It is an honor and a special pleasure for me to be here today at the 34th annual state conference of CATESOL. Your current president, Lía Kahmi-Stein, was kind enough to tempt me out of retirement—some 1,500 miles from here—to address this conference. (You need to know that I joined the staff at USC in 1960; in 1961 became coordinator of the English Communication Program for Foreign Students at that institution—a then-fledgling ESL program enrolling about 25 students and boasting a staff of two and a half full-time faculty—and continued to serve in that capacity until 1973. While remaining on the faculty at USC, I returned to the program—renamed the American Language Institute—as director in 1986 and resigned that role in 1991. I retired from USC on January 1, 1995.) I feel very grandfatherly about the whole thing, since I was involved in obstetrical duties at the birth of both TESOL and CATESOL. That fact would explain a fatherly stance; the grandfatherly aspect derives from the fact that Lía did some graduate work with me at USC in 1994, just as I was getting ready to hang up my spurs after 35 years of active faculty participation at USC and after having worked with some 80 graduate-degree candidates, some present in the audience today.

Now, this framing of events has a threefold purpose; it establishes me as “superannuated”—a lovely euphemism our British colleagues are wont to use—and therefore grants me license to ramble on and to reminisce about the “good old days”; it allows me carefully to avoid saying anything serious that might offend the bright young scholars among you, who properly view me as a dinosaur; and it allows me to talk openly and egotistically about my own role in all this activity—that despite the fact that I am ordinarily a rather modest creature. Because eight years have elapsed since my retirement, since my separation from CATESOL, and since my departure from Southern California, you will understand that I am a bit dated in my knowledge of CATESOL but, with the kind assistance of the present officers, I have tried to do my homework.

In any case, I want to try to accomplish several things today:
1. to place the emergence of CATESOL and of TESOL into an historical framework and to humanize the now-shadowy players of that antediluvian period;
2. to compare and contrast the activities of CATESOL in the early 1970s with those at the turn of the millennium; and
3. to glance into my very dusty crystal ball and—if not to predict the future—at least to urge you collectively to deal with the myriad things that remain to be done by CATESOL and by the English language teaching profession—to help you to make changes and to make a difference.

The late 1950s and the 1960s were a period of great ferment for language teachers—only two key events in the field predate the mid-1950s: Language learning: A journal of applied linguistics began publication in 1948, having its base in the English Language Institute (ELI) at the University of Michigan, which had begun its work under Charles C. Fries in 1941.

An Historical Framework

A great flurry of events occurred from the mid-1950s through the 1960s:

• 1956 saw the inauguration of the School of Applied Linguistics at the University of Edinburgh (Ian Catford, director);
• in 1957 the Bourguiba Institute in Tunis was created (Rafik Said, director);
• in 1958 the Central Institute of English (CIEFL) in Hyderabad, India, was established (Ramesh Mohan, director); and
• in 1959 the Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL) opened its doors in Washington, DC (Charles Ferguson, director).

The momentum carried over well into the 1960s; the Philippine Normal College Language Study Center was opened in 1962 (Bonifacio Sibayan, director), and the English Language Institute of the American University in Cairo in 1965 (Clifford Prator [of UCLA], director). In 1967, the International Association of Teachers of English as a Foreign Language (IATEFL) was organized. In 1969 the Caribbean Language Research Program at the University of the West Indies opened (Albert Marckwardt, director).

