

Promoting Collaboration: Using Computer-mediated Communication Tools in the MATESOL Practicum Course

- The traditional MATESOL practicum course involves placing teachers-in-preparation under the supervision of mentor teachers. While this arrangement allows individual teachers-in-preparation to develop a strong relationship with their mentor teachers, it often prevents them from engaging in a collaborative relationship with their peers. This paper describes how computer-mediated communication (CMC) tools have been integrated in a practicum course in order to promote peer support and collaboration. The paper concludes that the integration of CMC tools into the practicum course allows teachers-in-preparation to give and receive such support, to assume more responsibility for their own learning, and to be provided with increased opportunities for self-paced learning.

In the traditional Master of Arts for Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (MATESOL) practicum course, teachers-in-preparation are placed in different classrooms and perform a variety of tasks under the supervision of their mentor teachers. While this arrangement allows individual teachers-in-preparation to develop a strong relationship with their mentor teachers, it often prevents them from engaging in a collaborative relationship with their peer teachers-in-preparation. This lack of collaboration may result in a feeling of isolation and anxiety and in the construction of knowledge in an idiosyncratic manner (Schlagal, Trathen, & Blanton, 1996). In this article, I will describe how computer-mediated communication (CMC) tools have been integrated in a practicum course offered

at California State University, Los Angeles (CSULA) in order to promote support and collaboration for teachers-in-preparation (See Appendix A for course syllabus).

Integrating Computer-mediated Communication Tools in the Practicum Course

The practicum course described in this article is the last in a sequence of three 40-hour courses that meet over successive 10-week terms. The courses are designed to introduce novice teachers to current instructional methods for teaching ESL/EFL for survival and academic purposes. The first course in the sequence, "Methods of Teaching Second Languages," addresses current instructional methods for teaching ESL/EFL to students at beginning through advanced levels. The course has three components. The first component is weekly demonstrations of techniques and strategies, followed by whole class face-to-face debriefings designed to promote reflection on how the techniques and strategies relate to theory. The second component is microteaching. Microteaching involves the development and implementation of five mini-lessons integrating the techniques and strategies demonstrated in the course. The third component involves the use of World-Wide-Web Course Tools (WebCT), a Web-based tool developed at the University of British Columbia that facilitates the creation of Web-based educational environments (Goldberg & Salari, 1997).

WebCT offers a variety of CMC tools, including: a conferencing tool, group presentation areas, electronic messaging (e-mail), synchronous chat areas, and an asynchronous Web-based bulletin board (BB) system. The synchronous chat areas involve "real-time" communication: participants are on-line at the same time and interact simultaneously. Asynchronous Web-based BB discussions do not involve "real-time" communication; that is, Web-based BB discussion participants are on-line (reading and posting messages) at different times. Such Web-based BB discussions are "threaded" in that they allow discussion participants to view the chronological and hierarchical relationships of postings.

Emphasis in the teaching methods course is placed on the asynchronous Web-based BB system since it is designed to promote collaboration and communication. Course participants use the Web-based Bulletin Board (BB) to engage in six group-led discussions designed to allow them to reflect on the course readings. These Web-based BB discussions, which are completed outside the classroom environment, are followed by class debriefings.

The second course in the sequence, "Teaching ESL for Academic Purposes," focuses on the theory, research, and practice of preparing ESL/EFL students for academic study. Course requirements include: react-

ing to course readings, completing a textbook review, and developing an instructional unit applying the principles of English for Academic Purposes, English for Specific Purposes, or Content-based Instruction.

The final course in the sequence, "Practicum in ESL," is designed to provide novice teachers with a supervised practicum experience in teaching ESL. The course includes three components that characterize traditional practicum courses: supervised field experience, group meetings, and individual conferences (adapted from Brinton, 1996).

The supervised field-experience component involves assigning teachers-in-preparation to an instructional setting of their choice (e.g., K-12, adult ESL, intensive English program, community college). In this setting, they complete a variety of tasks under the supervision of a mentor teacher. These tasks include—but are not limited to—developing lesson plans and activities, assisting the mentor teacher with lesson delivery, responding to individual students' needs, and developing and teaching five to seven mini-lessons.

