

TESL NS Newsletter

Spring 2007



page 1

Table of Contents:

	<i>page</i>
Editor's Message	1
TESL Canada 2008 Conference	2
<i>ESL Learner Submissions:</i>	
- How We Think We Can Learn the English Language Best	3
- The Mexican Presidential Elections of 2006	6
- Globalization (2 essays)	10
Literature Review	11
Book reviews	13
Medical Insurance Note	16

Disclaimers:

The Newsletter Editor has accepted contributions with the understanding that they do not violate copyright laws. Contributors themselves are solely responsible for any copyright violations they incur.

Content does not express the views of the Newsletter Editor or TESL NS.

Editor's Message

*The sun was warm but the wind was chill.
You know how it is on an April Day
When the sun is out and the wind is still:
You're one month on in the middle of May.
But, if you so much as dare to speak,
A cloud comes over the sunlit arch,
A wind comes off a frozen peak
And you are two months back in the middle
of March.*

-- Robert Frost

What Robert Frost says of the New England States could well be said of our Atlantic Canada, in particular of the past few days –

May 14, 15, 16 and 17 – which have indeed felt like being two months back in the middle of March.

Here is hoping that we will soon feel one month on in the middle of June.

Last month, we had an interesting mini-conference on "Tricks of the Trade" in the teaching of languages, primarily for the English Language. The Spring 2007 Edition of our Newsletter carries the same theme. However, we always accept contributions even if they don't directly relate to our designated theme. I moreover publish contributions from ESL/EFL students mainly to show how much we as teachers have accomplished in helping them communicate in English. I do not attempt to edit, even less to censor, the content of students' literary contributions. If I do any editing, it concerns the language of the contributions only.

Because the conference looked at the issue mainly from the teacher's point of view, I tried to get a glimpse of it from the student's point of view by asking some academic writing class students at the TESL Center, SMU to do a composition on the topic "How I think I learn the English language best" and they've come up with an idea or two that some of us probably had not thought of. See for yourself, below, where I present excerpts from their writing. It would be a good idea to try to get the two sides to come together.

For this edition, we have some book reviews and a literature review from ESL Instructors (Sandee Thompson and Chris Grimshire respectively); some (SMU) student contributions on what they as ESL students think are ways they can learn English best and on what they (ILI) think of globalization. Another contribution from a (CCLC) student, preparing for the LLM

TESL NS Newsletter

Spring 2007



page 2

program, tried to explain how his country's educational system affected the outcome of their latest presidential election.

Let me conclude with an appeal to all the TESL Nova Scotia members to be more generous with contributions of their own for the next issue of our Newsletter -- personal experiences teaching ESL, suggestions how to improve our Newsletter, anything that has to do with TESL. If anyone would like to contact me about the newsletter, email me at: newsletter@teslns.ca

Thank you to all the coordinators and presenters at the recent mini-conference, to the contributors for this edition, and to our webmaster Ellen Pilon.

Fe Leonor Baculi
Editor
(TESL Center/ SMU)

TESL Canada 2008 Conference Report

By Ellen Pilon (HILC)

The conference will take place May 29 – 31, 2008 at the Delta Beausejour Hotel, Moncton, NB. It is co-hosted by TESL NB and TESL NS working with TESL Canada. The TESL Canada 2008 Conference Co-chairs are Barbara Clayden (TESL NB), Sandra Foreman (TESL NB), and Ellen Pilon (TESL NS).

Theme:

Because Scott Thornbury and Jeremy Harmer are willing to come to Moncton to speak, we worked the theme around their current specialty, the popular topic of discourse.

Committee Structure:

The Planning Committee has met face-to-face several times in Moncton, through innumerable emails, and telephone

conversations. Both TESL NB and TESL NS are trying to find funding for the conference and promoting interest. TESL NB is focusing on on-site planning: facility coordination, hospitality, visits, AV requirements, publishers and exhibits, and on-site registration. The Learners Conference will be chaired by Carolyn Gupta and Yasmin Ojah of TESL NB. TESL NS is looking after publicity and correspondence through the www.teslns.ca website, pre-registration through PayPal and the database of delegates, organization of and correspondence with presenters, the Conference Program, and the Registration Brochure. A committee is working on the program and brochure.

Facilities:

The Delta Beausejour in Moncton is a beautiful hotel located in the heart of downtown. The conference will occupy the entire second floor, with publishers, food, workshop rooms, the Learners Conference, registration and information all on the same floor. We will be the only conference during Friday and Saturday. We will occupy the main space on Thursday for the symposia, publisher set up and opening, and the President's Wine and Cheese. The hotel has 310 guest rooms and they have guaranteed the price of \$149.00 plus HST (14%) per night. Parking is free. Information will be posted on the website (www.teslns.ca) about deadlines for room reservations at that price. Tourist season is well underway by the end of May, so this is the lowest rate we could secure.

Program:

The Call for Symposia and Call for Presentations are posted on the www.teslns.ca website, and through TESL Canada and TESL NB websites. Both Calls have also been mailed with the spring *TESL Canada Journal*. We are inviting expressions of interest for symposia first,

TESL NS Newsletter

Spring 2007

page 3

with final detailed proposals due September 1st. This gives enough time to prepare the Registration Brochure which will go out with the Fall TESL Canada Journal. Already we have heard from five groups that want to organize symposia.