Amid all this ferment, the idea of TESOL was born. In May 1964, the National Advisory Council on Teaching English as a Foreign Language (NACTEFL) recommended the development of a national register of ESOL specialists from which individuals might be drawn to staff overseas programs in teaching English, teacher training, and administration; in October 1964, NACTEFL urged the development of a professional association to facilitate the earlier recommendation. In response to the NACTEFL recommendations, an ad hoc committee meeting was called by Harold Allen, Robert Lado, and Serarpi Ohannesian. The committee, chaired by Robert Lado, met in Chicago in January 1965, with Virginia French Allen and Betty Wallace Robinette
serving as recorders, and included, among others, James Alatis, Harold Allen, Edward Anthony, Charles Ferguson, Mary Finocchiaro, David Harris, Robert Hogan, Albert Marckwardt, Sirarpi Ohannesian, Clifford Prator, and Mamie Sizemore. The first anticipatory conference on the teaching of English to speakers of other languages, organized by Harold Allen (University of Minnesota), Charles Ferguson (CAL), Robert Hogan (NCTE), Robert Lado (Georgetown University), Serarpi Ohanessian (CAL), Clifford Prator (UCLA), Mamie Sizemore (Division of Indian Education, Arizona Department of Public Instruction), and a number of other distinguished colleagues, was held in Tucson in May of 1964; the second such conference was held in San Diego the following year, and TESOL was officially organized as a professional association in 1966 in New York, where Harold Allen was elected as its first president during a somewhat stormy business meeting (attended by 357 individuals, each paying annual dues of $6). The organization of TESOL had been supported by a consortium of professional bodies, including the Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL), the Modern Language Association (MLA), the National Association for Foreign Student Affairs (NAFSA), the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE), and the Speech Association of America (SAA). Their participation was, in part, altruistic and professional, but in part it was purely practical—intended to get those pushy ESL people from eating up valuable time in their respective conference agendas. I have cited only a small number of major events that occurred from the late 1950s through the 1960s to support my argument; there were many more. As a sort of capstone to all this activity, the first issue of the TESOL Newsletter (later TESOL Matters) was issued by Harold Allen in June 1966; it was subsequently regularly edited for a number of years by Alfred Aarons. The TESOL Quarterly began publication in 1967 under the editorship of Betty Wallace Robinette. My personal history with TESOL, then, stretches back almost 40 years; I attended both of the anticipatory conferences, and I hold a membership card issued at the 1966 New York meeting.

Over the next two years, as TESOL’s political structure gradually evolved, its constitution was revised (1968-69) to allow for the creation of affiliates. In anticipation of the possibility, in October 1967 a Southern California District conference of what was to become CATESOL was held at USC, and a comparable meeting was held in the Bay Area, though the details of that latter meeting are not available to me. In October 1969, a meeting was held in Monterey at which CATESOL was born, its first constitution was produced, and its first officers were elected—Gloria Jameson was president, and I was a member of the board. In March 1970, CATESOL met with “mother” TESOL in a national convention in San Francisco, and CATESOL became an official affiliate of TESOL—among the first five (California, New Jersey, New Mexico, Puerto Rico, and Texas); I cannot recall whether California was actually the first or whether that honor belongs to Texas. At that meeting I was elected president of CATESOL. In October of that year, CATESOL held a regional meeting in San Francisco. In March of the following year,
CATESOL held its first full-fledged statewide conference in Anaheim; to the absolute astonishment of the planners of that conference and the governing board of CATESOL, nearly 1,000 people showed up to listen to Robert Cooper and other specialists. That number overwhelmed the hotel in which the group was meeting by eating up everything in sight and by commandeering all available bed space. Since then—for more than 30 years—both CATESOL and TESOL have convened annual meetings, all more successful, better planned, and less overwhelming than that 1971 undertaking. Having cut my teeth in CATESOL, I went on to serve several terms on the TESOL board and to succeed to its presidency in 1989, and to honorary life membership in 1994. This brief discussion should serve to place the origins of TESOL and CATESOL in an historical context and to establish my credentials to talk about that history on the grounds that I’ve lived it. And you will note that California has played a leadership role from the beginning. The names that fall so trippingly from my tongue not only represent the great figures of that earlier period, they are for the most part names of people I knew, many of them as friends. They are not all deceased, but the survivors are, like me, superannuated (though some, no doubt, would deny such a designation). Thus, I am not even a living dinosaur, but rather the dusty fossil of a dinosaur.

