

THINKING Classroom

MISSION STATEMENT

Thinking Classroom serves as an international forum of exchange among teachers, teacher educators, and others interested in promoting democratic teaching practices. The publication encourages professional development, research, and reflection. *Thinking Classroom* features articles that foster learner-centered teaching strategies including critical and creative thinking, active and cooperative learning, and problem solving. The journal also publishes articles about the institutional structures that support these practices.

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An estimated crowd of 500 people filled a Humanities Building classroom at the University of Wisconsin-Madison during a teach-in on Muslim and Islamic beliefs and practices. The free program was offered in response to the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon. The University's "Plan 2008" is a ten-year blueprint for increasing faculty, staff and student diversity. For more information see <http://www.diversity.wisc.edu/>

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The International Reading Association is a nonprofit service organization dedicated to improving reading instruction and promoting the lifetime reading habit. The Association publishes professional books and five professional print journals: *The Reading Teacher* (about learners ages 1–12), the *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, *Reading Research Quarterly*, *Lectura y Vida* (in Spanish), and *Thinking Classroom* (also published in Russian as *Peremena*). The Association also publishes the electronic professional journal *Reading Online* (<http://www.readingonline.org>) and a bimonthly newspaper for members, *Reading Today*.

THINKING Classroom

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Letter from the Editor



A few days ago my almost-grown-up, 17-year-old son, who intends (for the moment, at least) to become a sociologist, said to me, “Mom, remember how I used to like to count everything when I was little? I never do that any more...”

“Well, you’re growing up, son. Some day soon you’ll be counting things again, as part of your profession, but with a new and different purpose...”

I feel this journal has “grown up” too. We still value articles in which people count various things—how many students liked a particular class, how many wrote about which topic—but more and more our submissions focus on interpretation: why a given topic is important; what causes students to act differently, or to adopt new priorities.

In this respect, I have a very positive feeling about this issue of the journal, because it addresses truly significant issues. For example, how can we help those who for various reasons—cultural, linguistic, or educational—find themselves outside the mainstream? And those in the mainstream need help as well, to learn to value diversity and open their hearts to people different than themselves.

Bird Stasz from the U.S. (p. 8) writes about methodologies that have been successful in involving the Roma community in schools in various East European countries. Stasz shows that, despite a centuries-long history of prejudice and mutual alienation between

the Roma and local residents, collaboration in the school system is possible, to the benefit of all the children.

Psychologist Anna Vershok from Russia (p. 14) shares her personal experience as the director of a school for refugee children in the center of Moscow. Each child in the school presents unique challenges, but the toughest psychological cases offer potential for the greatest rewards, to teachers, parents, and the children themselves.

American teacher Susan Finn Miller (p. 21) offers a different perspective on the problems of cultural synchronization, noting that for both teachers and students adaptation must be a two-way street. Clearly at this point in history the issue of immigrants and immigration is central to teachers who are striving to create thinking—and trusting—classrooms, where critical reflection is valued.

In a practical piece, Jennifer Joiner and Scott Greenwood (p. 29) suggest that word analogies, a strategy popular with students but largely underestimated and forgotten by teachers, can be used effectively across the curriculum and for all age groups.

A totally different but no less significant topic is addressed in the article by the Hungarian EFL professors Andrea Erdei and Zsuzsa N. Tóth (p. 36). They share their experiences in strengthening the partnership between school and university for preparing future teachers. Certainly the ideal for everyone involved would be

a seamless continuum between the practice-teaching schools and the teacher-training university.

However, there are certain “links” in our society that should be cut rather than strengthened, argues one of our authors in this issue. The particular links in question are those between school and business. In *Pros and Cons* (p. 46), Christopher Robbins tells us to beware of business-school partnerships, which affect both educational content and the language we use to describe school activities. It is for you to judge whether our schools have really become some sort of corporate entities. I assure you that this essay will arouse strong opinions, one way or the other, in all of our readers!

In any case, I hope that this issue is another small link in the creation of a network of like-minded thinkers around the world, and that people in this network can turn to *Thinking Classroom* for dialogue and advice about creating more democratic classrooms—classrooms where students feel that their opinions are relevant; and where teachers set an example of respect, tolerance, and positive problem solving.

And once this network has been built, it will be time to count again: new subscribers, new readers, and new authors. There will be many more of us, won’t there?

A stylized, handwritten signature in dark ink, consisting of a large, looped 'O' followed by a series of connected, fluid strokes.

Olga Varshaver

What's New?