We hope that 40 to 50 will attend the Symposia sessions and about 300 will attend the conference as a whole, and hope there will be about 90 workshops.

Jeremy Harmer will kick off the conference early Friday morning. Scott Thornbury will speak immediately after lunch on Saturday. We are planning to include lunch in the Saturday conference fee so that delegates can socialize or participate in Themed Tables before enjoying Thornbury.

Food:

We really liked the continental breakfast that was available at the TESL Canada 2006 Conference in Winnipeg and will be offering that to delegates, and Learners, at the Beausejour. The banquet will be Friday night (an additional charge). Saturday lunch will be included in the conference fee. Lunch on Thursday and Friday will be wherever delegates wish. The hotel has two delightful restaurants: the famous Windjammer Dining Room and the informal L'Auberge Restaurant. Both serve delicious meals. There's also a café and lots of places seconds away on the main street of the city.

Registration:

Registration will be available online through PayPal or by mail. There will be an Early Bird deadline. Registration will also be available on site. All communication about registration will go to conference@teslns.ca. Details about the program will be available at www.teslns.ca and on the websites of TESL NB and TESL Canada.

Special for TESL NS Members:

Because the TESL Canada 2000 conference, which was held in Halifax, raised so much money for TESL NS, the TESL NS Board has decided to use some of that money (\$2,000 in total) to help members pay for their registration at the 2008 conference. Details will be available at the fall TESL NS conference and posted on the website afterwards.

Maritime Hospitality:

We are excited to offer delegates our Maritime hospitality at this conference. On Thursday there will be scheduled visits to popular tourist sites and we are hoping to arrange for a Lobster Dinner for those who wish to remain Saturday night. Educational visits are yet to be decided. We are hoping to provide delightful locally-crafted tote bags with some local NB and NS surprises.

The conference organizers are enjoying this wonderful opportunity to prepare an exciting event for fellow TESL professionals from across Canada. Don't forget! May 29-31, 2008 in Moncton!

(adapted from my submission to the *TESL Canada Newsletter*)

ESL Learner Submissions:

"How We Think We Can Learn the English Language Best"

(TESL Center, St. Mary's University IEP Students)

Ilkin Artuc (Turkey): A language learner needs to do things by himself. If you want to become good at something, you must practice on it. Practice makes something perfect. The 2nd thing on how to become a successful language learner is through teachers. Almost every teacher tries to help us and if we don't take advantage of that

TESL NS Newsletter

Spring 2007



page 4

help, we will lose a good chance. Of course we can learn a language without them but they make it easier for us. They are there to help us. We need to take as much as we can from them. The third one is through our attitude. If we really want something, we have to spend more time on it.

Shichao Zang (China): First, try to use the mass media effectively. Much of our new awareness comes through the media (newspaper, magazines, movies, TV, the Internet). So I listen to radio every morning, sometimes with note-taking and read it later and see if I got it right. Next, I also like to study in a group. In my case, I live in a dormitory and usually I study with my roommates. There is always the group pressure that influences me to do my best in certain ways when I am in a group. Finally, I have to do learning by myself. Education is not completed with graduation. Even the best university graduates need to continue learning before they become really educated people. The same thing is true with learning a language; it is non-stop learning before you become a successful language learner.

Abril Delgado Fuentes (Mexico): In my experience, the best way to learn English is NOT to think in your native language, try to have a positive attitude, and always have fun. At first, I always thought in Spanish (my native language) and then translated from Spanish to English; it was horrible! When somebody was talking to me, I wasn't listening because I was busy translating in my mind my answer. By the time I tried to talk, the conversation was over. So, I changed. I started focussing on what the other person was saying and replied later, even if my grammar is wrong. Being positive also helped me a lot. I started believing in myself, even if I don't get an amazing English. I'm for sure much better now than when I just arrived in Canada. Finally, I have fun. People ask me how I'm

learning English when I am always in parties. When I am around people, even if they are not native speakers of English, we all speak English and even better, when we are all "relaxed". This is my big secret why I learned a lot of English. "Don't worry, be happy."

Xianjia Huang (China): To be a good English language learner, I should use English everyday, learn more about the English language, and study my own attitude towards this language. This means that I should use English frequently to improve my oral skills. I make a lot of mistakes when I speak or write but I don't feel upset. I also need time to study the language and about the language. This will make learning English more interesting and easier. Vocabulary and grammar are very important so I pay more attention to them. Lastly, my study attitude is also very important. I love to learn languages but I don't work hard on them. I feel learning English the formal way is boring so I watch movies, cartoons and so on and keep telling myself "I can handle it." It is better to learn something when you are in a good mood.

Norma Jaua de Calzadilla (Venezuela): To learn the English language best, I must read and talk more in English, think in English, and learn from my mistakes. Reading and talking a lot in English improve more my knowledge about the language. What I read increases my vocabulary and makes me a better writer and speaker with less mistakes. Finding a conversation partner in English is a big help for me because we speak Spanish at home all the time even if we can all speak in English. Secondly, I try to think in English even if it is a little slow right now. When I watch TV programs in English, I try to react to it mentally in English. Thirdly, I learn from my mistakes. I like it when my teachers, classmates, and neighbors correct my mistakes. I don't worry

TESL NS Newsletter

Spring 2007



page 5

about my mistakes, and I don't feel embarrassed when they correct me.