The group meeting component involves twice-a-month sessions focusing on different topics (e.g., using Web-based technology to fulfill practicum-related tasks; designing lesson plans and classroom materials; promoting classroom interaction by implementing various grouping arrangements; developing skills for self- and peer-observation; sharing successful classroom practices implemented throughout the term).

The third component, individual conferences between the teacher educator and the teachers-in-preparation, consists of meetings held prior to and after observed lessons. These conferences allow for the joint identification of up to two areas of concern that become the focus of the classroom observation and subsequent work.

In addition to the three components that characterize traditional practicum courses, the course described in this article includes the use of two of the CMC tools available on WebCT. These are the asynchronous Web-based BB system and e-mail. Figure 1 (on page 64) illustrates the home page of the practicum course Web site.

The asynchronous Web-based BB system is used weekly throughout the course. Every week, novice teachers, mentor teachers, and the teacher educator engage in Web-based BB discussions focused on the needs of the teachers-in-preparation. These novice teachers take weekly turns identifying and posting "burning issues" (Irujo & Johnson, 1997)—questions or topics of concern that they have identified in the context of their classrooms. Peers and the teacher educator respond to these weekly postings. While mentor teachers also participate in the discussions, time constraints may lead them to do so only occasionally. Figure 2 (on page 65) presents a sample Web-based BB discussion assignment and its corresponding schedule.

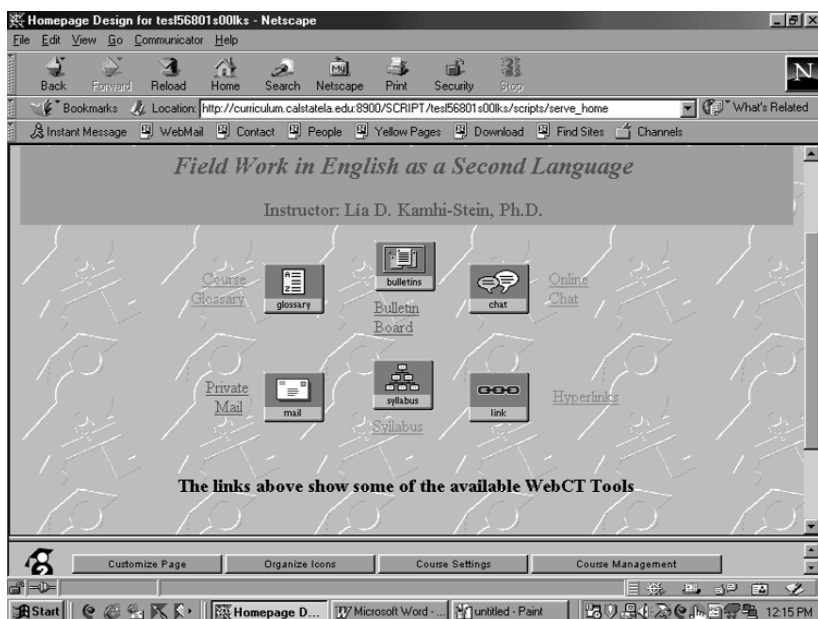


Figure 1. “Field Work in English as a Second Language” Web page at http://curriculum.calstatela.edu:8900/SCRIPT/tes1568s1lks/scripts/serve_home.

The second Web-based CMC tool used in the practicum course is the WebCT e-mail system. E-mail, used from the third week forward, allows individual teachers-in-preparation to engage in private conversations with the course instructor about issues that directly affect them. These issues may include their instructional needs, teaching schedules, concerns regarding their status as nonnative English speakers (NNEs), and their relationship with their mentor teachers. Unless teachers-in-preparation choose to share their entries with their peers, all e-mail messages remain confidential.

Benefits Arising from the Integration of CMC Tools in the Practicum

The integration of Web-based BB discussions into traditional teacher training courses often results in two immediate benefits: (1) it promotes the construction of knowledge as a social activity and (2) it allows teachers to work at their own pace.