International Reading Association's 48th Annual Convention

More than 19,000 people from over 45 countries attended the Annual Convention of the International Reading Association in Orlando, Florida, USA, 4–8 May 2003. Conferees could choose from over 600 sessions, seminars, and special events devoted to “Making a Difference” through literacy instruction. The Convention Exhibit Hall featured approximately 1,000 booths promoting new books and other educational materials.

Each year at the Convention, a new President of the Association takes office. This year, outgoing President Jerry L. Johns, Distinguished Teaching Professor Emeritus at Northern Illinois University, passed the gavel to Lesley Mandel Morrow, a professor at Rutgers University in New Jersey.

Materials from some of the Convention sessions can be downloaded online at <http://www.reading.org/orlando/>

The 49th Annual Convention, with the theme “Teaching the World to Read,” will be held 9–13 May 2004, in Toronto, Ontario, Canada. (See <http://www.reading.org/2004/>)

Reading Research 2003

Each year, prior to the Annual Convention, the International Reading Association sponsors a Research Conference. Reading Research 2003 drew 425 participants to Orlando 3 May 2003. The

event lived up to its theme—“Reading Research: The Cutting Edge”—by featuring 12 different sessions that showed what the latest research says to practitioners about preventing problems and promoting comprehension and other vital skills and goals.

Thinking Classroom/Peremena at Convention

Thinking Classroom/Peremena editors Olga Varshaver, Daiva Penkauskienė, and Wendy Saul met with over 50 prospective authors in a Convention session entitled “Thinking of Writing for *Thinking Classroom/Peremena*.” Attendees were invited to become writers as soon as they entered the session, by answering future questions for “Look Who’s Talking.” The editors later divided the attendees into small groups to brainstorm ideas for future articles and departments.

Convention attendees eagerly snapped up sample copies of the journal wherever they were displayed, so we look forward to welcoming lots of new subscribers!

United Nations Literacy Decade Launched

“Literacy as Freedom” is the theme of the United Nations Literacy Decade (2003–2012), which was launched at United Nations Headquarters in New York 13 February by UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, UNESCO Director-General Koïchiro Matsuura, and Natsagiin Bagabandi, the President of Mongolia. The aim of the Decade is to give new impetus to

efforts worldwide to reduce illiteracy. According to UNESCO statistics, some 861 million people, or 20 percent of the world’s adults, cannot read or write or participate fully in the organization and activities of their societies. Two thirds of these people are women. Another 113 million children are not in school and therefore not gaining access to literacy either.

Illiteracy is not just a problem of the developing world. In the mid-1990s, the International Adult Literacy Survey found that at least 25 percent of adults in 12 industrialized countries (Australia, Belgium, Canada, Germany, Ireland, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Poland, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, and the United States) lacked the minimum level of literacy proficiency considered necessary for everyday life and work in the member countries of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).

“The early years of the new millennium have underlined two key realities: the inter-connectedness of human societies and the unpredictability of world events,” Mr. Matsuura said. “We are all now more conscious of the need for mutual responsibility and global awareness. [...] The capacity for everyone, collectively and individually, to participate in networks of written communication is fundamental to building dialogue, understanding and harmony. It is, moreover, a basic human right.”



Read Aloud Week

The Orava Association (Združenie Orava) held its second annual *Read Aloud Week* 2–8 April in Slovakia. *Read Aloud Week* involves schools, parents, and children in activities and games related to books, and is designed to bring alive the connections between the world of adults and the world of children through fantasy and stories. Its purpose is to remind participants of both the joy of reading and its critical importance to lifelong learning. *Read Aloud Week* is organized under the auspices of František Tóth, State Secretary of the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic, and in cooperation with member libraries of the Slovak Library Association, the Slovak Board of PTAs, and the Slovak Pedagogical Library. More information is available on the Orava website www.citanie.sk

Reading for All in Africa: Building Communities Where Literacy Thrives

The International Reading Association recently published *Reading for All in Africa*, a collection of 40 papers selected from more than 150 presentations at the 2nd Pan-African Conference on Reading, edited by Joanne Umolu and Timothy O. Oyetunde. More than 300 educators—from 14 African nations, Canada, Jamaica, New Zealand, Thailand, the United Kingdom, and the United States—attended the conference in Nigeria in October 2001. Teachers, scholars, and organizations with

an interest in literacy promotion in Africa will find this volume to be a valuable resource.

I Enjoy Teaching

RWCT and the Step by Step program in the Czech Republic have published a new book for teachers, *I Enjoy Teaching*. The book, edited by Nina Rutova, collects the stories of 25 Czech teachers who participated in a nearly two-year-long writing workshop. These stories recount the beliefs, hopes, and efforts of innovative educators who have been using RWCT or SbS principles across the curriculum. By describing the challenges that must be met when a teacher adopts a new perspective on both teaching philosophy and teaching practice, the authors hope to inspire other teachers who are facing educational change. Support for the book project was provided by OSF Prague and OSI New York.