Yuko Takei (Japan): I should change my study habit, make more Canadian friends, and try to be in a good learning environment. First, I should change my study habit. Like last night, instead of doing my homework, I watched TV. I always do things the shortest or the easiest way. Next, I was told that if I wanted to improve my English I should hang out more often with Canadian friends. They can correct me. In addition, I have to keep myself in a good environment to study English. It would be helpful if we can stay in a "Speak Only English" environment like in the classrooms or in residences. Finally, becoming a successful language learner really depends on me.

Min Young Hwang (Korea): I personally believe that teachers are very important. I can't say that they will make me think; however, their teaching styles and personality can affect students. Teachers teach us in different ways but I prefer those who encourage us and help us have self confidence. We meet lots of disappointments while studying, specially when we study abroad, so we need compliments from our teachers to make us feel better for studying. Next, I like to study with people. Group study has many advantage -- having somebody to force you to study when you want to play; you don't feel lonely; you also have a little competition with them; and you learn how to share. Some people are very selfish.

Yue Zhu (China): Learning a language best includes : interesting teachers, practice, relationships, and self-esteem. When you have wonderful teachers who are skillfull, interesting, easy-going, and talkative....and they are good and you like them very much, you will want to be a successful student.

Next, you have to practice your English -- speak, write, read and listen in English everyday. Don't be afraid of mistakes; they are very helpful for you to learn more. Third, if you live with host families or with roommates who speak the language you are learning, it is easier to learn that language. Hence, it is important that you maintain good relationships with them. Lastly, have a self-confidence and keep telling yourself that you are good and getting better.

Jisu Han (Korea): I need to consider four areas: writing, reading, listening, and speaking and other personal efforts. To write a paper well, I need people who can correct my imperfect writing: teachers or educated native speakers. I also have to write as often as possible -- essays, diary, research paper, etc. It is also equally important to read lots of books in English. For that, I need many vocabularies and grammar, or it is impossible for me to read and understand what I am reading. Reading also helps me in my writing, speaking and listening. So, I read a lot! Third, I need more contact with native speakers of English so I can speak only in English as often as I can. When I talk with them, I should listen to them carefully to understand what they say, and what vocabulary words or grammar they use. Lastly, when there are fewer personal problems, learning is easier. Now that I can cook my own food (and hopefully drink less alcohol), I am much happier and healthier to study.

Choi Sang Hoon (Korea): First of all, do not worry so much about your mistakes. Native speakers of English understand that English is not our first language. So speak English without fear even if you have some problems with pronunciation or with the use of correct vocabulary. Second, use the mass the media -- newspaper, radio, tv, movies, the internet news. Here you learn special words for journalism and eventually, you

TESL NS Newsletter

Spring 2007

page 6

will understand what you are reading. Finally, practice speaking or using the language everyday. We are not genius; we can't memorize everything in one day. According to a research work done by a Korean Science magazine, the length of time you spend learning or using a new language determines how long you are going to remember the new language.

Xue Yang (China): I learn English best by having an interest in the language, a good study habit and a good mood. Interest in learning a new language helps you learn that language better. Knowing something about the culture of that language can help you become more interested in it. Next, You should make a plan for your studies and follow them. Study everyday, and keep writing everything you learn, including your mistakes. The best way to correct mistakes is by writing them many times, specially when these are new words or grammar lessons. Vocabulary, specially idioms, and also grammar are for me the two most important things to master in learning a language. I always have a small note with me or around me where I can write new things I learn in English; during my free time, I go over them. Lastly, being in a good mood can help you focus on your studies better. It's also good for your health and the healthier you are, the more time you have for your studies. We can have a healthy mind for studying when our body is healthy first.

The Mexican Presidential Elections of 2006: The influence of education on the results

By Olmo Guerrero Martínez
(CCLC Student)

Fear is an effective weapon used to discriminate and manipulate populations all around the world. In Chomsky (2003), the idea of fear being used by most governments

as an effective strategy to maintain political power and control over their populations is presented. Nazi Germany and Stalinist Russia are extreme examples of how people follow the most absurd ideas when controlled by fear.

The most recent Mexican presidential elections are an actual and perfect example of the use of fear as a tool to achieve power. The year 2006 was the stage of the fiercest election in the nation's history. There were two main parties competing for the presidential chair. The rightist party, Partido Acción Nacional (PAN) was represented by candidate Felipe Calderón while the leftist party, Partido de la Revolución Democrática (PRD) was represented by Andrés Manuel López Obrador.

These parties are recognized for supporting different political principles. The PAN, which first attained power in the year 2000, is known as a firm supporter of Neoliberalism and a free market economy. In contrast, the PRD is recognized by its motto: "For the welfare of all; first, the poor". Before the elections, the PRD slogan was constantly used by then Mexican president and member of PAN, Vicente Fox to "show" the solidarity between the PRD and the Venezuelan president, Hugo Chávez. Fox also labeled the PRD candidate as messiah and messianic. This fear mongering showed a clear intent to manipulate voters, taking advantage of the bad reputation that most of the media had created about Chávez.