Each of you will take weekly turns identifying a “burning issue” (Irujo & Johnson, 1997). A burning issue is a question or a topic of concern that you have identified in the context of your teaching and classroom experience. You will post the burning issue on the WebCT BB by the date and time indicated below, and your peers and the instructor will respond to your posting. Please note that your mentor teachers have been invited to participate in the BB discussions; since they are very busy, however, they may choose to do so only occasionally. When you post your burning issue, make sure to give it a number and a title (e.g., *Burning Issue # 4. To what extent should we cover grammar in the language classroom?*). When you respond to a posting: (a) stay on topic; (b) be concise (Irujo & Johnson, 1997); (c) respond personally; (d) keep a positive tone; (e) do not be overly concerned about grammar.

| Posting of Burning Issues | Name of the person posting the Burning Issue | Posting of responses by all teachers-in-preparation |
|----------------------------------|---|--|
| Practice message | Instructor | In class |
| By April 9, 8:00 p.m. | Jennifer | By April 15, 8:00 p.m. |
| By April 16, 8:00 p.m. | Rodrigo | By April 22, 8:00 p.m. |
| By April 23, 8:00 p.m. | James | By April 29, 8:00 p.m. |
| By April 30, 8:00 p.m. | Mary | By May 6, 8:00 p.m. |
| By May 7, 8:00 p.m. | Linda | By May 13, 8:00 p.m. |
| By May 14, 8:00 p.m. | Tomoko | By May 20, 8:00 p.m. |
| By May 21, 8:00 p.m. | Sung | By May 27, 8:00 p.m. |
| By May 28, 8:00 p.m. | Cynthia | By June 3, 8:00 p.m. |

Figure 2. Sample “Burning Issues” Schedule.

Web-based BB discussions promote the construction of knowledge as a social activity

Web-based discussions allow teachers-in-preparation, mentor teachers, and the course instructor to share their perspectives on teaching in an atmosphere of mutual trust and respect and with the understanding that all of the participants have something to learn from one another. In the following quotation, a teacher-in-preparation reflects upon the value of such sharing:

I am thankful that I was introduced to WebCT, a wonderful tool. It helped me so much in collecting information, ideas from peers, instructors and other reliable sources. We also shared ideas and discussed “burning issues.”

The high degree of responsibility and control that the novice teachers assume in a Web-based BB discussion also promotes the construction of knowledge as a social activity. Such egalitarianism is in contrast to traditional face-to-face interactions, in which the instructional sequence is usually determined by the course instructor (Cazden, 1988). Instead, most of the “burning issues” posted are driven by the needs and interests of the teachers-in-preparation and the role of the course instructor in setting the instructional sequence is minimal. In the course described here, only two of the 12 “burning issues” were posted by the instructor (see Figure 3).

| “Burning Issues” | Posted by |
|--|------------------|
| Your Beliefs as Classroom Teachers | Instructor |
| Ideas on the “Dress Code” | Instructor |
| Balancing the Needs of Individual Students with Curriculum Guidelines and Goals | Jennifer |
| Standardized Teacher Testing | Rodrigo |
| Placing Students with Different Proficiency Levels in the Same Class | James |
| “That Test Was Too Hard!!” | Jennifer |
| Teaching Noncount and Count Nouns and Verb Tenses | Jennifer |
| Need Help with Ideas for Spring Program. Help!!!! | Rodrigo |
| Dealing with Your Personal Demons | Mary |
| Topics in an American Culture Class | Cynthia |
| Different Ways to Share the Information After Group Discussions | Tomoko |
| Teaching Students Who Are Linguistically Low and Cognitively High | Sung |

Figure 3. “Burning Issues” Posted in the Course of a Term.

Web-based BB discussions are characterized by a high degree of interaction. In the process of negotiating information, teachers-in-preparation direct their responses to selected peers; very often, they engage in multiple dialogues. For example, as shown in the thread presented in Figure 4, Jennifer first posted a “burning issue” (posting # 256). The following week, she directed her response to a posting by Cynthia (posting # 265). Additionally, on the same day, she directed another response to a posting by Mary (posting # 260). Finally, toward the end of the week, she directed a posting to another message by Cynthia (posting # 275). An excerpt of the transcripts reflecting the multiple dialogues in which teachers-in-preparation participated is presented in Appendix B.