New Russian Publications

Two guidebooks, *Teaching Children to Think Critically* and *Strategies for Developing Critical Thinking* (Scythia/Alliance-Delta, St. Petersburg, Russia, 2003) have recently been published in Russia with partial support from the Open Society Institute (New York). In her preface to *Teaching Children to Think Critically* (I. Zagashv, S. Zair-Bek,

and I. Mushtavinskaya), Donna Ogle (IRA President 2001–2002) notes that this accessible book offers strategies that can be used not only by teachers, but also by parents and students, to help develop critical evaluation of information and independent decision-making.



Strategies for Developing Critical Thinking (I. Zagashv, S. Zair-Bek) is aimed primarily at faculty involved in pre-service and in-service teacher training, as well as at graduate and post-graduate students of teaching methodology. In his preface US educator David Klooster says that the authors “provide concrete and proven methods that will help students find their voices as they formulate ideas, engage in discussion and debate, listen with respect and tolerance to ideas different from their own, and experiment with ways to apply their new knowledge.” This publication is especially timely as the project “RWCT for Higher Education,” initiated by IRA and supported by OSI-NY, was recently launched in Russia.

Look Who's Talking

THE QUESTION:

There are a couple of students in my class who are painfully shy. They never volunteer to answer a question, and they seem completely overwhelmed by the other students when we are working in groups. How can I get them to participate in class activities?

Veronica Cretu

Executive Director, English Language Teacher Trainer, ESL Teacher CMB Training Center, Chisinau, Republic of Moldova



There will always be shy students in your classes, but you don't have to just accept the situation—there are things you can do to encour-

age and motivate them.

Try to find something that they are good at, encouraging and supporting them. Their fellow students will see them in a new light, and they may gain the confidence to explore other areas.

Try to determine the origin of the student's attitude...maybe he or she has never been encouraged at home; maybe some unpleasant experience adversely affected the student...Talk to the parents to find the roots of problem. You can't succeed unless you try!

Andreja Belošević

Third grade teacher, "Nikola Tesla" School Zagreb, Croatia

Obviously we need to encourage shy students and boost their confidence. However, this is not a quick and easy matter. The first and simplest step is to praise such students in front of the class for every accomplishment, however small. The teacher should find various ways to demonstrate that the quiet ones are as good as—

or better than—their classmates, and should assign tasks designed to show the students' strengths. With open-ended assignments, students can choose their preferred means of expression. For example, students could express their reactions to a book through song, dance, drawing, acting, etc.

Of course the role of the teacher in all of this is crucial: He or she must create an atmosphere in which nothing said in class will be laughed at or ridiculed. The teacher also needs to allow students sufficient time to prepare their responses. Most importantly, we need constantly to remind students that we are all different, and that it is precisely our uniqueness that we should value most.

Kathleen Lifka

Reading Specialist and English Teacher, Maria High School, Chicago, Illinois, USA



To help shy students voice their opinions in a non-threatening situation, I periodically have the class do a timed speaking/listening

exercise on a selected topic related to the lesson being taught.

Each student is allowed to pair up with a friend. Student A begins by speaking for one minute on the assigned topic; then student B talks for one minute on the topic. It does not matter if ideas are repeated. Then they get into groups of four,

and each student must explain their partner's ideas. The roles of facilitator, secretary, and reporter are rotated among the other three students.

In this way, the quiet ones first can tell what they know to a friend in a non-threatening situation. Then they report to a slightly larger group, but without fear of reprisal because they are presenting their partner's ideas, not their own. Gradually they gain the confidence needed to report to the whole class. They have learned by listening to others that their opinions count and they do have a voice in discussions.

Natalya Zadorozhnaya

Professor, "Critical Skills" course American University in Central Asia, Kyrgyzstan



For me a shy student is a "special handling zone." At first I sort of hold the student's hand—my primary goal is to create a friendly

environment, for this student and for the group in general. I encourage attentive listening and open-mindedness to ideas expressed in class. I never rephrase students' comments or pass judgment on them.

I often cite students' statements, identifying the author by name: If you remember, Meder said that... I agree with Anna in respect to...

It is worth considering Victor's words... It can be useful to call attention to passing remarks that students may have missed. This shows that every idea is valued. At first the more active students are most often "cited," but eventually this circle broadens. And it becomes apparent that each person is interesting in his own way.

As for our shy students... As a rule, when they become confident enough, they'll let go of your hand.