International politics aside, the PRD slogan represents to the poor of Mexico not only a valid political position, but also a statement of reality to be fulfilled. In 2001, the World Bank established that poverty increased in Mexico during the 90's. Fifty per cent of the 104,000,000 million are barely able to reach their basic nutritional needs. Twenty four

TESLA NS Newsletter

Spring 2007



page 7

per cent of the population cannot even earn enough money to eat properly. Ten per cent of the population earns 40% of the total national income (Vega Martinez, 2005).

The leftist slogan has to be the guiding principle for any party trying to reach power in a poor democratic nation like Mexico. Democracy is defined as the rule of the majority in which the supreme power is vested in the people and exercised by them through their representatives. Therefore, if 75 % of Mexico is poor, and we consider that Mexico is a democracy, the welfare of the poor has to be the motto of any political party in power.

The basic idea shown above was ignored by the PAN candidate during the presidential campaigns. Interviewed by national television, Calderon said “I keep saying that Andrés Manuel López Obrador (PRD candidate) is a danger for México”. This last statement was based mainly on the PRD candidate’s preoccupation about the poor and his rejection of the consequences of continued following of the neo-liberalism model. During the campaign, the PAN party televised different spots referring to the PRD candidate as a danger to the country.

These spots were found illegal by the Mexican Electoral Courts. Their illegality was based on the fact that these disqualifications could sway the opinion the population has toward the candidates. Also, the spots were qualified by the Electoral Court as practices that provoke negative effects working against the freedom of vote, and being a decisive factor that could orientate the citizen’s vote (Monsivais, 2006). Despite the above, the Electoral Court concluded that there was lack of evidence to show the cause-effect relation between the violations of the law and changes in the election results. Therefore, the Court declared the legality of the

elections in favor of the PAN candidate by .56 per cent. In other words, this was a violation to the law without punishment.

The exact cause-effect relation between the use of the illegal spots and its effects on the results of the election is impossible to prove. It is just humanly impossible to prove how many votes changed because of the PAN spots. Therefore, the Electoral Court would have nullified the elections only if the impossible had been achieved. The Electoral Court decision was total nonsense.

Even though there is no way to prove exactly how many votes were influenced, I contend that the ad campaign used by the PAN did deeply affect the results of the elections. The main reason is because most of the voters were unable to understand and handle all the information received about the “danger” that the PRD candidate represented.

The PAN used fear as a political tool to reach power. This method flourished even more because it took advantage of the lack of education of most of the voters. Education in Mexico focuses on the memorization of dates and names, without concern for the development of thinking skills or the analysis of given information.

This kind of education is described by Paulo Freire in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970) as “an act of depositing, in which the students are the depositories and the teacher is the depositor [issuing] communiqués and [making] deposits which the students patiently receive, memorize, and repeat.” The student believes in reality as something constant and unmodified. Therefore, they are not allowed to discuss reality and sometimes they cannot even recognize the option to doubt.

The Mexican adaptation of this kind of

TESLA NS Newsletter

Spring 2007



page 8

education is shown in the results of studies conducted by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), an intergovernmental organization that groups 30 industrialized countries sharing a commitment to democratic government and the market economy. The study called *Outcomes of Learning: Results from the 2000 Program for International Student Assessment of 15-Year-Olds in Reading, Mathematics, and Science Literacy*, measured 265,000 15-year-olds' literacy in reading, mathematics and science. The study was conducted by the OECD's Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) studying over 31 countries.

In the words of Gary Phillips (Lyne, 2001), commissioner of the U.S. Education Dept.'s National Center for Education Statistics, PISA's focus on age 15 students allows countries to measure outcomes of learning that reflect both societal and education system influences, and measure students' preparedness for adult life beyond compulsory schooling. The results also determined the students' ability to understand complex texts, evaluate information, build hypotheses, and draw on specialized knowledge.

The results showed three nations sharing what was likely the study's most dubious distinction. Brazil, Mexico and Luxembourg finished No. 31, 30 and 29, respectively, in reading, mathematics and science. The conclusion is that Mexican students are not able to evaluate information, and this disability follows them during their adulthood.

The PAN presidential campaign took advantage of the proven disability of most voters to understand and evaluate information. The use of fear as a political tactic was not recognized, nor understood by

the common people. Therefore, the danger that the PRD candidate represented to the nation, as said by the PAN, was wrongly considered as a fact. There is no evidence to believe that the PAN spots did not affect strongly the tendency of the votes. The disability exhibited in the international studies does not find exceptions.

A society that cannot think properly tends to be moved by emotions instead of truth. This was the main point developed in the PAN campaign and will be a tactic used in politics until our own improvement. There is a Mexican saying, "Everyone has the government they deserve.", but I still cannot find what we did to deserve this.

