A Rhythmic Thank You

There's so much that I'd like to say about CoTESOL here, Now that we've embarked upon our thirty-first full year.

I'm proud to be the president; I'm glad that I belong To a group that's grown and stands today 800 members strong.

Professionals from K through 8, and high school teachers too, Who dedicate their precious time, since there's so much to do.

And then we have our IEP's, scattered 'cross the state. Preparing foreign students at a most impressive rate.

And don't forget about our peers who teach in Adult Ed, Doing all they can to help their students get ahead.

Of course we have our colleges and universities, Preparing students for success by giving them the keys

I am forever grateful, friends, just knowing you are here, And so I thank you all so much for the things you do each year.

Dieter Bruhn
CoTESOL President

Calendar

February 9
CoTESOL Spring Conference
"Brain-based Teaching for English Language Learners"
Tesla Center, Colorado Springs

March 7
CoTESOL Board Meeting
Ellis Elementary School
4:00 p.m.

April 2-5
TESOL 2008 New York
Rocky Mountain TESOL reception on Thursday, 8:00 p.m., location TBA

June 27
Deadline for proposals to participate in the CoTESOL 2008 Fall Convention

July 11
CoTESOL Board Meeting and reading of proposals
IEC, UC Boulder

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CoTESOL Directory

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CoTESOL
Colorado Affiliate of
Teachers of English to Speakers
of Other Languages

The Colorado TESOL News is published twice a year and mailed to all CoTESOL members.

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Newsletter Ads
Full page (7½ x 9½) .................. $120
Inside half page (3¼ x 9½ or 7½ x 4½) .................. $60
Back cover half page .................. $65
No agency discounts
For due dates and copy specifications, please contact the Newsletter Editor at the address on this page.

Fall Convention Program Ads and Exhibits
For rates, due dates, and copy specifications, please contact the Publishers’ Liaison at the address on this page.
ESOL and Immigration Issues
By David Koppers, Spring Institute

Since the vast majority of our ESOL students are immigrants to the U.S., the changing face of immigration law is a concern for many. Rumors spread quickly among immigrant communities regarding how new laws will affect them. Whether the rumors do or do not have a basis in fact, they can, and often should be, addressed in class.

The use of media resources – both to learn English and to learn about current events – is an important tool. In my classes, we often look at newspaper articles when an issue in the news interests my students. For example, when marches and rallies took place in several U.S. cities, we looked at how they were covered in the press, and discussed the different perceptions students had of it and whether or not they participated.

After recent proposals to change immigration law became a bill, I copied a news article from the Internet and read it to them. After we talked about the vocabulary in the article, students discussed their opinions and concerns. Rumors can often lead to fear and uncertainty. Although some students were not in complete agreement with the bill, they nevertheless learned exactly what it was about.

Another way for students to learn about current issues is to bring in a guest speaker. In Denver there is a group called Rights for All People, or Derechos Para Todos. When a speaker from this group came to my class, students were very interested to learn about the rights they have and what they can and cannot do in this country. Of course a teacher should maintain some degree of impartiality with students and bring in a variety of speakers. Another speaker I brought in was a local police officer. Although some students felt intimidated at first, those who warmed up to him asked important questions and learned a lot. Bringing in an immigration lawyer is another good way for students to learn more about their legal status here.

Perhaps the most important thing a teacher can do is give students the ability to find answers to their questions themselves. Teaching computer skills and giving useful web sites, such as that of the U.S. Customs and Immigration Service (www.uscis.gov), are good places to start. Even teaching such basic skills as how to write and mail a letter can be helpful.

Help Wanted!
Do you have a passion for politics? Are you a natural advocate for your students? Do you want to be more involved in the issues that affect ESL, both locally and nationally?

CoTESOL Needs YOU!
We are looking for a new Socio-Political Liaison. Responsibilities of this position include keeping tabs on state and federal legislation and reporting items of interest at CoTESOL Board meetings, building relationships with state political leaders, testifying as necessary at state legislative hearings, sharing relevant topics and legislative news with CoTESOL members via the newsletter, and helping to identify interesting socio-political speakers for the Fall Convention.