Irina Tyalleva

Sebastopol University of Continuing Education, Sebastopol, Ukraine



As a rule, quiet schoolchildren become quiet college students. What is the reason for their silence, their reluctance to make contact?

Some may have an image of themselves as "just-an-average-student," who doesn't know much, and isn't worth the teacher's time. Others may be dealing with the psychological problems of late adolescence. I begin by trying to learn something about my students, and expressing my genuine interest in them.

One way to help students open up is by role-playing. In "trying on" a different image, a student need not fear that his or her inner self might be hurt. Role-playing can be used in written as well as oral work. Often the students who have the most difficulty expressing themselves in dialogues or discussions produce the most creative written work. This creativity is an added plus for the teacher—it provides an opportunity to give the author some well-deserved praise.

Rick Waterhouse

First-grade teacher, Downes Elementary School, Newark, Delaware USA



School children are shy for many reasons. Separation from parents, a new situation, and fear of failure in front of peers can all send a

young child searching for a place to hide. Since the child is expected to be part of the group, silence may be his or her only refuge. This situation isolates the shy child from classmates and is frustrating for a teacher. It is difficult for the teacher even to know how much the child is understanding. This situation is especially problematic in kindergarten and first grade, where so much of what is done depends on verbal rather than written communication.

I have had good success relating to this type of child through the use of puppets. The first puppet I introduce behaves in a shy and uncertain way. He worries about being away from his home and about making mistakes. It is amazing to see the children develop true empathy for the puppet. They want to help him, as if he were a classmate. For a shy student, the puppet represents someone else who feels the same way they do. The puppet is less threatening than the teacher and becomes a shy "classmate" to whom the child can relate.

When the children are working independently the puppet can go to the shy child's desk and interact with him or her individually. The puppet may tug on the shirt or sit on the desk of the shy child, almost always evoking a smile or laugh.

I sometimes let the shy child choose which puppet will come out to help with a lesson. The puppets have

the added benefit of keeping the whole class focused on the teacher—or rather the puppets—during lessons. In fact, you will soon find that your students would much rather listen to the puppets than you!

Marina Maramzina

Primary school teacher, Lyceum #8, Nizhny Novgorod, Russia

Last year in my first-grade class there was one girl who would never volunteer an answer. At first I thought that she might be scared of me, but I noticed that she also kept her distance from her fellow students. Sometimes she actually refused to work with another student or to work in a group. Clearly she didn't know how to deal with her own natural shyness. So when the other children were doing group work, Jenny and I formed our own "mixed" pair to work on the assignment. To present our work we would walk up to the blackboard together, holding hands—it was easier for the girl this way. At first I did most of the talking, but the situation gradually changed. Eventually Jenny agreed to work with one of her friends, and then with other classmates.

Now, in second grade, Jenny actually enjoys working in groups and in pairs with various classmates.

A question for the next issue:

If you were given US\$100 (or its equivalent in your local currency) to buy something for your class, what would you buy?"

Readers are invited to respond to this question, or to suggest questions for future issues. The editors will select items for printing.

Please e-mail your answers and suggestions to: bmichaels@reading.org



Community as a Source for Literacy Instruction

Bird Stasz and Dawn Tankersley

Introduction

Slovakia: A young Roma teaching assistant tells Roma students and their parents stories in their native language. The assistant works with the classroom teacher to plan language arts activities based on those stories. Roma parents agree to stay in the classroom after the storytelling to demonstrate and teach traditional arts such as cooking and weaving to their children.

Bulgaria: Roma family coordinators organize parents, many of whom have low levels of literacy, to dictate, write, and illustrate little books based on Roma customs, grandmother stories (i.e., tales passed along from one generation to another), and stories about their own skills and professions. These lively homemade books are a source of pride and become favorite readers for children in the classroom.

Czech Republic: Roma community members come to school to write books on the Roma cuisine. Recipes for familiar, tasty foods fill these texts born from shared cultural experiences.

Hungary: A Roma family coordinator teaches students traditional Roma art. Teachers use the artwork produced by the students to develop literacy material on family history.

Bulgaria: Non-Roma teachers collect Roma proverbs and sayings from Roma parents. The proverbs and sayings are then used to teach phonics.

The scenarios described above are noteworthy because they stand in marked contrast to the pervasive stereotypes of how Roma peoples participate in schools in Central/Eastern Europe. Most educators recite an unhappy litany of prejudicial remarks: Roma have nothing to offer to the general educational experience; Roma

parents do not care about their children's education and thus refuse to be involved in any school activities; and Roma children cannot learn to read as successfully as non-Roma children. The stereotypes that surround Roma children and their families have arisen from years of school failure, disenfranchisement by the general population, and some very grim statistics on low literacy and school drop-out rates.

