The CATESOL Journal

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CONTENTS

Editors' Note.....**vii**
Mark Roberge and Margi Wald

2013 GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH AWARD

Vocabulary Assessment With Varying Levels of Context: A Replication Study.....**1**
Brenna Shepherd

This replication study investigates how the level of context in vocabulary assessment affects the scores on tests of American idioms. Using Uçkun's methodology of 3 tests with 3 levels of context, 85 participants varying in level from high-beginner to advanced took an online test consisting of 30 questions, 10 questions for each level of context. The tests were matching, sentence-level gap filling, and rational-delete cloze. The participants were nonnative speakers of English living in the US. The scores were analyzed for mean differences and in regard to differences in native language and English proficiency level. No significant differences were seen for native language, but there were significant differences for context level and proficiency level. As an exploratory part of the study, 17 of the participants were asked to perform a think-aloud protocol task while taking the test. Their responses were recorded and analyzed descriptively for insight into test-taking strategies.

FEATURE ARTICLES

Leveling the Playing Field: The Efficacy of Thinking Maps on English Language Learner Students' Writing.....**24**
Jamal Cooks and Anita Sunseri

Many students, especially English language learners (ELLs), struggle with writing expository texts. This study examined the impact of several writing strategies on ELLs' writing skills, including prewriting strategies and scaffolding strategies inherent in the Thinking Maps (TM) program. The purpose of the study was to see if ELLs were able to use these strategies to express their ideas more effectively in compositions in a more organized way. The participants were 8 students in grades 3 through 5 in the South Bay School District. The students were participating in an after-school writing class 2 days a week for 6 months. As a result, the overall average of students' writing scores in the areas of "Ideas" and "Organization" increased. While the overall averages were below the proficiency level (3.0), these writing strategies can be seen as having a positive impact on ELLs' writing skills.

Multicultural Teacher Education: Why Teachers Say It Matters in Preparing Them for English Language Learners.....**41**
Lan Quach Kolano, Liv Thorstensson Dávila, Joan Lachance, and Heather Coffey

Numerous studies show that mainstream classroom teachers still remain inadequately prepared to teach diverse students and lack the knowledge base and skills to teach English language learners (ELLs). This has profound implications, particularly in the Southeast, where the rate of school-aged Latino immigrants has grown significantly. Thus, this study examined the perceived effectiveness of teacher-training programs and professional-development experiences of 157 content-area teachers in North and South Carolina. Specifically, researchers analyzed self-report questionnaire data from teachers to explore the role of academic course work, professional development, and multicultural experiences in preparing teachers to work with ELLs and other diverse learners. Overall, teachers overwhelmingly reported feeling underprepared to work with this population until they sought more substantive academic training and professional-development experiences. Teachers had diverse experiences but reported that the quality of courses and depth of multicultural experiences had an impact on their attitudes and classroom practices.

L1 Use in FL Classrooms: Graduate Students' and Professors' Perceptions of English Use in Foreign Language Courses..... **66**
Patrick Gaebler

This report explores participant perspectives on L1 (English) use in foreign language classrooms. The study includes data collected from 25 participants, 23 students and 2 professors, from the Monterey Institute of International Studies (MIIS). A combination of classroom observations, interviews, and questionnaires were used to collect data. The data were triangulated to determine if the participants' views reflected their actual classroom practices. The data show that while some students found comfort in L1 use, others felt threatened by the L1 and viewed it as an interference. Furthermore, the professors respected their students' views and thus attempted to use the L1 accordingly. Rather than relying on the L1 to facilitate all communication, the professors and students alike included the L1 in their repertoire of learning and teaching strategies. This study suggests that the participants understand the value of L1 but realize that it is not the only tool available.

CATESOL EXCHANGES

Enriching Students' Linguistic Repertoires Through Text-Based Guided Output Tasks.....**95**
Natalie G. Koval

L2 input, such as a reading text, constitutes a rich source of information on how meanings are expressed in the L2. Helping learners to use this information effectively should be one of the main goals of L2 teaching. In this article, I propose text-based guided output (TBGO) as a technique for "pushing" learners to make better use of the learning opportunities that L2 text has to offer. I make a case for the integration of TBGO into text-based ESL lessons for adults and conclude by discussing important features of design and my own experience with this type of task in teaching a group of upper-intermediate–advanced university students during 1 semester.

Facilitating the Quest: A Case Study of Three Technologies in an EAPP Writing Classroom..... **106**
Kelley Calvert

As the web continues to morph, creating a more interlinked, connected, and hybridized human experience, educators are experiencing a generational shift in terms of comfort with technology. The number of technologies becoming available to students and teachers is dizzying. Within the array of possibility, this research considers three technological applications that facilitate the teaching and learning of writing: a writing blog, a word-of-the-day forum, and a storytelling grammar/style iMovie. In this exploratory research in a single graduate-level English for Academic and Professional Purposes (EAPP) classroom, pre- and postactivity surveys seem to suggest that students found technological tools helpful in gaining and retaining writing skills.