If this sounds like the job for you, please contact noellejvance@msn.com.
The Real Value of Learning

Creativity is sometimes omitted in the adult ESL curriculum, which is a real shame. Giving a creative outlet to refugee students has been a real bonus for many of them. At Thanksgiving I have my adult refugee students following written directions to create turkey decorations. They have to trace, cut, paste, and assemble the turkeys using only the directions. Projects that are hands-on give them experience doing things that all American children have had. One student told me that because of some of the projects we had done in class, she could help her children with their homework. This can develop self-esteem and confidence in a world where children quickly become the cultural leaders of the family. I would encourage you to add a few creative projects to your classroom, since it not only gives them a way to express themselves that doesn’t require great language skills, but it can also give them a source of income.

This past fall, The Bead Women project for refugee women was started. The women involved in this project met on Saturdays to learn how to make jewelry and enjoy each other’s company. They created many beautiful pieces of jewelry and presented them at a sale before Christmas.

The following story is taken from the blog of The Bead Women and illustrates the significance of a creative outlet. It was written by Sharon McCrea and posted on the blog in September. If you want to learn more about this project and their needs, the web address is at the end of the story.

Monday, September 24, 2007

Eight Dollars

Haifaa approached me after class today and somberly asked if she could talk to me. I smiled and asked her what was on her mind. She reached into her pocket and held out eight dollars in cash, a five dollar bill and three ones.

She looked at the money and then looked at me and said, “Do you know what this is?” Since Anna and I had set up a fairly standard pricing system for the jewelry, I took a guess and said, “Did you sell a necklace, Haifaa?” She said that on Saturday, Anna stopped by her apartment to tell her that Susan (another program coordinator) had bought and paid for one of Haifaa’s pieces.

Haifaa said she took the money from Anna and just stared at it. Anna asked her if it was OK—had we charged too little? Haifaa assured her it was fine. After Anna left, Haifaa closed the door and started to cry. She told me that she cried and cried for a long time. She held the eight dollars in her hand and thought about her life until now...

And so it was that Haifaa found herself staring at eight dollars in her hand on a Saturday afternoon. She said, “I can’t tell you how the feelings inside of me came up. I looked at this money and I didn’t see eight dollars; for me it is like eight million. For the first time in my life, these hands, my hands, made something for me. I did something not as a mother, not as a refugee, but just me, for me, my work.” She pointed at the center of her chest and continued, “I have this pride, this feeling, and I can’t explain it. This eight dollars, it means everything right now. It tells me I can do something and make my own money. This is my first money I made. I can never spend this eight dollars. I have to keep it and show it—I must show it to the other women so they know how this feels and it is real.” She told me that she stood with her back against the door for what seemed like an hour, praying that no one would disturb her so she could fully savor this moment.

Haifaa’s eyes had long since welled up with tears and they were spilling down her cheeks. She spoke with a great deal of emotion, and I
understood that it wasn’t her pride that was making her feel this way so much as what this eight dollars signified for her. At 53 years of age, she had just experienced the first taste of self-sufficiency, the knowing that she had just proved something to herself about her own strength, determination, and nascent sense of accomplishment. It was so much more than her first pay, and significantly more than a handful of damp dollar bills. When I look at the women in this crafts group and I think about their lives, their histories, the challenges and horrors they’ve overcome, and the challenges they’re facing now, I have to wonder: How can we possibly estimate the true value of eight dollars? –SM

The Bead Women’s project meets on Saturdays and is growing as word gets around. If you want to know more about them, go to their blog at http://refugeecrafts.blogspot.com/2007_09_01_archive.html

Secondary Ed SIG Report
from Christine Veto, Ed.D., SIG Chair

English Language Learners in an International Baccalaureate School

As Isaac Newton Middle School goes through the process of becoming an International Baccalaureate Middle Years Programme school, the needs of our English language learners leap to the forefront for program delivery. Schools offering the IB Programme are required to support students’ Language A (mother tongue) to the extent possible, and provide coursework in Language B (a second language to study). The four world languages offered for IB include Mandarin, English, Spanish, and French. The issue our ELLs are facing in the IB model is how to support their Language A in order to retain and expand the fluency they already have.