This article describes methodologies used successfully to engage the Roma community in their schools. These methods were used throughout a three-year research project sponsored by the Open Society Institute, *School Success for Roma Children*, that began in September 1999. The research took place in four countries (Hungary, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, and Slovakia) in 16 special education schools. The goals of the project were to identify Roma children who were misplaced in special education schools, improve their academic skills, and integrate them back into the mainstream (Rona & Lee, 2001). Key to this process were two "best practices": parent involvement and the use of culturally appropriate literacy materials. One of the methodologies used to engage Roma children and parents was a form of community-based ethnography, in combination with the documentary arts, designed to foster and promote increased literacy skills and parent participation. The usefulness of this methodology is transferable to almost any educational setting that has a mixed group of minority and majority children.

Background of the Project

The educational model used in the research project had five key components (Rona & Lee, 2001). First, in these classrooms the **mainstream education**

curriculum (as opposed to the special education curriculum) was used. It should be noted, however, that using the mainstream curriculum did not mean using the region's traditional teaching methodology. The next component of the model was the **replacement of the traditional methodology with various methodologies from early childhood education, anti-bias education, and bilingual education.** The final component was the **placement of an ethnic Roma family coordinator into each classroom to act as a bridge between the school and the Roma community.**

Professionals working in the project noticed early on that teachers relied heavily on textbook material to teach literacy skills. Unfortunately, the vocabulary and the context offered in these texts were unfamiliar and inaccessible to many of the Roma children. Not surprisingly, the sole use of such textbooks to teach this population is problematic, in the same way that it is problematic for any minority group whose "story" is left out of the educational conversation. Central/Eastern European textbooks, like those elsewhere in the world, usually express the perspective, as well as the language, of the dominant culture in a given country.

Education research supports the notion that in order for competencies, skills, and dispositions to be transferable, and thus mastered, they must be anchored in the familiar (Pease-Alvarez, Garcia, & Espinosa, 1991; Tharp, 1982; Wong-Fillmore, Ammon, McLaughlin, & Ammon, 1985). Hence, with the Roma students there was a great need to develop flexible, non-traditional materials and pedagogy that featured their home language and placed their cultural experiences at the center of text and instruction. We assumed that Roma children could learn to read and navigate the national curricula if they were given an opportunity to use culturally relevant materials as supplements to the textbooks. In addition, we assumed that parents would be willing to participate if that participation celebrated what they knew and could do, rather focusing on negative issues of discipline and school failure.

Gathering Community Stories: The Use of Community-Based Ethnography and the Documentary Arts

Workshops and training on community-based ethnography and the documentary arts were organized. The methodology was seen as a way into the community, designed both to generate multicultural materials for minority students and to engage parents in a positive way in their children's schooling. The focus of the workshops was to train teachers and classroom family coordinators in the skills used by ethnographers and documentarians. Simply put, a series of activities and discussions invited participants to acquire and practice skills that would help them develop

- some proficiency in recognizing the community as a source of text, and strategies to mine that text;
- specific skills to organize community-based materials into teaching materials for children, regardless of group membership (dominant or minority);
- specific strategies in the teaching of critical thinking, and language arts strategies that build on non-traditional, community-generated texts and projects; and
- a familiarity with the use of the documentary arts (e.g., oral history, book creation, exhibiting, and photography) as a way of engaging parents, community members, and the like.

At the very heart of this process is the notion of story, its power and its importance in human life. Stories exist everywhere—in the landscape, in events, in names, artifacts, beliefs, and rituals. They are the threads that tie humans together, regardless of culture, class, language, or viewpoint. Telling stories and keeping stories alive is traced back to the very beginning of human time. All cultures and peoples have stories. Through stories we are able to share wisdom, exchange ideas, tell secrets, entertain, and admonish each other to keep the social order. Stories give voice to experience, and in so doing maintain continuity across time and generations.

From a theoretical standpoint, ethnography, which means literally to write

about people, is about stepping into and stepping out of our own culture and the culture of others (Chiseri-Strater & Sunstein, 1997; Kutsche, 1998). The ethnographer, using fieldwork techniques, views culture from the perspective of both insider and outsider. For most of us our own culture is virtually invisible and can be likened to the water surrounding a goldfish in its bowl. It simply exists and swirls around us, and yet it powerfully directs our behaviors and our thoughts. The job of the ethnographer as researcher, and the documentarian as artist, is to make culture visible, through careful listening, gathering stories, taking notes, and honest analysis of narrative. Embedded in this work is the act of “remembering, creating, and telling life stories and experiences. Out of this shared telling and remembering grow identity, connection, pride, binding people to a place and to one another. These ties form the basis of community life, individual involvement in schools and...public causes and events” (Center for Documentary Studies, 2001, p. 2).