### Past Presidents of TESOL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Past President</th>
<th>Years</th>
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<tr>
<td>Harold Allen</td>
<td>1966-67*</td>
<td>Jean Handscombe</td>
<td>1985-86</td>
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<td>Edward Anthony</td>
<td>1967-68</td>
<td>Joan Morley</td>
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<td>Paul Bell</td>
<td>1968-69*</td>
<td>JoAnn Crandall</td>
<td>1987-88</td>
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<td>David Harris</td>
<td>1969-70</td>
<td>Dick Allwright</td>
<td>1988-89</td>
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<td>Mary Finocchiaro</td>
<td>1970-71*</td>
<td>Jean McConochie</td>
<td>1989-90</td>
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<td>Russell N. Campbell</td>
<td>1971-72*</td>
<td>Robert B. Kaplan</td>
<td>1990-91†</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alfonso Ramirez</td>
<td>1972-73</td>
<td>Lynda Stack</td>
<td>1991-92†</td>
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<tr>
<td>Betty Wallace Robinette</td>
<td>1973-74</td>
<td>Mary Hines</td>
<td>1992-93</td>
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<td>Muriel Saville-Troike</td>
<td>1974-75</td>
<td>Donald Freeman</td>
<td>1993-94</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mary Galvan</td>
<td>1975-76*</td>
<td>Fred Genesee</td>
<td>1994-95</td>
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<td>Christina Bratt Paulston</td>
<td>1976-77</td>
<td>Joy Reid</td>
<td>1995-96</td>
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<td>Donald Knapp</td>
<td>1977-78</td>
<td>Denise E. Murray</td>
<td>1996-97†</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ruth Crymes</td>
<td>1979*</td>
<td>Kathleen M. Bailey</td>
<td>1998-99†</td>
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<td>John Fanselow</td>
<td>1981-82</td>
<td>Barbara Schwarte</td>
<td>2000-01</td>
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<td>Darlene Larson</td>
<td>1982-83</td>
<td>Neil J. Anderson</td>
<td>2001-02</td>
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<td>John Haskell</td>
<td>1983-84</td>
<td>Lou McCloskey</td>
<td>2002-03</td>
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<tr>
<td>Charles Blatchford</td>
<td>1984-85†</td>
<td>Amy Schlessman</td>
<td>2003-04</td>
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* = Deceased; † = Californian
### Past Presidents of CATESOL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
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<th>Years</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gloria Jameson</td>
<td>1969-70</td>
<td>Alice A. Addison</td>
<td>1987-88</td>
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<td>Serafina Anfuso (Krear)</td>
<td>1971-72</td>
<td>Sharon Seymour</td>
<td>1989-90</td>
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<td>Aaron Berman</td>
<td>1972-73</td>
<td>Steve Sloan</td>
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<td>Perry Akins</td>
<td>1974-75</td>
<td>Katheryn Garlow</td>
<td>1992-93</td>
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<td>Anne Terrell</td>
<td>1975-76</td>
<td>Natalie Kuhlman</td>
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<td>Betty Poggi</td>
<td>1976-77</td>
<td>Dorothy Messerschmitt</td>
<td>1994-95</td>
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<td>Don Mills</td>
<td>1977-78</td>
<td>Gretchen Bitterlin</td>
<td>1995-96</td>
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<td>Kent Sutherland</td>
<td>1978-79</td>
<td>Kara Rosenberg</td>
<td>1996-97</td>
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<tr>
<td>Penny Larson</td>
<td>1979-80</td>
<td>Gari Browning</td>
<td>1997-98</td>
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<td>Sadae Iwataki</td>
<td>1981-82</td>
<td>Carol Bander</td>
<td>1999-2000</td>
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<td>Tippy Schabe</td>
<td>1982-83</td>
<td>Linda Sasser</td>
<td>2000-01</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lydia Stack</td>
<td>1983-84</td>
<td>Chan Bostwick</td>
<td>2001-02</td>
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<td>Steve Ross</td>
<td>1984-85</td>
<td>Lía Kamhi-Stein</td>
<td>2002-03</td>
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<td>June McKay</td>
<td>1985-86</td>
<td>Lynne Nicodemus</td>
<td>2003-04</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rita Wong</td>
<td>1986-87</td>
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### Comparing and Contrasting the Activities of CATESOL Over Time