On the surface, the IB Programme seems to be a natural fit for ELLs. What better option could there be for students fluent in another language than to have English truly taught as a second language in the manner Spanish or French is taught as a second language? However, the reality of the school’s resources comes into play where we don’t have the resources to provide that kind of opportunity. IB recognizes this, which is why they state the ideal is to teach students’ Language A to the extent possible.

Our present staffing allows us for one ESL teacher and two paraprofessionals to support our ESL students. This year, we implemented a schedule where students are clustered in specific grade-level classes throughout the day and have support from one ESL person assigned to those classes. To try to accommodate our students’ mother tongues, we provide a content support class in which they may work in small groups while receiving one-on-one attention as needed.

In our master schedule for the 2008-09 school year, we are implementing an intervention period to incorporate the Response to Intervention model. As part of this, we are asking teachers who speak other languages to think about how they could support ELLs in a content support class during this time. The idea is rather than have all ELLs in the same content support class, we can divide them up according to Language A so they can have an opportunity to continue their fluency with an educated adult who also speaks their language. We are also considering using parent volunteers in this capacity.

Intensive English Program/Higher Education SIG Report
from Tamara Milbourn, SIG Co-Chair

Make Theory the Practice

Do you have difficulty convincing your IEP/IEF students to practice what you preach? In my Fall 2007 advanced reading class at CU’s International English Center, I told my students that for a college lecture course, reading the chapter before the lecture would improve their comprehension of the material. Seems logical – most people would have a hard time disagreeing with that advice. After some discussion, my students reported that they agreed in theory, but doubted they would put it into practice. Their reasons included that reading takes too long, they are busy with other projects, they only need to learn the material in the lecture for the exams, etc. From the discussion, I gathered that, while my advice made sense to them, they did not value the theory behind it enough to put it into practice.

(Continued on page 2)
Executive Secretary’s Report

Fall Convention 2007 Recap

Wow, another terrific convention! Here’s a typical comment we received: “The conference was so inspiring and validating. It keeps me going as a professional!” This is the second year we registered 800 participants. It’s a pleasure to welcome the 300 new members who attended the Fall Convention for the first time. CoTESOL continues to be a growing and vibrant organization.

It was an honor to welcome three guests from TESOL who were here to start the planning for TESOL 2009. Gertrude Tinker Sachs, University of Georgia, Atlanta, is the convention chair, and Barbara Hruska, Columbia Teachers College, is the co-chair. Lisa Dyson is the TESOL director of conference services.

Many thanks go to the Board for helping to plan and organize this year’s convention.

2008 Mailings

New members frequently ask me about mailings they can expect throughout the year. This newsletter is the first of the year. In early May you will receive the Call for Proposals for our 32nd Fall Convention. The pre-registration packet for the fall convention will be mailed out in late August. The summer newsletter is also mailed out in August. Other mailings may occur as the need arises.

Important! CoTESOL Changes Hotels for the 2008 Fall Convention

Mark your calendars: the 32nd Annual Fall Convention is scheduled for October 24-25, 2008, at the Radisson Denver SE Hotel and Convention Center. The Board has already started the year-long process of organizing another superb convention.

Adios to Departing Board Members

Serving on the CoTESOL board is entirely voluntary and a labor of love. With the new year we’ve sadly said goodbye to the following departing board members: Eric Brandt, Karen Caddoo, Gretchen Hack, Mitzi Jontz, Lorraine Joseph, Paige Prugar-Jaumann, Diane Rosen, and Barbara Sample. Thanks for your dedicated service.