Once the workshops were completed, the teachers and family coordinators went back to their schools and began to document their communities. These efforts resulted in a collection of materials that were then transformed into literacy texts for children. In many cases Roma parents helped produce these materials. The advantages of using community-based ethnography as a source of teachable text are many.

Students see themselves as part of the educational narrative.

The products generated from this approach are not outsider accounts (portrayals or reports written by “experts”), but collaborative accounts written from an insider perspective (Stringer, 1997). The text “sounds” authentic to the reader and the story is familiar because it is anchored in the community experience. Using community-based materials as a starting point for the curriculum ensures that all children can see themselves as part of the educational story; school is no longer the exclusive domain of the dominant group.

For example, Roma students in Hungary created their own pictures and texts based on materials gathered from their

communities and families. The little books and projects were a source of pride for them as well as an opportunity to read in their “home language.” Using material from the community allows students to develop a positive sense of self as well as a group identity. If the curriculum is based solely on materials of the dominant group, minority students do not see themselves represented in what they study. For example, textbooks in Central/Eastern Europe show only people with light skin, living in traditional housing, whose family members work only at traditional jobs. These portrayals can and often do result in the loss of self-identity for Roma and ensuing academic difficulties, which can cause students to drop out. This situation is not unique to Roma children but exists for minority groups all over the world (Ada, 1998).

The inclusion of all students in the educational narrative is one of the main goals of multicultural/anti-bias education. Banks (1999), a leader in this field, states that “education in a pluralistic society should affirm and help students understand their home and community cultures” (p. 4) and “should provide them with cultural and ethnic alternatives” (p. 2). Community-based ethnography is intrinsically multicultural because it takes the approach that since all of us are human, we all have the right to label the world in relation to our own experiences. In addition, people should have the right to hear their own voices, spoken and in print. The ethnographic approach promotes exploration of the many facets of a community as stories are gathered and written down. The discussions that occur during this process form the basis for shared understanding, and an appreciation of similarities and differences, another key concept of multicultural education.

Supporting home language strengthens academic performance in second language

Research has shown that when we support the home language, we also strengthen students’ academic performance and acquisition of a second language (Collier, 1992; Ramirez, Yuen, Ramey, & Pasta, 1991; Thomas & Collier, 1997). There are several reasons for this.

First, students can understand the concepts introduced in a story that is contextualized in their own experience and culture. Second, for students to work in the symbolic realm, they must first understand the concrete realm. Therefore, as teachers and students gather materials in the community language—stories, proverbs, artifacts and rituals—the concrete realm becomes accessible.

In Slovakia, for example, the stories that were gathered from the community were first told and discussed in Romany, before work was begun on any academic concepts. As a result, students understood all of the words used in the story before being asked to take words apart phonetically or to work with a math concept. In contrast, in a classroom in Hungary, Roma students misunderstood a story told by the teacher because the word for “cup” in their home dialect was different from the word used by the teacher.

The teacher never understood that the students failed to interpret the story correctly because that one word changed the meaning altogether.

Increased parent participation

The process of gathering and documenting family and community stories is a powerful tool to increase parent involvement. When parents’ lives, knowledge, and experiences are incorporated into the curriculum, parents feel more capable as partners in their children’s education. Even parents who cannot read and write can be seen as knowledgeable, capable individuals, who also are teachers of their own children. The positive connection between parent participation and the increase in student academic performance has also been widely documented. However, traditional ways of

involving parents in their children’s schooling may not work when parents have low levels of literacy, or have had negative experiences in the school system. Parents may avoid involvement in formal education because they feel they have nothing to offer their children. This is simply not true. As Ada (1997) points

out, parents enrich children’s daily lives by engaging in discussions and by showing children how to learn (p. 167). Using community story is a non-traditional way for school systems to foster communication between the home and school and “to use the printed word as a means of validating and celebrating parents” (Ada, 1997, p. 167).

In Bulgaria, the Roma family coordinators, in keeping with the principles and practices of ethnography and documentary work, gathered information from Roma parents about topics in which they had clear expertise, such as animal

husbandry, their work, their crafts, and their family traditions. Information provided by the parents was compiled into classroom books. Even those parents who could not write worked in collaboration with the family coordinators and other parents to create these books, and their words and knowledge were included in the products they helped to produce. Rather than highlighting the parents’ low levels of literacy, the schools celebrated their high level of expertise in activities and products that were valued in the community. For many Roma parents this was probably the first time in their lives that they had been asked to be part of the education of their children in a school setting. It is also conceivable that this was one of the first positive experiences that these Roma parents had had with the education system.