256. Jennifer (Thu, Apr. 8, 1999, 16:11)
260. Mary (Sat, Apr. 10, 1999, 20:02)
262. Jennifer (Sun, Apr. 11, 1999, 16:22)
263. Instructor (Sun, Apr. 11, 1999, 18:17)
265. Cynthia (Mon, Apr. 12, 1999, 11:39)
268. Jennifer (Mon, Apr. 12, 1999, 23:23)
279. Linda (Thu, Apr. 15, 1999, 21:02)
266. Jennifer (Mon, Apr. 12, 1999, 11:44)
267. Tomoko (Mon, Apr. 12, 1999, 21:51)
269. Jennifer (Mon, Apr. 12, 1999, 23:33)
270. Instructor (Tue, Apr. 13, 1999, 18:21)
274. Tomoko (Wed, Apr. 13, 1999, 20:49)
282. Instructor (Thu, Apr. 15, 1999, 23:51)
275. Cynthia (Thu, Apr. 15, 1999, 15:16)
271. Elis (Tue, Apr. 13, 1999, 18:38)
276. Instructor (Thu, Apr. 15, 1999, 18:28)
272. Rodrigo (Tue, Apr. 13, 1999, 22:00)
273. Sung (Tue, Apr. 13, 1999, 23:00)
284. James (Fri, Apr. 16, 1999, 18:06)

Figure 4. *Typical Thread Observed in the Web-based BB Discussions.*

Another feature of the Web-based BB system that promotes the construction of knowledge as a social activity is a forum that allows teachers-in-preparation to share and build upon ideas discussed in the practicum course and/or other MATESOL courses. For example, the dialogue in Appendix B illustrates how the BB system allows novice teachers to make connections across courses such as “Practicum in ESL” and “Teaching ESL for

Academic Purposes.” It also allows for input and guidance from mentor teachers, as shown in the dialogue in Appendix B where Elis, one of the mentor teachers, collaborates and assists these novices in developing a repertoire of teaching techniques.

Web-based BB discussions allow teachers-in-preparation to work at their own pace

The asynchronous nature of the BB system allows all course participants to work at their own pace. As noted by several teachers-in-preparation, the fact that the BB system does not require them to perform under pressure creates a nonthreatening atmosphere, thus leading to better learning conditions. The asynchronous nature of the BB system is particularly appealing to NNESs, who often benefit from the reduction in the social and linguistic barriers experienced in face-to-face interactions. One such NNES notes: “WebCT allows NNESs to have control over their own learning process. WebCT doesn’t threaten us and allows us to focus on the burning issue we are discussing.”

Another appealing feature of the Web-based BB system is the visible record of discussions it provides, allowing the developing teachers to retrieve, reread, and reflect upon postings made during the term. Thus, the integration of Web-based e-mail dialogues in the practicum can result in a reduction in the social distance between the teacher educator and individual teachers-in-preparation. In contrast to the group nature of the discussions fostered by the Web-based BB system, the Web-based e-mail system allows the teacher educator to address issues that have an immediate effect on the teaching performance of individual teachers-in-preparation.

The concerns raised in the Web-based e-mail dialogues are of two types. Teachers-in preparation usually report and reflect on their teaching experience, ask for assistance on the development of specific lesson plans, and share concerns regarding their practicum experience. Additionally, NNESs often share their anxiety regarding their status as second language (L2) speakers and receive emotional and professional support regarding this issue. Following is an excerpt from an e-mail entry reflecting the concern expressed by a nonnative English-speaking teacher-in-preparation:

I have a question. An ESL teacher should provide correct input. However, since I am not a native speaker, occasionally, I may use an odd expression native speakers seldom use or I may make a mistake. It’s not good to give the wrong input. Neither is it a good idea to ask the mentor teacher to correct the mistake in front of the students. Do you agree with me? I think teachers who are non-

native speakers can help students better in different ways. Could you give me some advice on how to become a better nonnative English-speaking teacher? I am concerned about providing inappropriate input. What do you think?