References

- Chomsky, N. (2003). *Hegemony or survival: America's quest for global dominance*. New York: Henry Holt.
- Vega Martinez, L. (2005, June). La Pobreza en México [The poverty in Mexico]. *Observatorio de la Economía Latinoamericana*, 44. Retrieved December 14, 2006 at <http://www.eumed.net/coursecon/ecolat/mx/2005/lvm-pobreza.htm>
- Freire, Paulo. (1970). Pedagogy of the oppressed. In *Marxism and Education*. Retrieved December 14, 2006 at: <http://www.marxists.org/subject/education/freire/pedagogy/>
- Lyne, J. (2000). Who is number one? Finland, Japan and Korea. Says OECD Education Study.. *OECD/PISA Study*. Retrieved December 14, 2006 at: <http://www.siteselection.com/ssinsider/snapshot/sf011210.htm>
- Monsivais, C. (2006). Un peligro para Mexico [A danger for Mexico]. *El universal*. Retrieved December 14, 2006. at: <http://www.eluniversal.com.mx/editoriales/34459.html>

TESLA NEWS Newsletter



Spring 2007



page 9

Globalization

by Yong Mo (Jimmy) Yang
ILI Student

When you go around anywhere these days, you can easily see people who are wearing clothes from other countries and cultures and you can eat food such as pizza, pasta, and steak. Nowadays, we are surrounded by thousands of different things that were produced in foreign countries. In fact, we are getting used to these things because of globalisation. This means people around the world are more connected to each other than ever before. However, as the world has become global, it has created many pros and cons.

One of the most basic advantages of globalization is that the products produced in one part of a country are available to the rest of the world. For example, we can eat tropical fruits and vegetables and use oil even though some countries have no oil of their own.

In addition to this, it is much easier for people to travel, communicate and do business internationally. We can go anywhere without difficulty, except some countries, so we can have a better global understanding of other ideas, values, and behaviours.

Finally, it offers a higher standard of life. For instance, information and money flow quicker than ever. Furthermore, we can enjoy our lives by sharing the culture of other country's like movies, music and so on.

Globalization has drawbacks as well but its benefits are much clearer. The most important thing is not only to accept these advantages wisely but to also keep our culture and identity at the same time.

Globalization

by Sally Wang (ILI Student)

People in large volumes are becoming aware of globalisation. This worldwide phenomenon has both advantages and disadvantages.

It is well known that globalisation promotes technological improvement rapidly, such as through laptops, mp3 players and some software. More medications and medical treatment have also been developed during this period of time. Moreover, it is now common to study abroad and do trade business. The main thing that adults, both young and old, benefit from is the spread of entertainment, for example, cd's, magazines and so on. With the improvement of peoples' speaking methods, one can communicate freely with non-native speakers through lingua franca.

As the saying goes, all things have an opposite side". The disadvantage of globalisation emerged simultaneously. Firstly, people are suffering from the clash of cultures. International crimes are increasing in many ways. Next, imported products may give local people allergies and spread disease. Unfortunately, some new products with unknown genes are also brought into many countries. In addition, traditional cultures are being reduced.

In order to benefit from the advantages of globalization, we need to reduce the disadvantages through better planning and communication.

TESL NS Newsletter

Spring 2007

page 10

Literature Review

by Chris Grimshire
(CCLC Instructor)

The literature in this review provides general information on the topic of cultural control and the marginalization of those who do not meet the standards of those in positions of power. In particular, it examines hegemonic relations in the field of adult education. Hegemony is defined by Gramsci (Coben, 1998, p. 15) as the all-pervasive dominance of society by a select few through the control of the institutions of society. Hegemonic control is not strictly a top-down affair, but also reaches up from below and traps educators in the middle of a tug-of-war. This has far-reaching consequences, without an option to be neutral. Myles Horton (Horton & Freire, 1990) remarked in conversation that there is no neutrality in education. "It's a code word for the existing system" (p. 102).

This report is by no means an exhaustive selection of literature in the area of critical pedagogy; time restraints prevent this. Rather, it is a cobbling of suggested readings and fortuitous selections that depicts society and marginalized individuals through the lens of education. An attempt was made to provide varying perspectives of hegemony and the marginalization of segments of society, especially in the area of adult education. The material covers more than half a century.

Hegemony and Marginalization in Society

Once established, a culture's main objective is to ensure its survival. In recognition of this axiom, Gramsci's view of hegemony was political. In his teachings, Gramsci (Coben, 1998) notes that "every state [sees] as one of its most important functions [the raising of] the great mass of the population to a particular cultural and moral level" (p. 16). This is in

correspondence with the interests of the ruling class. Coben goes on, citing Green (1990), to explain that hegemonies are able to maintain control by making alliances with subordinate groups. Although concessions are granted, they are never so great that they would upset the preferred balance of power. Thus we see alliances between business and governments, governments and religious groups, religious groups and schools.

Two of Freire's stages of conscientization, described in Coben (p. 74), show how this is possible. People in the naïve transitive stage feel a strong compulsion to belong to a group more powerful than they. They accept the arguments and values of the hegemony and defend them with polemics rather than dialog. I have met people like this in the field of education, people who retaliate with hostility at any suggestion of reform, lest it perturbs their departmental fiefdoms.

In the stage of fanaticized consciousness people believe they are free, but they are, in fact, easily controlled by charismatic leaders. Horton (1990, p.109) warns of the dangers of charismatic leaders. They communicate to large segments of society and are unable to get feedback from those being addressed. He speaks of the power of emotions, since emotion, not understanding, is the only thing that brings about a conversion.

These stages of conscientization explain the layers of hegemony in society and how it is possible to be privileged in one setting and marginalized in another. Horton (Horton & Freire, 1990, p. 30) mentions how he would be listened to in church because of his position in a regional youth group, but ignored on the street because he was a clerk in a store. Sissel and Sheared (2001) talk about their experience with this layering of hegemony below.