Photo: Bird Stasz

An example from Slovakia underscores this same point. Parents came to school in the morning with their children just to listen to the stories told by the Roma teaching assistant. They felt included in the educational process because their language and their experience were being included. Similarly, when parents in the Czech Republic wrote cookbooks for the school, they were able to use their home language. Parent involvement depends on parents' feeling comfortable in the classroom, and on having materials that are equally accessible to the child and the parent. The ethnographic community-based process ensures this type of experience and success.

Reducing barriers between the community and the school

The stance of community-based ethnographers and documentarians is invitational, which is key to the success of the process. It is essential that people feel invited to participate, rather than told to or made to participate. Choice makes the process democratic and fosters balanced interaction among teachers, students, and the community. The very nature of ethnographic and documentary work is collaborative. It is impossible to do the work otherwise. Hence the distances between the teacher, the student, the parent, and the community are shortened and the boundaries blurred. It is a partnership, where no one group holds all of the power. Each group has strengths that can be used by the other groups, and all are working toward a common purpose. The focus is on respecting the knowledge that exists in the community, thereby seeking to erase the boundaries that might separate schools from the communities they serve.

An exceptionally successful example of collaboration between school and community was a small book of Roma proverbs created by project participants in Bulgaria. Proverbs are interesting as they represent common wisdom displayed in minimal text. They are easy to memorize and easy to read. They also transmit the bedrock of belief. These little books illuminated the collective advice of the Roma community, preserving and celebrating it, while at the same time making it accessible to the dominant culture.

Folktales offer another avenue for exploration. By their very nature and structure folktales are powerful teaching tools (Temple et al., 2001). Heroes and heroines display the characteristics that are valued by the group. The plots are lean and the language lends itself to the ear. There are endless opportunities for cross-cultural discussions and critical thinking. For example, a folk story about the traditional Roma bread focuses on the value of sharing whatever one has with others. Class discussions of the tale in Slovakia centered on why some people share and others do not. Students further explored the idea of sharing by discussing value judgments and proposing various ways in which people could share.

Telling folktales in the classroom and encouraging other forms of verbal communication builds on the strong oral tradition of the Roma people, and celebrates that tradition by using it as a tool to help Roma students develop literacy. Furthermore, Roma folktales, like those of many minority communities, have not been collected in anthologies. Hence, through the act of going into the community to collect these stories, teachers, students, and parents are also preserving them. This is a departure from traditional methodology, which uses only "classic" tales—however that is defined—that have already been recorded and interpreted. That traditional approach often characterizes the oral tradition as representing low levels of thinking, rather than appreciating the extraordinary levels of skill involved, particularly in the complex syntax and extensive memory.

Conclusion

The lessons learned in this project do not apply only to Roma; they also can be extended to other communities where students' racial, ethnic, linguistic, or social-class backgrounds set them apart from the dominant group. As a methodology, it makes sense to connect students' learning to their prior experiences. Cummins (1996) states that "teacher-student collaboration in the construction of knowledge will operate effectively only in the contexts where students' identities are being affirmed" (p. 26).

When the development of literacy contributes to students' identities, it becomes a tool that challenges any

perceptions that the students' cultures are inferior. It also provides a platform for action, for building more just and democratic societies. Freire (1985) discusses how the development of literacy should be a liberating experience, as opposed to a domesticating experience that emphasizes passivity, acceptance, and submissiveness. The community-based ethnography approach, in addition to strengthening self-identity, also promotes action by giving shape and voice to community experiences. In sum, "documentary work can influence broader conversations about change, preserve local history, prompt new ideas, create better understanding among different parts of the community, and clarify common goals for the future" (Center for Documentary Studies, 2001, p. 2).

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Integrating Refugee Children

Anna Vershok

A bit of history

After military actions began in the Chechen Republic in 1995, a stream of refugees—both Chechens and Russians displaced by the conflict—poured into the rest of Russia. Initially many of them managed to settle down quite successfully. They received compensation for their lost homes, found work, and sent their children to school. But as the number of refugees grew, municipal governments in Moscow and some other regions of Russia began to try to protect themselves—they passed legislation limiting the rights of the newcomers.

In the fall of 1996, the telephone in the offices of “Civil Assistance,” a non-profit organization providing assistance to refugees and forced migrants, began ringing off the hook. Refugee parents were calling from morning till night, complaining that their children were not being accepted into Moscow schools. Previously a representative of “Civil Assistance” or the State Duma could just call the principal and request that the child be accepted. But starting in 1996 such calls were no longer effective. School principals explained that they were under orders not to accept any children whose parents were not registered as legal permanent residents in Moscow. They could not disobey, as the authorities checked up on them every week.