Conclusion

The integration of CMC tools, including the Web-based BB and e-mail systems, has enhanced the learning experience of the teachers-in-preparation enrolled in the practicum course. Specifically, the use of CMC tools has allowed teachers-in-preparation to give and receive support, thus promoting a lower anxiety level than that typically experienced by novice teachers. It has also allowed them to assume more responsibility for their own learning and has provided a forum for self-paced learning. Moreover, the integration of CMC tools in the practicum course has motivated experienced ESL teachers to become mentor teachers. According to several of the mentor teachers involved in the course, the collaborative approach to teacher preparation provided by the use of CMC tools is appealing to experienced teachers with a desire for professional growth.

Finally, the integration of CMC tools into the practicum course has allowed teachers-in-preparation to develop technological competence through an approach to technology instruction that is hands-on and does not treat technology as a separate subject (Kamhi-Stein, 1996). Looking toward the future, it is expected that the implementation of various Web-based tools, including but not limited to multi-media (sound and video) and voice mail, will further encourage teachers-in-preparation to engage in collaborative projects, resulting in an even more meaningful practicum experience.

Author

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Appendix A

*Syllabus for MATESOL Practicum Course using CMC Tools**

TESL 568: Practicum in English as a Second Language TESOL PROGRAM

Division of Educational Foundations and Interdivisional Studies
Charter School of Education
California State University, Los Angeles
Instructor: Dr. Lia D. Kamhi-Stein

CATALOG DESCRIPTION:

Prerequisite: TESL 560 or TESL 564. TESL 568 is a supervised field experience in teaching English as a second language.

STUDENT OUTCOMES—CONTENT STANDARDS, PROCESS STANDARDS, AND PERFORMANCE STANDARDS:

Content Standard # 1

Teachers-in-preparation will demonstrate an understanding of the curriculum design process.

Performance Standards:

1. Teachers-in-preparation will develop materials designed to meet the needs of the ESL students enrolled in the classroom to which they have been assigned.
2. Teachers-in-preparation will adapt textbook materials that will meet the needs of the ESL students enrolled in the classroom to which they have been assigned.
3. Teachers-in-preparation will submit lesson plans to the university supervisor or to their mentor teachers two days before they are scheduled to teach the lessons.

Content Standard # 2

Teachers-in-preparation will demonstrate growth in their ESL teaching skills.

* Adapted from Brinton, D. M. (Spring, 1996). *Supervised teaching: English as a second language. TESL 380 course syllabus*. University of California, Los Angeles: Los Angeles, CA

Performance Standards:

1. Teachers-in-preparation will fulfill a minimum of 30 hours of supervised field experience.
2. Teachers-in-preparation will teach a minimum of 6-7 times over the term.
3. Teachers-in-preparation will perform a variety of tasks (to be determined by the mentor teacher in collaboration with the teacher-in-preparation), including but not limited to: working with small groups of students, assisting the mentor teacher in the development of lesson plans, responding to the needs of individual students, etc.
4. Teachers-in-preparation will meet with the university supervisor before and after the university supervisor's observation. These meetings are designed to assist the teachers-in-preparation to reflect upon their instructional strategies.
5. Teachers-in-preparation will videotape one lesson and will present a report on their lesson's strengths and weaknesses.
6. Teachers-in-preparation will observe a peer's instructional strategies, complete a report on their peer's lesson and discuss the report with their peer.

Content Standard # 3

Teachers-in-preparation will demonstrate the ability to function in an educational environment.

Performance standards:

1. Teachers-in-preparation will engage in regular communication with the university supervisor and with their peers by participating in computer-mediated communication (CMC) activities, including: (a) a weekly WebCT BB discussion and (b) a weekly e-mail dialog journal.
2. Teachers-in-preparation will attend five two-hour meetings on campus.
3. Teachers-in-preparation will submit a professional portfolio.

