Editors’ Note

This issue of *The CATESOL Journal* features articles, exchange ideas and reviews that explore two important issues: learner-based instruction, that is, language instruction that responds to the needs of the learner and the integration of language skills.

Marianne Celce-Murcia explores a number of models of instruction that can be called “content-based.” Researchers and instructors using such models work toward integrating language learning with the necessary content learners must acquire to meet their life goals, such as successful school or college preparation in content areas. Helen Kallenbach, applying Maslow’s hierarchy of needs, examines the expectations foreign students bring with them to their language classes. Johnnie Johnson Hafernik approaches the question of topics for student writing by asking the question “What topics do students prefer to write on?”

Donald and Yvonne Freeman show how many current assumptions about how learners acquire language actually make learning more difficult. They then call for an integrated approach, the Whole Language approach, that facilitates language learning in the classroom. This theme of integration is picked up again in Stephen Kucer and Cecilia Silva’s review of the new California Language Arts Framework and David Freeman’s review of two texts on Whole Language. Using an ethnographic approach to writing, Raymond Devenney demonstrates how learners can explore and build on their own life experiences in their writing. This approach calls for both attention to learner needs and an integration of reading, writing, and talking.

Katharine Samway, Lucinda Alvarez and Frances Morales extend the theme of learners’ control over their own learning to teacher training by describing a collaborative approach to staff development in which they were all involved.

These full articles are complemented by CATESOL Exchange accounts of sexist language (Kendall), workplace culture (McCarth), personality types and the composition instructor (Klaswitz), integrating skills in reading (Spaventa), and activities for teaching persuasive writing (Devenney).

Finally, in this issue we have begun a new section, “Book Bytes,” which provides brief reports on recently published texts.

Dorothy Messerschmitt
Denise Murray
Editors

Models for Content-Based Curricula for ESL

- This paper defines and illustrates content-based language teaching in the ESL context. Some good programs are cited as examples, and the reader is given an introduction to the theoretical and practical motivations of content-based ESL, along with some notion of who the principle innovators are. Three content-based models (theme-based, adjunct, and sheltered) are presented in some detail. Since content-based ESL fits so well with current principles of communicative second language teaching, the author argues that content-based ESL, tempered with judicious use of humanistically motivated experiential activities, will be the major approach to formal ESL instruction at all levels in the near future.

While ESL/EFL teachers work in very disparate teaching situations, they readily exchange ideas and share common principles of good ESL/EFL teaching. In fact, much of the impetus for growth and development in the field of ESL has come from our colleagues in the Council of Europe, who over the years, have developed a set of guiding principles for foreign and second language learning and teaching (see Trim, 1985), which teachers and learners (along with other parties involved in the process such as parents, administrators, testers, and publishers) are asked to adopt and adapt to their own special circumstances. These principles are: (a) Language learning and teaching are part of continuing education; (b) language education should be learner-centered; (c) language education should be related to other aspects of learners’ lives; (d) language education should be democratic; (e) language education should use the communicative approach as its frame of reference; and (f) language education should be experiential.

Preliminaries to Content-based Instruction

Today, because of recent advances in sociolinguistics and applied linguistics, as well as the development of guiding principles such as the six just cited, teachers and administrators are looking for ways