The 2008 Board welcomes the following new members: Virginia Nicolai, Dana Harper, Ranee Cervania, Shirley M. Lucero, Tamara Milbourn, and Andrew Koch. Thanks for volunteering.

Spring Conference Appreciation

Kudos to Margie Brown and Annie Cohen for planning and presenting the third CoTESOL Spring Conference in Colorado Springs. This is Margie’s final year as the Colorado Springs chapter liaison. CoTESOL has been most fortunate to have such a talented representative in the Colorado Springs area, one who worked for many years to establish our first branch chapter.

TESOL 2008 New York

CoTESOL will be well represented in New York in April by its executive officers. Because TESOL will be in Denver next year, we’re looking for people to help promote Denver 2009 at the New York convention. Please e-mail me if you are going to TESOL this year, and let me know whether you are presenting.

If you are going to New York, plan to attend the Rocky Mountain TESOL reception, tentatively scheduled for Thursday, April 3 at 8:00 p.m., location TBA.

Membership/Finances

CoTESOL currently has an active membership of 800. Thanks to the generous support of our membership, CoTESOL finished the year on a strong financial footing. With its trust funds, savings, and regular checking, CoTESOL enjoys a healthy cash position. I am happy to report that CoTESOL will have adequate funds to meet the requirements of the 2008 budget.
How many times has this happened to you? Although my students logically accepted my advice on learning vocabulary, summarizing, the value and skimming, it was not enough to motivate them to follow through and actually implement my advice.

How can I convince them that changing their learning strategy might lead to enhanced academic success, which is what they want? I have enough experience to know that repeating myself does not work. Neither does saying it louder. Therefore, last fall I decided to take a new approach: I chose to make the theory itself the practice. I did this by having students conduct and participate in their own reading research.

To begin, we discussed the idea of academic research generally. I explained the scientific method and introduced five steps we could use to outline the investigation. After much classroom debate, we agreed on the following approach.

1) Create a Hypothesis
The hypothesis the class agreed to test was “Advanced ESL students who skim a reading on a topic before they listen to a lecture on the same topic will score higher on a comprehension test than advanced ESL students who do not skim the reading, but rather listen to the lecture only.”

2) Establish a Method
The eight students in my class randomly assigned themselves to one of two groups of four. One morning, the students went to a 50-minute lecture on the CU campus, with one group skimming the chapter being lectured on before the lecture and the other group not. The students asked me to create a multiple-choice and true/false comprehension test for them to take later the same day of the lecture. We would use test scores to analyze any differences in comprehension level between the groups.

3) Collect Data
After attending the morning lecture, seven students (one missed the lecture) took the comprehension test I had developed in the afternoon. We asked the IEP’s other advanced reading class (another nine students) to take the comprehension test as well. These students had neither read the chapter nor

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1 At the time, I was taking Speech, Language, and Hearing Sciences (SLHS) 2000 “Introduction to Communication Disorders”. The instructor kindly agreed to let my students sit in one of the classes.

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Peak performance is easy with ESL materials by Elizabeth Claire

(founder and editor, Easy English NEWS)

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Tel: 888-296-1090
Opportunities Abound for CoTESOLers
By Bruce Rogers, 1st Vice President

What a great conference we had last October! It was good to see the trends continuing upward in terms of both the number of convention attendees (over 800!) and the quality and variety of presentations. And those Japanese drummers—they were fantastic!

Now that 2007 is behind us, it’s time to start thinking about future events and opportunities that are coming up quickly.

First, there is the CoTESOL Spring Conference, to be held Saturday, February 9, from 9:00 am to 4:30 pm. Margie Brown, District 11 ESL coach, will lead a seminar titled “Brain-based Teaching for English Language Learners.” It will be held at the Tesla Center, 2560 International Circle, Colorado Springs.