GRADING PROCEDURES:

| Number | Activity | Points |
|---------------|--|---------------|
| 1. | Attendance (five group meetings <i>and</i> individual conferences) | 15 points |
| 2.a | WebCT bulletin board answers (8) | 16 points |
| 2.b | WebCT bulletin board question (1) | 2 points |

| | | |
|----|--|------------|
| 3. | E-mail dialogue journal (4) | 8 points |
| 4. | Report on a peer's lesson (via e-mail) | 5 points |
| 5. | Oral report on a videotaped lesson | 5 points |
| 6. | Portfolio | 20 points |
| 7. | Thirty hours of field experience | 29 points |
| | Total | 100 points |

COURSE SCHEDULE: GROUP MEETINGS

| Session Number | Topic |
|----------------|--|
| 1 | Introduction to Course Review: The Structure of the Lesson Discussion: Materials available in Dr. Kamhi-Stein's office |
| 2 | Materials Development Classroom Observation Checklists |
| 3 | Error Correction & Feedback Videotaped Reports |
| 4 | Videotaped Reports |
| 5 | Presentation by ESL Instructors (Adult Education, Community College—Credit and Noncredit ESL) The Job Market, Job Hunting |

Course Rubric:

An "A" or "A-" grade represents a high level of performance shown by the depth and complex thinking required to meet the three content standards, the course requirements above, and the criteria presented in the assignment rubrics. You must earn between 90-100 points to receive an "A."

A "B" or "B-" grade represents an average level of performance shown by the depth and complex thinking required to meet the three content standards, the course requirements above, and the criteria presented in the assignment rubrics. You must earn between 80-89.9 points to receive a "B."

A "C" or "C-" grade represents a minimal level of performance shown by the depth and complex thinking required to meet the three content standards, the course requirements above, and the criteria presented in the assignment rubrics. You must earn between 75-79.9 points to receive a "C." A "C-" is not a passing grade for graduate study.

| Point Range | Grade |
|-------------|-------|
| 94-100 | A |
| 90-93.9 | A- |
| 87-89.9 | B+ |
| 83-86.9 | B |
| 80-82.9 | B- |
| 77-79.9 | C+ |
| 73-76.9 | C |

DESCRIPTION OF ASSESSMENT PROCEDURES

The WebCT Bulletin Board Postings (Burning Issues):

Throughout the quarter, you will use WebCT. You will take weekly turns:

- (a) Identifying “a burning issue” (Irujo & Johnson, 1997), that is a question or a topic of concern that you have identified in the context of your classroom,
- (b) posting the “burning issue” on the WebCT electronic bulletin board by the date and time indicated in Table 1 and
- (c) facilitating the discussion.

Please note that your mentor teachers have been invited to participate in the electronic bulletin board discussions; however, since they are very busy, they may have difficulty participating and may choose to do so only occasionally.

When posting the “burning issue,” make sure to give it a number and a title (e.g., *Burning Issue # 4. To what extent should we cover grammar in the language classroom?*).

When responding to the “burning issue”:

- (a) stay on topic;
- (b) be concise (Irujo & Johnson, 1997);
- (c) respond personally;
- (d) keep a positive tone; and
- (e) don’t be overly concerned about grammar. Sample postings will be distributed and analyzed.

Your answers are worth 16 points. Your question is worth 2 points. Late responses (by one day) will receive a 1-point deduction. No points will be

given if the responses are more than one day late. The responses will be graded on the degree of reflection/analysis and responsiveness to the question posted. Generic responses will not receive points.

The WebCT E-mail Dialogue Journal

Starting in weeks 3 or 4 (depending on your teaching schedule), you and I will engage in weekly correspondence via e-mail dialogue journal (for a total of four entries for the term). The purpose of the dialogue journal is to engage in a private conversation focusing on issues that relate to your practicum experience and to allow you to obtain my direct feedback on them (Rhodes & Christian, 1993). The dialogue journal will be different from your electronic bulletin board postings in two ways.

First, all journal entries will focus on issues that affect you directly, that is your instructional practices, needs and concerns; your teaching schedule; and your interactions with your master teacher. For example, in your entries you may choose to deal with your evaluation of lessons taught by you, your reflections on your progress and growth as a practicing teacher, your questions regarding lesson design and delivery. Second, all journal entries will remain confidential in that I will be the only person reading and responding to your entries unless you choose to copy a peer.

Four entries: 8 points

The entries are due by the end of Weeks 3 or 4, 4 or 5, 5 or 6, 6 or 7

Report on a Peer's Lesson (Novice Teachers)

Decide which of your peers you are going to observe, schedule the observation session well in advance, complete a report on your peer's lesson (see checklists) and meet with your peer to discuss the report. Give your peer a copy of your report.