TESLA NS Newsletter

Spring 2007



page 11

Hegemony and Marginalization in Education

In the field of education, adult education is marginalized. Adult educators are the have-nots with respect to resources, funding, and recognition. “Nowhere is the education of adults a major priority” (Coben, 1998, p. 4). For example, those in adult education often say that the field is at the mercy of those who control the purse strings. Within the field, organizations such as the American Association of Adult and Continuing Education, the Canadian Association for the Study of Adult Education, and the Canadian Language Council, set standards and control agendas. Sissel and Sheared (p. 8) explain how such organizations control professional language by deciding how language acquires status. By controlling publishing, they determine whose voices get heard and, consequently, who acquires rank and economic sustainability. They admit that, even in the publication of their book, mandated to give voice to the voiceless, they chose who would speak.

When people are in situations where there is constant worry about making ends meet, they consciously or subconsciously ally themselves with those whom they think have control over their existence. That is Freire’s semi-intransitive consciousness (Coben, p. 73). To test his idea that “it takes position to get position” (p. 73), Fuller (2004) created two sets of business cards, one with no title and the other with a fictitious title. He was put off, dismissed, or ignored when it was believed this former president of a prestigious liberal arts college was nobody. This was in stark contrast to the returned telephone calls and meetings granted when he presented the false title.

Tompkins’ (1990) description of a performance model of teaching illustrates

her fear of being marginalized professionally. In a consumer driven society, this means performing not only for your employers, but also for the consumers of your service. “I ... finally realized that what I was actually concerned with and focused on most of the time were three things: a) to show ... how smart I was, b) to show ... how knowledgeable I was, and c) to show ... how well-prepared I was for class” (p. 654).

Students, however, live in fear of marginalization as well. In the same article, Tompkins refers to Freire and his statement about how the oppressive power relations in society are echoed in our schools. As they acquire power, students pass along this abuse. This brings us back to Fuller’s contention that abuse becomes a vicious, downward spiraling circle. His book, which decries the evils of the abuse of power endemic in society, cautions of violent reprisals which arise when the oppressed decide to rebel against their oppressors. This is not the orderly restructuring of power Moses Coady (1939) advocated, nor is it the civil and labor organizing practiced at Highlander (Horton & Freire, 1990). Fuller cites examples of shootings in schools, terrorist attacks, and genocide to support his claim. Coady concurs. “Blocking a human stream is dangerous and begets revolution” (p. 29).

Educators: Holders of Official Knowledge

Another way hegemonies maintain control of a society is by controlling the culture. Gramsci (Coben, p. 21) explains that the masses can be controlled by controlling the natural leaders, the “holders of eternal truths.” Intellectuals, i.e. educators, “represent the entire cultural tradition of the people” (p. 19). In order to overthrow oppressive power structures, the masses need their own educators, organically derived as opposed to the

TESLA'S Newsletter



Spring 2007



page 12

traditional educators of the ruling class. By putting forth their own layer of intellectuals, the once powerless create an alternative culture, another hegemony, albeit one that reaches up from below.

The editors of Horton and Freire's (1990) book explain that participatory education, one that is organic, has the potential to empower the powerless (p. xv). This is what Moses Coady hoped to prove with his Antigonish Movement and Myles Horton accomplished through Highlander. Coady, Freire, Fuller, and, to a lesser extent, Horton do not believe the existing social order should be torn down. More equity and dignity for those suffering from oppression will be created through restructuring, not reconstructing.

Models of Education

Gramsci's traditional intellectuals are equivalent to Freire's banking educator. This is the often well-meaning individual who strives to find some way to serve his community. This person goes through life wearing ideological blinders, asking himself "how [he can] live out these things [he believes] in within the capitalist system, within the subsystem of capitalism, the microcosm of capitalism, the school system and within the confines of respectability, acceptance" (Horton, p. 44).

Some might say that Moses Coady was a follower of banking education. He spoke of humans as being blank pages (p. 116). With proper guidance and education, an individual could be made whole -- physically, economically, culturally, institutionally, and spiritually. Freire (Coben, 1998) would argue that small study clubs and peer teaching were examples of the other model of education, problem-posing.

This model does not anesthetize or

inhibit development in order to submerge consciousness. Rather, through dialog which develops critical thinking, reality is unveiled and presents opportunities for action (Freire, in Coben, pp. 77-78).

Concluding Remarks: The Question of Neutrality

From the readings, professionals in the field of adult education become aware of the enormity of Tompkins statement, "what we do in the classroom is our politics" (p. 660). However much we wish to remain neutral, if we are being paid for our services, we ally ourselves with one or another hegemonic group.

In my present practice at a for-profit school, I work with learners who belong to the privileged classes of their respective cultures. These people are, or most certainly will be the leaders in their communities. In some of them I see evidence of marginalization and abuse.

I feel a need to accept the invitation of Sissel and Sheard (p. 11) to examine myself as an educator. Which master am I serving? In my organization there is a strong push to pay more attention to economic, rather than learning goals. Much as I am tempted to follow Tompkins' (p. 660) advice not to compromise my professional integrity by dancing to the tune of institutional standards, I live in fear of the repercussions of a real world.