Now let me jump ahead some 30 years and take a look at CATESOL at the present moment. Glancing at the past five volumes (Vols. 9-13—1996-2001) of *The CATESOL Journal*—which began publication in 1988 as an outgrowth of the *CATESOL Occasional Papers*—I have detected a number of familiar names in the governance structure of CATESOL (Chan Bostwick, Donna Brinton, Lía Kamhi-Stein, Denise Mahon, Jim Martois, Karen Russikoff, Lydia Stack), in the production of *The CATESOL Journal*, and as contributors to it (the late Martha Bean, Marianne Celce-Murcia, Jim Cummins, the late David Eskey, Kathy Flynn, Bill Gaskill, Johnnie Johnson Hafernink, John Hedgcock, Linda Jensen, Ann Johns, Natalie Kuhlman, Paul Kei Matsuda, Denise Murray, Ted Plaister, Debby Poole, Pam Porter, Robin Scarcella, Tippy Schwabe, Sharon Seymour, Rita Wong—some of whom at various times taught in the ESL program at USC). This rich list of names (many of them previously affiliated with USC and/or its ECPFS/ALI) signals a good thing—continuity in the structure and operation of CATESOL. At the same time, the long list of high-quality articles covering a wide range of critical issues is marked by an even longer list of names unfamiliar to me—a sign of the growth and vitality of CATESOL. It is also noteworthy that *The CATESOL Journal* is now abstracted in the ERIC and LLBA systems. It is also noteworthy that among these lists of names are several former presidents of TESOL and a number of former presidents of CATESOL, as well as a number of nationally and internationally recognized scholars.
If one were to compare the early CATESOL with its present incarnation, many important changes might be noted. In the early days, CATESOL had a membership of around 350 persons while today its average annual membership hovers just below 3,500—10 times its original membership. The association, however, has continuously lived with a special problem—the annual ebbing and flowing of the membership. The association has as its core a cohort of what might be called “eternal” members surrounded by a constantly fluctuating periphery, reflecting the actual situation of the profession; that is, some new people emerge every year, and some people leave. As the cost of membership has increased, that cost has driven some people away, but so too have changing circumstances—the vast increase in the number of part-time teachers, the dismal salaries some of those part-time people and even some full-time teachers receive, teacher burnout, and a variety of other causes with which you will be familiar.

Indeed, CATESOL, like many similar professional associations, constantly faces two problems: one has to do with numbers and the other has to do with dollars. I have already touched on the numbers problem, though there is a secondary feature that deserves attention. CATESOL is an association in which virtually all of the work is accomplished by volunteers. As I have read over the documentation provided me to reacquaint myself with the organization, I have been struck with the enormous load the officers of the association carry. That has, of course, always been the case, but it is far more acute now than it was in the early days of the association because the number of issues requiring the attention of the association has expanded geometrically. But more about that in a moment. My point is that the relatively small cadre of “eternal” members carries a disproportionate share of the administrative and operational burden. It is important to remember that the members of that core group all have other jobs; they do the work of CATESOL out of altruism, dedication to a principle, and a willingness to deprive themselves of a life in order to serve the association.

The second perpetual problem has to do with dollars. I’m sure the association treasurer reports annually on the association’s budget—on income and expense. Income derives primarily from two sources: membership dues and a small margin of profit deriving from the various meetings provided by the association. The expenses, on the other hand, are far more diverse. First, every membership costs something to service; but there are also costs associated with the publication of *The CATESOL Journal* and *CATESOL News*; there are costs associated with every meeting of the Board of Directors and with the travel of the association’s officers to meetings and in other contexts; there are costs associated with mounting the conferences, workshops, and other professional-development activities, and so on. It is a matter of luck, fiscal responsibility, and tight economic controls that the association has been able to remain fiscally viable.