5 points

Submit the report to your instructor via email. Copy your peer on your report.

Oral Report on a Videotaped Lesson

You will give a report on one of your videotaped lessons. You will accompany your presentation with the videotape. The report is designed to help you to reflect on your instructional strategies or to provide you with feedback on your "action research."

5 points

Portfolio

During the week of finals, you will submit a portfolio demonstrating your “efforts, progress, and achievement” (McLaughlin & Vogt, 1996, p. 108) over the course of the term. Your portfolio will contain the following items:

1. A cover letter and a copy of your resume
2. An introduction/rationale explaining how the portfolio is organized and why it is organized in such a way
3. A copy of one of your videotaped mini-lesson accompanied by your reflection. Remember that your reflection does not involve an evaluation of the *quality* of your instructional practices; instead, it involves a candid analysis of your instructional practices
4. A copy of a lesson plan used in one of your mini-lessons accompanied by a reflection on the lesson’s strengths and weaknesses
5. A copy of your mentor teacher’s observation report followed by your response
6. A report of how you would use an electronic bulletin board and/or e-mail in the ESL/EFL classroom
7. A revised version of the report on the results of your “action research”
8. A report on your overall practicum experience, including your perceived strengths and needs as a future ESL/EFL teacher and any future steps you are planning to take in order to work on your perceived needs

20 points

The Field Experience

This quarter, you will spend a total of thirty hours in the classroom to which you have been assigned. In this classroom you will work under the supervision of a mentor teacher who may ask you to perform a variety of tasks (e.g., work with small groups of students, assist the mentor teacher in the development of lesson plans; respond to needs of individual students, etc.). In addition, at your site you will be responsible for developing and teaching six to seven mini-lessons (15-20 minutes each). Remember that you will be expected to videotape one of your lessons. For that purpose, you should schedule the use of the video camera and tripod available in my office well in advance. When working at your site, you should:

1. Rely on your mentor teacher for assistance and guidance;
2. show receptivity to your mentor teacher's feedback;
3. schedule your mini-lessons and consult with your mentor teacher regarding lesson plans and classroom activities well in advance; and
4. schedule a conference with your mentor teacher prior to and after each of your mini-lessons.

29 points

Observation by Mentor Teacher and/or Supervisor

I will observe four of your mini-lessons during the course. Each observation will include a pre- and a post-observation conference with me. Therefore, you should:

1. Schedule the pre- and post-observation conferences well in advance (it is *your* responsibility to schedule these conferences with me) and
2. give me a copy of your lesson plans (including handouts and classroom materials) at least *48 hours* prior to our pre-observation conferences. Feel free to e-mail me your lesson plans as long as they include all the materials you are planning to use.

Internet resources for ESL/EFL teachers

Here's a list of Web sites where you will find useful information:

1. Information Competence Grant
<http://curriculum.calstatela.edu/faculty/lkamhis/info/index.htm>
2. TESOL Program at Cal State LA
<http://www.calstatela.edu/academic/tesol/tesolhpg.htm/>
3. AskERIC
<http://ericir.syr.edu>
4. TESOL
<http://www.tesol.edu/>
5. Nonnative English Speakers in TESOL Caucus
<http://curriculum.calstatela.edu/faculty/lkamhis2/NNestCaucus/>
6. CATESOL
<http://www.catesol.org>
7. California Department of Education:
<http://www.cde.ca.gov>

8. TESL-EJ
<http://www-writing.berkeley.edu/TESL-EJ/>
9. Center for Applied Linguistics
<http://www.cal.org>
10. National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education:
<http://www.ncbe.gwu.edu>
11. Reading Online
<http://www.readingonline.org/>
12. Language Learning and Technology
<http://lt.msu.edu/>
13. Purdue University Online Writing Lab
<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/>
14. The Electronic Journal for Computer Writing, Rhetoric and Literature
<http://www.cwrl.utexas.edu/~cwrl/index.html>
15. Asian Journal of English Language
<http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/ajelt/>
16. Teaching Information Competence
<http://curriculum.calstatela.edu/faculty/lkamhis/info/index.htm>
17. Project LEAP: Learning English for Academic Purposes
<http://curriculum.calstatela.edu/faculty/asnow/ProjectLEAP/>
18. International Society for Technology in Education
<http://www.iste.org/Standards/NCATE/found.html>

Appendix B

Excerpt of a Web-based BB Discussion

Posting by Jennifer

Subject: Burning Issue # 2—Balancing the needs of Individual Students with Curriculum Guidelines and Goals.