It is to be hoped that a deepening understanding of the politics of hegemonies will allow me to find ways to serve my learners immediate needs without compromising my employers' economic needs. At the same time, I hope that some of what is acquired in my classes might live to bring a little more social equity in the world in the future. Myles Horton (p. 40)

TESL NS Newsletter

Spring 2007

page 13

admonishes me, “The way to do something [is] to start doing it and learn from it. ... You don’t get the answers from a book.”

References

Coady, M.M. (1939). *Masters of their own destiny: The story of the Antigonish Movement of adult Education through economic cooperation*. New York: Harper & Row.

Coben, D. (1998). *Radical heroes: Gramsci, Freire and the politics of adult education*. New York: Garland.

Fuller, R.W. (2004). *Somebodies and nobodies: Overcoming the abuse of rank*. Gabriola Island, BC: New Society Publishers.

Horton, M. & Freire, P. (1990). *We make the road by walking: Conversations on education and social change*. (B. Bell, J. Gaventa, & J. Peters, Eds.). Philadelphia: Templeton University Press.

Sissel, P.A. & Sheared, V. (2001). Opening the gates: Reflections on power, hegemony, language, and the status quo. In V. Sheared & P.A. Sissel (Eds.), *Making space: Merging theory and practice in adult education*. Westport, CT: Bergin & Garvey.

Tompkins, J. (1990). Pedagogy of the distressed. *College English* 52(6), 653-666.

Book Reviews:

Talk Time

Susan Stempleski
Oxford University Press, 2007
ISBN 019439291-0
(92 Pages)

By: Sandee Thompson
ILI

Talk Time is a three-level course that is meant to be used with false beginners, beginners or low intermediate students. Each level has a student book and CD, teacher’s book, class CD set and test booklet with its own disc as well. The texts are organized into twelve chapters with two thematically connected topics and each is 6 pages in length. The specifics of each chapter are laid out in the table of contents, the scope and sequence pages at the beginning of the book and the theme, grammar and main vocabulary items are also included. The grammar points are also highlighted in bold font for easy access. The book is colourful and systematic in its approach and each chapter follows the same pattern, although the tasks within each chapter differ from the previous chapters to ensure variety.

Before the first chapter in **Talk Time** is introduced, there is a section called ‘*to the student*’ where Stempleski has chosen to explain the format of each unit to perspective users. This three- page section helps the learner understand the layout of the author’s book and ensures they get the most out of the course. The author also includes a review section at the back of the text where learners can check their comprehension and memory of new lexis and grammar introduced in each unit. The last five pages of the text are devoted to lists of the most common words that were introduced in each chapter, which also provide a quick reference for students.

Talk Time is colourful, but not excessively so, and includes cartoons as well as photographs to introduce context and help visual learners access new vocabulary easily. The photographs are multi-cultural, where gender and people of all ages are equally represented. The clothes the various people are wearing are also simple enough

TESL NS Newsletter

Spring 2007



page 14

that the text should not become dated too quickly, a common complaint of younger learners. There is enough 'white space' on each page that they do not appear overly crowded and each new task is clearly explained with simple, clear instructions, followed by examples.

Each of the two units in each chapter follows an identical pattern: Speaking, Listening, Grammar, Conversation and then Communication task. The format essentially follows the 'Present Practice Production' (PPP) model, which is meant to show the language in context, to provide clear examples of how the language is used and to introduce the grammar and vocabulary before asking the learners to produce it. As with most lessons that follow this framework, the real communication tasks are last, allowing students to personalize what they have learned in an active manner. Generally, the tasks include both writing and speaking tasks and all include group work. For example, in unit one of **Talk Time 2**, learners are asked to write two true and three false statements about themselves and then they have to read them aloud to their group members and try to guess which are true and which are not. The second communicative task in the chapter is a bingo board game which follows the same premise as a 'find someone who...' task where learners have to ask their classmates questions and then fill in their names if they say yes. These two tasks encourage personalization, although I think the second task could be taken further by leaving some blanks for students to write their own questions.

Other tasks have students reading a recipe and then sharing their own favourite recipe, planning a trip and designing a travel brochure, completing survey forms and giving directions following a map, to name a few.

The other sections of the text, which are more 'practice' or accuracy-focused, follow a near-identical pattern. First, students are requested to look at a picture and listen to a text. This is followed immediately by a brief personalization task or pair task, such as asking a partner which of the foods mentioned in the listening text might be found in his or her house. Next, students are provided with a listening task which is meant to extract specific details. This is followed by grammar where they are asked first to 'listen and repeat' the text and then to personalize it by speaking about their own experiences. A full conversation related to the topic is then listened to, followed by the group communication task. There is a wide variety of tasks introduced throughout the text to ensure students who appreciate variety are not bored by the routine of following the same pattern for each lesson. These include tasks we come to expect in a course book (multiple choice, true or false, gap fills and yes/no questions) but also those that are still not as common as they should be (information gaps, categorization tasks and charts to complete).

I think what I like best about **Talk Time** is that the instructions are simple and clear and the lessons can be taught as one-off lessons or as part of a whole. The books could be used on their own for classes specifically aimed at listening and speaking skills or in conjunction with a main course book such as the American Headway series. Being a proponent of providing natural examples of English for learners of all levels, I did not particularly care for the slow or stilted way some of the voice actors recorded their parts; however, this can be easily rectified by providing an authentic, live model of the same dialogue mid way through the lesson or recording the learners' dialogues at a later time.