A few moments ago, I said I would return to the matter of the number of issues requiring the attention of the association. It is impressive, for example, that the Board of Directors has more than 30 people serving on it. A typical
board meeting packet, circulated in advance, runs to some 25 pages, and the board meets twice a year for a full day or more each time. The board minutes—the record of what the board actually did—for each of its meetings run to some 20 pages. Much of this activity has to do with the nuts and bolts of running the association:

• seeing to its publications;
• planning for its various conferences; and
• tending to the needs of the complex network of substructures—e.g., the statewide organization (its annual conference alone serving some 2,500 members annually), six regional organizations (each mounting conferences which serve something like 500 individuals annually), eight chapters, five academic levels, and four special interest groups—intercultural communication; technology enhanced language learning; nonnative language educators; and teaching English in the workplace.

A word more about the annual statewide conference. That is where we are today; look around you at the number of participants, at the 18 preconference workshops and other special activities; look at the crowds in the hallways; look at the publishers’ displays. This activity is now so large that the association contracts with a professional organization that organizes professional conferences—Conferon—an organization also used by mother TESOL. Given all this enormous activity, it would be interesting to have a sense of the number of person-hours provided annually by volunteers, but such data has not been cumulated.

But on top of all that, the organization undertakes to monitor activity in the state legislature and in various state offices responsible for educational endeavors, to work with the various sectors of education—i.e., the University of California, the California state colleges and universities, the community colleges, K-12 educational entities, and the private sector. Quite a number of years ago, CATESOL took on a legislative advocate—even before mother TESOL did so, I believe—and CATESOL has developed an extremely effective voice in Sacramento. But, for example, in mid-March this year, the legislative advocate supplied the board with a list of 22 bills in various stages of development in the legislature; all 22 of these bills implicate matters that are of concern to CATESOL, and the organization tries to develop positions on such matters and to work with legislators to amend bills and actively to support or to oppose various legislative initiatives. As noted earlier, the total membership of the association hovers at about 3,500 individuals—unevenly distributed across the state: LA/Orange County = 31.5%; San Francisco/San Jose = 30%; San Diego = 9%; Central Valley = 10.5%; Sacramento/Northern California = 11.5%; Nevada = 3.5%; other = 3%. Each of those individuals, regardless of geographic location, has an opinion on virtually anything and an accompanying request. The net worth of the association averages around $200,000 (some 10 times the net worth of the association 30 years ago), including income from dues, publication sales, conferences at all levels and in

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all regional locations, preconference and postconference workshops, and a
variety of other activities. That income funds the conferences, the cost of
board meetings, and the organizing costs of all the professional-development
activity. Remember, please, that all of this activity is managed by unpaid vol-
unteers. This is a level of activity geometrically greater than what the associa-
tion was able to offer 30 years ago. As it would be interesting to know how
many persons across the state the association serves annually, so it would be
interesting to know how much time the various layers of CATESOL volun-
teers provide to the professional development of the teachers of the state at
no cost to the state.

**Predicting the Future**

In sum, CATESOL has become a massive, engaged, vibrant organization
serving the needs of California teachers (see the CATESOL Web site—
http://www.catesol.org—for much more detailed information). But this is no
time to become sanguine about what the association does and has done over
the past 34 years. We live in one of the most complex periods in recent times,
and the number of challenges has increased and is likely to continue to
increase in the nearer future. Consider, if you will, what is happening at the
national and state levels. At the federal level, among other things:

- On 8 January 2002, the Bush administration abolished the Bilingual
  Education Act of 1968;
- The Congress has done regrettable things to Title VII, of the
  Elementary and Secondary Education Act;
- The Congress is considering amending the Voting Rights Act of 1975,
  the Court Interpreters Act of 1978, and the Native American
  Languages Act of 1990;
- Just the other day, yet another new bill was introduced in the House of
  Representatives to declare English the official language of the govern-
  ment—U.S. English is alive and well;
- Earlier this year, the Student and Exchange Visitor Information
  System (SEVIS)—fallout from the increased security concerns after
  9/11—was activated by the Immigration and Naturalization Service,
  effectively creating a new, complex bureaucracy, which will make it
  much more difficult, more unfriendly, and more expensive for interna-
  tional students to come to the US to study.
- Some months ago, the US went to war in Afghanistan, and only a
  matter of a couple of weeks ago, the US invaded Iraq; the outcome of
  these military activities is hard to predict, but surely they will impede
  the flow of foreign students to U.S. institutions.