Since I have not yet started my class observation, I thought that a question that was brought up in the readings for TESL 564, Teaching ESL for Academic Purposes, might be interesting to explore. As a novice teacher, one of the issues that has always puzzled me is how you balance the needs of individual students with the curriculum guidelines and goals of the institution where you work. For example, the students have to take an exit test, so you must cover all of the material that will be in the test; therefore, it's hard to find time for many of the "fun" activities that you would otherwise incor-

porate into your lesson plan. I welcome your thoughts and wish you the best in your classroom observations and projects. Jennifer

Posting by Mary

I believe a balance can be reached between the two. A fun activity doesn't necessarily have to take the whole class time...I think it takes a gifted and or an experienced teacher to find a fun way to incorporate both. What the students need to know to pass their exit test and a way of learning the information in a fun and innovative style. Good and thoughtful question Jennifer. Mary

Posting by Cynthia

Excellent question Jennifer...Well, as teachers we do have to find the balance...Oh, and by the way Mary, you do not need to be gifted or experienced to be a balanced teacher. Anyone can make ESL fun! Basically, you need ideas/resources and common sense...

Posting by Jennifer

Dear Cynthia: I agree with you and thanks for the suggestions. Do you think that it would be helpful to make one day of the week a "fun activity day" or to incorporate fun activities into class in a more random fashion? Jennifer

Posting by Cynthia

Well Jennifer, an activity "fun day" sounds pretty motivating to me. I know younger students always love a "something—day" to look forward to. They love structure and consistency. For instance, on Fridays...

Posting by Jennifer

Dear Mary: I don't know about you, but I know that as time goes on, I will feel more relaxed in my teaching. It's hard to think about the fact that the students will be scrutinizing your every move and comparing you to other teachers they've had. But I do believe that we can be creative even if we don't have a lot of experience. I'm sure you have all the qualities you'll need in this department! Thanks for your response. Jennifer

Posting by Tomoko

I think that teachers should consider the needs of individual students the most because their needs are closely related to their motivations...When I taught in Japan, I had a hard time balancing between the needs of the students, curriculum goals, and the students' needs to prepare for entrance examinations...Here is what I did to make my lessons more interesting...I

tried different techniques to meet both the students' needs and interests and test requirements, but it was very hard to satisfy each individual student. If you have more ideas, please let me know. Thank you.

Posting by Jennifer

Tomoko, your modifications and efforts in accommodating your students deserve a big pat on the back. I just wanted to say that you will NEVER satisfy EVERYONE and you cannot beat yourself up for that! As long as you are trying your best, you need to be affirmed that you are doing an excellent job as a teacher. You're human, you're an educator, you are not a miracle worker!...

Posting by Tomoko

I agree that teachers cannot be liked by every student, and Jennifer's response to my posting encouraged me. Thank you...

Posting by Jennifer

Dear Jennifer and everybody for that matter: I am so encouraged and inspired by all of your postings. I definitely deal with the "wanting to be liked" syndrome; however,...We as TESOL teachers have the options that you and others talked about...we can make it fun and yet meet student needs. That is why I wanted to take this class...I want to learn in the field from experienced and non-experienced teachers so that I can not only build up my confidence but also learn from others. My desire is to be the best teacher I can be, but I am also aware that this will take time. Jennifer

Posting by Elis

Before I started teaching in college, I taught at a language school where teaching for a test was not that important. I could be creative in my lessons and have "fun games"...Now that I teach in three different colleges, I feel the pressure to follow the curriculum and prepare the students for the "exit test"...I think the most important thing is to get a feel of how your students are, what you can and cannot do with them, and what they expect from you. Don't worry; be happy! Elis