Then there is the TESOL 2008 Conference in New York City on April 2-5. For the first time, the conference will be a three-day affair, so it will be less expensive and more convenient for out-of-towners to attend the entire time—and it will no doubt be even more intense than usual. Registration for the conference is now open through the TESOL web site. It’s a good idea to reserve early. If you do attend TESOL, check the CoTESOL web site to find out where the Rocky Mountain TESOL reception will be held (it’s tentatively scheduled for Wednesday, April 3, at 8:00 p.m.). Plan to check in with CoTESOLers as well as attendees from nearby states. Arizona TESOL is hosting this year’s reception.

And of course, our own annual Fall Convention will be held in SE Denver on October 24-25. This fall, the convention returns to the Radisson since the facilities at the Renaissance were only available October 31-November 1 and the Board did not want to interfere with anyone’s trick-or-treating plans.

In March 2009, the 43rd Annual TESOL Conference comes to Colorado! This represents a unique opportunity for those of us in this part of the country—the last time TESOL held a conference in Denver, Richard Nixon was in the White House! (It happened back in 1974.) For everyone who has wanted to attend a TESOL conference but found the travel too difficult, TESOL 2009 is your chance!

In January, the Board of Directors selected three local chairs and 7-13 team leaders. They will be guests of TESOL at the New York Conference, where they will shadow their counterparts to learn first-hand how to put on a great conference. However, there will still be a need for plenty of volunteers from the local affiliate (that’s us) to do local promotion, arrange site visits, contact local media, stuff conference bags, staff the hospitality booth, and wear “Ask me!” buttons. So please plan now to volunteer at this exciting event!

For the latest information about CoTESOL events, activities and opportunities, explore our web site:

www.colorado.edu/iec/cotesol
CoTESOL Awards for 2007

Every year, our members have an opportunity to nominate outstanding teachers and colleagues for prestigious awards. Once again, the recipients honored at the 2007 Fall Convention represent the best in ESL professional achievement. We also offer grants and scholarships that make convention attendance more accessible to students and long distance travelers.

Two CoTESOL members were awarded the Virginia French Allen Award for Excellence in Teaching—both excel in instruction and/or materials/program development. They are Erik Erickson, who is on the faculty of South High School, Denver Public Schools, and Chris Tombari, a teacher at the Spring Institute for Intercultural Learning.

The CoTESOL member who received the Gladys Doty Award for Outstanding Contribution to the Profession is Norma King, of the English Language Center at Denver University.

Travel awards and scholarships to the 2007 Fall Convention were granted to Olena Benedyktova, an MA candidate in the Linguistics Department, University of Utah, who was sponsored by the U.S. Department of State, and Sybil Merzber, of the Literacy Program in Jackson, Wyoming. Additional convention scholarships were awarded to Chen Jie, visiting professor at the University of Colorado — Boulder from Guizhou University for Nationalities, and China Kelly Velez, who teaches a drop-in English class for the Denver Public Library.

Congratulations to all these worthy recipients!

It's not too early to plan for the CoTESOL 2008 Fall Convention!
Use this coupon to lock in the lowest possible rate now!

RADISSON HOTEL DENVER S.E. $89 SPECIAL
3200 South Parker Road, Aurora, CO. 80014

CoTESOL members who register for the October 24-25, 2008, convention will receive a special $89 (plus tax) rate for each night's lodging at the Radisson Hotel Denver Southeast. When you call to make your reservation, mention CoTESOL, and you will automatically receive the discounted rate.

This rate includes breakfast buffet for two in the Aspens Café.

Make your reservation by calling the hotel directly at (303) 695-1700.

Treat yourself to a pleasant hotel stay at the Radisson and help CoTESOL. Each convention guest who stays at the Radisson helps to reduce CoTESOL's convention costs. We appreciate your support.
attended the lecture, and we thought it would be interesting to see how they scored.

4) Analyze the Data
During the next class, the students examined the data. They corrected the tests, tallying correct and incorrect answers into three categories: “All Questions”, “Lecture-Only Questions” and “Reading and Lecture Questions”. Then we put all the data together and calculated percentages.