At the state level, among other things, you must live with the implications of
California Proposition 227—“English Language in Public Schools,” enacted
as an initiative statute in 1998 (the Unz initiative—“English for the Children” also was enacted in Arizona in 2000 and in Massachusetts in 2002).

Basically, this is a list of bad news; however, there are small glimmers of light on both the state and the national level:

- California International Education Policy (Assembly Bill 1342) was signed into law by Governor Gray Davis on 11 September 2002—thanks to the efforts of Mary Jacobs, Director, Office of International Students and Scholars, UC Santa Barbara, and colleagues in the UC system, the CSUC system, the Community College system, and NAFSA;
- In mid-January 2003, NAFSA published its report titled “In America’s Interest: Welcoming International Students.”

These, of course, are what one might call big picture issues; there are some other equally important matters working away at the state level. There is some evidence that international student enrollments are diminishing across the state. That has been taken as a rationale for greater flexibility in hiring teachers. There was already a great pressure to hire part-time teachers; indeed, the California “freeway flier” has become world famous. And, of course, part-time teachers can be paid less and can be deprived of all fringe benefits. There are bills in the legislature at this very moment, dealing with the issues of salary and benefits for part-time faculty in the state’s public institutions. CATESOL is working for a reasonable solution to these complex issues. Although the issues of poor pay and the limitations of part-time employment have been with CATESOL since it was formed, California teachers need to be aware of what is happening in this context elsewhere in the nation, even in these stringent times.

Last fall, the faculty at Western Michigan University—a public institution—ratified a new contract with some pretty startling provisions (reported in the most recent issue of Academe). Article 20 of that contract provides for the award of tenure to “faculty specialists”—a group including lecturers, clinical instructors, and certain academic professionals. At many California institutions, public and private, ESL teachers are classified as instructors or lecturers. Following the example of Western Michigan University, these members of the faculty would be tenurable, and thus would be eligible for pro rata pay and benefits. It is certainly a development that ought to be called to the attention of the legislature. It is a step in the right direction; it illustrates that the concept of tenure is not defunct (as some school administrators have claimed), and it is a development that ESL teachers and CATESOL ought to follow closely.

CATESOL exists in one of the richest resource centers in the nation. It already cooperates with other associations which share some part of CATESOL’s interest and concern (e.g., CABE, NABE, California Reading Association, ACTFL, etc.) But there are special resources scattered across the state and across the nation. To name just a few:
• The Language Acquisition Resource Center, at San Diego State University, with its own press. This center is one of a series of 14 U.S. Department of Education-funded Language Resource Centers.
• The Linguistic Minority Research Institute, at the University of California at Santa Barbara.
• The Center for Applied Linguistics in Washington, DC.
• The Defense Language Institute in Monterey, CA.

There are, of course, organizations in the surrounding states; CATESOL already has a heavy involvement in Nevada, but there are resources in Arizona (NAU), Oregon (PSU), Utah (BYU), Washington (UW, WSU), and in British Columbia, Canada (UBC). Admittedly, many of these resources are directed toward foreign language learning. The events of 9/11 have inspired a great deal of activity intended to address the broad-range language deficiencies in the US. There is no reason why CATESOL should not ride this tide.

Nearly a quarter of a century ago (1979), the President’s Commission on Foreign Language and International Studies cited a number of facts that illustrated its deep concern for “American’s scandalous incompetence in foreign languages” (1979: 7). The passage of so many years has not seen much significant improvement in foreign language instruction. CNN posted the following item on its Web site on November 9, 2002:

The FBI has hired more than 300 linguists since the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, but there’s still a severe shortage of people in the United States who know languages used by terrorists and who can decipher intelligence, said Margaret Gulotta, chief of the FBI’s Language Services Section.