All in all, **Talk Time** is a bright new series

TESL NS Newsletter

Spring 2007



page 15

that students and teachers should enjoy using. The topics are light but relevant and there is enough variation that learners of all persuasions should be happy!

Tune In 2

Jack C. Richards and Kerry O'Sullivan
Oxford University Press, 2007
ISBN 0 19-447108X
(92 Pages)

By: Sandee Thompson

Tune In is a new three-level series meant to provide listening practice for students who fall between the false- beginner to low intermediate range. The text is focused on North America, although other cultures and accents, such as people from New Zealand, are also represented in the context of exploring different cultures and places, thus ensuring students are introduced to more than one English accents. According to its two authors, **Tune In** “teaches you the two important aspects of listening: understanding what people say and how they say it” (intro iii) and it does this with consistency between its units as well as the variety of its tasks. A student book with cd, teacher’s book, class cd set and test pack with cds is available for all three levels in the series.

Tune In is made up of fifteen units that each contains two lessons. Each lesson follows a typical receptive lesson format (pre-text, text and post-text tasks) and an identical form: Before you listen, Listen and understand, Tune in, and After you listen. The student cd, included with the student book, has a recording of the first ‘Listen and understand’ task so students can practice on their own as well as in class. The series is meant to develop students’ listening skills and to introduce them to “over 50 features of spoken English” (backcover) including showing interest, asking for clarification,

hedging and using conversation fillers.

The text is full of a wide variety of task types including prediction tasks where students have to look at pictures and guess the context and content of the recording, true and false, multiple choice, matching and rating tasks as well as short answer tasks. Students are also encouraged to notice language by highlighting new words and phrases in their texts. This variety ensures students do not get bored by the repetitiveness of the format while still providing the structure and support they need in order to be able to do the tasks with any level of success. **Tune In 2** also includes a number of personalization tasks throughout the course book to ensure students remain interested. For example, in unit 11, students are asked to think about their own family members and gifts which would be more appropriate for them. They then listen to a text related to the theme of gifts. The fifth and last task of the unit allows students to personalize the topics even further by completing a survey. Language is introduced in the ‘Tune in’ section of each lesson which is the final phase of the controlled practice tasks. Students are asked to listen to the recording and ‘notice how people express enthusiasm’ (page.48) or ‘check understanding by questioning or repeating key words’ (page 51). This is then followed by an example of what students are to listen to as well as a controlled practice task to check their comprehension of the discourse technique. Some of the topics focused on in this section are : showing interest, responding to bad news, using intonation and keeping conversations moving. By helping to highlight these features of discourse, we help our students to become more comprehensible when they speak English as well as aiding their comprehension when others speak to them.

TESL NS Newsletter

Spring 2007



page 16

Another aspect of this series that I liked is the visuals. They are simple and they include both cartoons and photographs. The colours are colourful but muted, which is easy on the eye. The photographs are generally of things that will not become dated quickly, for example, a police officer in uniform, houses, animals, sports equipment and team jerseys whereas the cartoons show people in clothes and a variety of hairstyles, which are likely to be less offensive to those students who are adversely affected by outdated pictures in texts. The cartoons and photographs include a wide variety of people of all shapes and sizes and gender; age and colour all appear to be represented in a balanced manner. Visual learners will also appreciate that the last task in each lesson is on different coloured paper, mauve, which clearly indicates that a new lesson is to follow. Kinesthetic learners may like the role play tasks interspersed throughout the course book, as well as tasks that ask them to order and rank information.

The topics in **Tune In 2** are relevant and interesting ranging from family to the news and, a North American all-time favourite, the weather and the table of contents at the front of the book really helps the learner to navigate around them. Each unit is broken down into unit topic, lesson, lesson objectives and listening genre. These help students and teachers to select the lessons most appropriate to their needs or, if **Tune In** is being used in conjunction with another text, the topic of the lesson. Some of the genres included in this text are: casual conversation, voice mail messages, recorded mail information and radio shows. While I found the recordings themselves to be somewhat contrived with the speakers speaking slower than I would like, they are still clear examples of the genre and would likely not offend anyone.

Tune In includes a track list at the back of the book that informs students of the listening tracks that are included on the students' cd. Everything about this book is meant to help students improve their listening abilities while keeping their interest and making the materials as accessible as possible. Once again, Jack Richards has created a text which will be able to be used in a wide range of classroom settings.

Medical Insurance Note

Thank you to everyone who has answered my emails and provided me with information regarding their possible interest in group medical insurance and the areas they would like to ensure are covered.

We are still in the process of exploring our insurance options. Initially, we had hoped to be able to support an ex-learner in his new position as an insurance representative; unfortunately, in order to do this, each individual school in the province would have to sign on for insurance coverage rather than being able to do this as a community group. Instead, I have approached the insurance broker that BC TEAL uses and he is looking into prices and different coverage that would meet the various needs of TESL NS members and their families .

As soon as I have more detailed information to report, I will report the information to the board, members and TEFL/TESL schools in the region and will then pass the torch on to a current board member to organize and keep track of numbers. We hope that by offering health insurance through TESL NS that we will also increase our membership.

Respectfully submitted,
Sandee Thompson, ILL