5) Develop Conclusion(s)
In small groups, the students examined possible connections among the percentages. As a class, the students determined that our hypothesis was correct – that students who skimmed the reading before the lecture exhibited a higher comprehension level (65%) than those who had did not (55%). In addition, the students suggested that comprehension of new material (material not in the skimmed material, but on the same topic) could also increase with skimming a text beforehand, since the students who had skimmed the reading performed better on “Lecture-Only” questions than students who had not skimmed (64% versus 50%). Finally, the class decided that multiple-choice and true/false tests may not be the best way to assess true learning (the students considered the other class’ average score of 40%, with no exposure or background in the topic, to be too high).

In the end, the students concluded that our study was not perfect. Our sample size was small, we did not control enough for language level, and we did not use any statistical analysis. However, my conclusion as their teacher is that their research experience made the specific theory – my original advice – more tangible. They saw demonstrable evidence that skimming a reading before a lecture could improve comprehension of the material.

Furthermore, this activity provided an opportunity to introduce students to the academic research process. The majority of my students admitted that while they had performed chemistry and physics experiments, they had never participated in a “soft science” research study, a type of study they will definitely encounter again and again while studying at an American university.

Finally, it was an opportunity for the students to sharpen their critical thinking skills as they examined data and engaged in a final critique of our research method. As IEP/HE teachers, we want our students to adopt successful learning strategies, familiarize themselves with American academic culture, and use critical thinking skills. Classroom research projects such as the one described above is one way to do this.

Please contact me at milbourn@colorado.edu if you have any questions about this activity or would like to collaborate on a similar experiment. Wouldn’t it be interesting for students from IEPs across Colorado to compare results from shared research on vocabulary learning strategies or reading comprehension approaches?

Applied Linguistics SIG Report
from Ranee Cervania, Ph.D., SIG Associate Chair

Introspection through Visual Imagery

The Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary of Current English defines “introspection” as an act of examining one’s own thoughts and feelings. Introspection through visual imagery allows students to put on paper their own thoughts and feelings using visuals (drawings, cut-out pictures, or clip arts) about where they were at the beginning of the semester, where they are now (the end of the semester), and where they are going (future goals).

During the fall 2007 semester, I discovered that introspection through visual imagery helps students to create paths to success. Through introspection, students examined themselves more closely and discovered how they have grown personally and academically. At the beginning of the semester, the majority of the students felt insecure about themselves. They didn’t have enough confidence to succeed in college. One student reported, “I thought of myself as [someone who] wasn’t smart enough or wasn’t responsible enough to stand steadily and move forward in college.” They also felt fear because they were “not ready to begin college.”

At the end of the semester, the students were pleased to discover how they had grown. Academically, they learned to become independent learners. One student reported, “I now take the initiative to research subjects, problems, words, and situations without being told to do so.” Personally,
they discovered their "stumbling blocks." Sample observations included, "I learned a lot about myself. I'm more confident about myself and I'm not as lazy as before. I'm more motivated because I found out that I can do anything if I put my mind into it."

Introspection, coupled with visual imagery, allowed my students to see vividly and concretely where they had been, where they are now, and where they are going. This process gave them much-needed encouragement and the intrinsic motivation to pursue their desired careers. Some believe that whatever is put on paper becomes a reality. In fact a former student shared his story with the class. He said that years earlier, he drew on paper the specific design of a music studio he wanted to have. Now his actual music studio is a mirror image of his drawing.

Because introspection challenged students to look within and visual imagery helped them see their path to success vividly and concretely, they learned to become independent learners. They now seek knowledge and wisdom for themselves, not just for grades. They also found value in managing their time effectively. And because their focus is on how they can achieve future goals, they began to create action plans to reach these goals.

In conclusion, allow me to quote one more student's discovery about herself. "I can't be successful if I don't believe in myself. ... I need to take each of my failures as a new lesson to help me face all the coming challenges. ... Failures are not embarrassments. They are materials that can be collected to build myself up completely step by step."

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