“Yes, we were unprepared. We needed more linguists than we had,” Gulotta told more than 500 people at the 43rd annual Conference of the American Translators Association on Friday.…

The American Translators Association said only 614 students are now studying Pashto, Dari, Farsi and Uzbek at U.S. colleges, although 40 million people speak those languages. There’s also a need for many more Arabic speakers, the group said. “We still need a lot of people to work for us,” Gulotta said. “They’re not getting languages through the American school system.”

The government commits money to language education only in a time of international crisis, and then interest lags, said Richard Brecht, Director of the National Foreign Language Center, a Washington think tank. “We’ve never made that investment,” said Brecht, a panelist at the meeting.…The [combined] panelists agreed that it’s also important to promote foreign languages in America’s public schools….[Emphasis added].
The theme of this conference is “Making changes/Making a difference.” CATESOL needs to make changes, to broaden its scope of activity—though it is hard to see how the present structure and the number of volunteers already involved can accomplish that. CATESOL needs all of its current members; CATESOL needs more members and a greater willingness among the membership to get involved in the work of the association.

Each and every member of the association is in a position to make a difference. The challenges facing the association and the profession are huge. Not the least of these challenges lies with the public and the legislature. The public does not understand what CATESOL is or what it does. Worse yet, the legislature does not understand why language teaching in general and English language teaching in particular must be a major commitment of government.

It is interesting how some problems persist. One of the issues facing the young CATESOL was getting across the idea that the learning of English as a second language is a credit-worthy activity. Then, as now, learning English by nonnative speakers was perceived as remedial—because, of course, all educated people already speak English. But that hypothesis must be based on the assumption that speaking English is the default case, and that speaking any other language is an aberration. Those of us who were involved with CATESOL 30 years ago thought we had beat that particular monster to death; we were wrong. The legislature is yet again revisiting the problem. And that is so because the average legislator is painfully ignorant of issues concerning language learning and teaching.

CATESOL must, with your involvement and assistance, inaugurate a public education program, not to apologize for ESL teaching but to assure that every parent, every citizen, and every legislator understand why we need CATESOL, why we need ESL instruction, why we need foreign language instruction, and why the state must invest in the activity, even in difficult economic times.

Recognizing that there are dozens of problems I have not addressed, and recognizing that I have intentionally avoided discussing EFL instruction—a topic that would expand this talk by at least another hour—let me leave you with this challenge: the students—the children—of California need you; you must act to make changes and to make a difference. Good luck.

Thank you.

Author

Linguistics, member of the editorial board of the Oxford University Press International Encyclopedia of Linguistics, 1st and 2nd eds., and on the editorial boards of several journals. He has written or edited more than 35 books, more than 150 journal articles and book chapters, more than 90 book reviews and other pieces, and nine special reports to the U.S. and other governments.

Endnotes

1 For much of the early history and prehistory of TESOL, I am indebted to the publication Quest for Quality: The First 21 Years of TESOL, compiled by James Alatis in 1989. I am also indebted to the publication Language and Development: A Retrospective Survey of Ford Foundation Language Projects, 1952-1974, compiled by Melvin J. Fox in 1975. The Ford Foundation supported the development of the centers in Hyderabad, Manila, Cairo, Tunis, the West Indies, and Washington, DC (actually, originally in Arlington, VA).

2 Membership of the council included, among others, Harold Allen (Minnesota), J. Milton Cowan (Cornell), Robert Lado (Georgetown), Albert Marckwardt (Princeton), Melvin Fox (Ford Foundation), David Harris (Georgetown), Serarpi Ohannesian (CAL), Harry Freeman and Myron Vent (AID), Richard Beym (DLI), James Alatis and William Shamblin (U.S. Office of Education), Jane Alden (Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, Department of State).

3 The selected papers of the Tucson conference were published as On Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages, Series 1, edited by Virginia French Allen.

4 Originally National Association for Foreign Student Advisors, later National Association for Foreign Student Affairs, currently NAFSA: Association of International Educators.

5 The term linguist in this context is used to mean “individuals who are fluent bilinguals in the desired languages.” It does not mean individuals trained in linguistics.