was killed and his passenger suffered a broken shoulder yesterday when their car **was in collision** with an ambulance in Kings-bury, northwest London. Both victims were men. The driver was believed to be in his thirties.

New University Test

UNIVERSITIES are to introduce an entrance test designed **to increase** the number of state school pupils studying medicine. Most of the 16,000 applicants this year will have **to sit the two-hour UK Clinical Aptitude Test**.

From The Sunday Times 15 January, 2006

Reading British and American Press ... (cont.)

VOCABULARY

A.. Find words and phrases in the text which mean the following.

e.g. not strict in the way you punish someone or control their behaviour = lenient
 someone who is being trained for a job
 test on natural ability or skill

an accident in which two or more people or vehicles hit each other while moving in different directions
 to move smoothly over a surface while continuing to touch it, or to make something move in this way

B.. Now find these phrases in the text and (a) write a short explanation for each of them; (b) use each of these phrases in a sentence.

1) *collapsed (from cliffs)* = suddenly fell down because its structure was weak or it had been hit with a sudden violent force

e.g. Uncle Ted's chair **collapsed** under his weight.

2) *has resigned in protest at sth* 3) *to sit the two-hour test* 4) *after leaving No 10* 5) *was in collision*

C. Find 3-4 synonyms for each of the following words. Give an example of any situation where this or that word can be used.

e.g. 'to rescue'

pick up = to save someone from a dangerous and distant place by taking them away in a boat or aircraft **e.g.** A helicopter was sent to pick up the survivors.

get sb out of = to help someone to escape from a situation in which they have a lot of difficult problems to deal with **e.g.** You got us into this mess, so you can get us out of it.

salvage = to save something, especially something valuable, from a situation in which other things have already been damaged, destroyed or lost **e.g.** Divers hope to salvage some of the ship's cargo.

save, rescue, come to the rescue, salvage, throw sb a lifeline = to save an organisation when it needs help, especially by giving financial support **e.g.** If our business goes into debt, the parent company will throw a lifeline to us.

bail out = to save a person or organisation from serious financial difficulty, especially when their problems are caused by bad management and when the money that saves them is provided by the government **e.g.** The government bailed out the ailing car company in order to protect jobs.

lenient to resign to protest to trap crash

D. Find an antonym for each of the following words.

to increase – to decrease

lenient to rescue to quit

E. Looking at the context sentences below write out a definition of the italicized verbs.

1. Only a few *got through* to the next round. 2. Coastguards *pulled them out*. 3. The boys were on a cliff path at Charmouth when a section about 500ft long by 120ft wide *gave way*. 4. They *slid down* to the beach where they became trapped up to their chests in the mud.

LANGUAGE WORK

F. Look at the context sentences below and explain the use of the verbals.

1. Seventeen people had *to be rescued* yesterday... 2. He said he had told Blair there was "a lot of good you can do in the world" after *leaving* No 10. 3. Amin has been accused of *being* too lenient. 4. Some began *waiting* on Friday night... 5. Production is due *to start* next month. 6. The driver was believed to be in his thirties. 7. Universities are *to introduce* an entrance test *designed to increase* the number of state school pupils *studying* medicine.

Monitoring the students, we see that selected reading matters can help them adapt freely to the British and American authentic newspaper articles as well as culture, way of life, learning etc.

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WHAT IS HAWAI'I TESOL?

Hawai'i TESOL is a non-profit educational organization committed to building a community of professionals teaching ESL (English as a Second Language) in the State of Hawai'i.

Hawai'i TESOL works to promote the highest standards in employment and instruction, improve professional support and interaction, and increase public and government recognition of the ESL field.

Hawai'i TESOL provides opportunities for networking and professional development. We welcome all interested individuals to active membership.

All activities are coordinated by an Executive Board consisting of the officers elected by the membership at the annual business meeting, and chairs of active committees.

MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

THE WORD— The newsletter written and edited by Hawai'i TESOL. Articles submitted from members discuss language learning and teaching, practical classroom techniques, and other topics relevant to ESL professionals. *The Word* is passed out at meetings and is available on our website.

MEETINGS – Five times per year, Hawai'i TESOL has meetings open to the entire membership. Each meeting includes time to meet other ESL professionals and to promote networking.

PROFESSIONAL INVOLVEMENT—Members of Hawai'i TESOL are responsible for developing programs for the annual Practical Workshops and Conference, and will have the opportunity to give presentations or workshops at these events.

DISCOUNTS—Membership in Hawai'i TESOL also provides discounts to the Annual Hawai'i TESOL Conference.

TRAVEL GRANTS — Hawai'i TESOL offers travel grants for members to attend out annual conference (from a neighbor island) as well as conferences on the mainland or abroad. For details, visit our website www.hawaiiitesol.org.

Disclaimer: TESOL membership does not include affiliate membership, nor does membership in an affiliate grant you TESOL membership.

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Article Submission Guidelines: *The Word*



Topics

We welcome any topic which would be of interest to HITESOL members or ESL professionals in Hawaii. We are interested in, for example: recommended internet sites (or a tech type column), book reviews, a grad student's perspective, field trips/learning outside the classroom, reports from members working overseas, content-based teaching ideas, using video and music in the classroom, online teaching, CALL, a "gripes" column, DOE news/concerns, K-12 news, outer island news, applying theory to practice, interview with someone in the field, etc. This list is by no means exhaustive. Please feel free to send any articles about these topics or others that you consider interesting to ESL educators in Hawaii. (You do not have to be a member of HITESOL to submit an article).

Format & Style

Articles should be no more than 4 pages, double-spaced, Times New Roman font, 12 point, attached as an MS Word document. Accompanying photos or clip art are optional but welcome. Please also include a short biography statement about the author (email address optional). In general, articles are written in a fairly informal, non-scholarly style. Please refer to previous issues of *The Word* to get a sense of the types of articles which appear in the newsletter, or contact the editors with questions.

We look forward to receiving your submissions!

Elise Fader and Ashwin Pandit Co-editors, *Yukiko Yamaguchi* layout & design editor of *The Word*.