Using Free Online Materials as the Basis of an Upper-Level IEP Listening and Speaking Course..... **118**
Beth Sheppard

Freely available online videos are the basis of an Intensive English Program (IEP) listening and speaking course described in this article. Strands and activities of this course could easily be adapted for use in other institutions. For each strand of the course, rationales are stated, activities are described, and suggested online resources are listed.

English for New Citizens: Contributions of a Learner-Centered Vocational ESL Framework..... **129**
Lynnette Arnold

As immigration reform is on the table for the first time in two decades, proposals are being made involving a path to citizenship for the 12 million undocumented immigrants now in the country. This article suggests that, in addition to helping these immigrants meet the English-language requirement for citizenship, comprehensive immigration reform provides the field of TESOL with another opportunity to contribute to equality for the undocumented community by helping these new citizens obtain the language skills necessary for social and economic mobility. This article argues that vocational ESL, or VESL, is well suited for working with this population. A brief review of the history and underpinnings of VESL is followed by a more extended discussion of how VESL fits the specific characteristics and needs of these new citizens as language learners. The final section offers suggestions for expansion, advocating for close partnerships between VESL courses and students during all phases of the educational program. Learner-centered VESL for new immigrants constitutes adult education as a tool for social change, emphasizing the importance of social justice to the field of TESOL.

What Makes Critical Thinking Critical for Adult ESL Students..... **143**
Joshua P. Miekley

Critical-thinking skills help to prepare adult education students for a successful transition to college degree programs and for job advancement. Yet fostering critical thinking poses a challenge to ESL instructors. Brookfield (2012) provides a way forward for adult educators when he explains that the crux of critical thinking is to discover one's assumptions. The author describes how instructors can model uncovering their assumptions, thus creating a safer environment for students to engage in critical thinking. Three of Brookfield's critical- thinking tasks—speaking in tongues, the critical incident questionnaire, and scenario analysis—implemented during an intermediate ESL writing course at a community college are explained. Students' responses to these tasks are summarized and reflections on both the benefits and challenges of using critical-thinking tasks in ESL classes are described.

Semantic and Thematic List Learning of Second Language Vocabulary.....**151**
Javad Gholami and Sima Khezrlou

This article overviews research on second language vocabulary instruction with a specific focus on semantic and thematic vocabulary-clustering types. The theoretical benefits associated with both the semantic and thematic approaches, as well as the potential problems associated with them, are discussed. The conclusion drawn is that reinforcing the level of activation of target concepts during learning can lead to facilitation but only if interference from competing items is kept to a minimum. With respect to the incremental nature of vocabulary acquisition, learning programs need to boost learner engagement by embodying systematic, principled, and long-term practices.

REVIEWS
Kristiane M. Ridgway, Editor

***Becoming a Language Teacher: A Practical Guide to Second Language Learning and Teaching* (2nd ed.)**.....**163**
Elaine Kolker Horwitz
Reviewed by Maria C. Aldana

***A Course in English Language Teaching* (2nd ed.)**.....**166**
Penny Ur
Reviewed by Nooshan Ashtari

***ACTIVE Skills for Reading 3* (3rd ed.)**.....**169**
Neil J. Anderson
Reviewed by Sage Benson

***Interchange 1* (4th ed.)**.....**171**
Jack C. Richards (with Jonathan Hull and Susan Proctor)
Reviewed by Janine K. Black

50 Ways to Teach Them Writing: Tips for ESL/EFL Teachers.....**174**
Maggie Sokolik
Reviewed by Donna Genelin

Learning English for Academic Purposes:
***LEAP: Reading and Writing* (2nd ed.)..... 176**
Julia Williams
Reviewed by Mauricio Gonçalves

Answers May Vary:
***Essays on Teaching English as a Second Language*..... 178**
Dorothy Zemach
Reviewed by Brandon A. Harris

***Select Readings: Upper-Intermediate* (2nd ed.)..... 180**
Linda Lee and Jean Bernard
Reviewed by Sarah Hoch

***College Writing Skills With Readings* (9th ed.)..... 183**
John Langan
Reviewed by Sheri Jordan

Tips for Teaching Culture:
***Practical Approaches to Intercultural Communication*..... 186**
Ann C. Wintergerst and Joe McVeigh
Reviewed by Michael Lessard-Clouston

50 Ways to Teach Them Speaking:
***Tips for ESL/EFL Teachers*.....188**
Janine Sepulveda
Reviewed by Hannah Malone

Discovering Fiction:
***A Reader of American Short Stories, Book 2*.....190**
Judith Kay and Rosemary Gelshenen
Reviewed by Joseph Nevarez

Guidelines for Submission.....193