“Civil Assistance” filed suit against the Moscow government on behalf of the children. And won...four years later. But in 1996 this outcome could not be foreseen. So “Civil Assistance” suggested that we—university students—could teach the refugee children.

So it was that the Moscow Center for the Integration and Education of Refugee

Children (“The Center”) opened in March 1996. We had neither classrooms nor a clear idea of how to begin. Besides, none of us had ever taught anyone before, nor had we dealt with refugees. However, being university students, we were familiar with the teaching/learning process, and many of us planned to work with children in the future. So in short, we decided to take a chance.

Being young and optimistic, we were absolutely sure that we would be able to provide real schooling for these children... But as the program developed and matured, so did we, and after suffering many academic failures, we came to understand that in fact we were not capable of coping with such a huge task. But we did manage to “launch” lots of children into normal Moscow schools. At some point we realized that our main task was to prepare the children for regular school, and to help them adapt to both their new school and their new home, Moscow.

What we do now

Finding themselves in school, refugee children get their full share of its negative aspects. The reason is twofold: (1) They are behind academically (both because most Moscow schools have very high standards, and because these children have missed from six months to three years of study) and (2) they suffer from the widespread negative attitude toward “non-Muscovites.” The children have to face this negative attitude not only from classmates but even from some teachers. Fortunately, most such teachers revise their prejudices when the newcomers demonstrate a good knowledge of their subjects.

Civil Assistance (C.A.), a public charitable organization offering assistance to “forced migrants,” was founded in Russia in 1989 in response to the wave of Armenian refugees that poured into Moscow as a result of ethnic conflicts in Azerbaijan. The UN uses the term “forced migrants” to include both refugees (who have fled their native country to escape ethnic, religious, or political persecution) and displaced persons (who have been compelled by persecution to migrate within their country of origin). C.A. offers legal, medical, humanitarian, and mediation services to all forced migrants who request assistance, regardless of their immigration status or future settlement intentions. C.A. aid is available to any migrants who claim that they (or their families) have been subjected to persecution or discrimination, or threats against their lives.

C.A. workers maintain contact with all the agencies in Russia concerned with refugee affairs: central and regional services for migrants; the Russian federal Parliament; ministries of education, health, and social welfare; the office of the public prosecutor; and the ministry of internal affairs. C.A. staff includes two physicians and a psychologist.

Members of the organization participate in conferences, training sessions, and press conferences devoted to the problems of refugees in Russia. They provide information to interested parties in cases involving violations of refugee rights; and serve as expert consultants in the formulation of legislative and regulatory measures concerning forced migrants.

In 1996, C.A. established the Moscow Center for the Integration and Education of Refugee Children, primarily to respond to the needs of a new wave of refugees from Chechnya. The fundamental emphasis of the Center is on the rehabilitative value of educational intervention: It is based on the idea that knowledge is a significant social force, which can increase self-esteem and offer new opportunities for self-realization. Success in school lays a foundation for success in life, and this foundation is crucial to restoring—or re-creating—the social network that has been lost by refugee children. Therefore one of the Center’s primary goals is to create fertile conditions for both academic and social success in the school setting. Efforts are aimed at helping refugee children adapt to their new surroundings; and helping them integrate what they have experienced—before, during, and after the tragedy that led to their migration—so they can achieve some feeling of stability.

The teachers at the center are university student volunteers, working under the guidance of experienced professionals. Currently the Center serves 27 children, with 37 volunteer teachers. Instruction is provided in three basic subjects: Russian language, mathematics, and English language. Competence in these areas helps ensure students’ survival in the regular schools.

In the near future, the Center expects to receive official accreditation as an institution of supplemental education, as well as licenses to provide educational and psychological services. The Center’s activities will also be expanded so that up to 100 children can participate.

In her article “Integrating Refugee Children,” Anna Vershok shares some of her experiences and some of the lessons she learned in the course of several years’ work at the Center.

Initially, approximately 10 children attended our Center daily; now [in 2002] there are usually 20–35. Almost all of them formerly lived in the Chechen Republic and left their homes because of the military conflict. Each child has his or her own story, providing for very different prospects for integration into the new environment, both psychological and academic.

The teachers at the Center are university students, and for many teenaged refugees they also play the role of big brothers and sisters. All instruction is individual, which helps to establish close emotional contact between teacher and pupil, and if the pair is well matched the teacher can become a trusted friend to the child and be his/her mentor and guide in the new culture. Though typically teenagers from the Caucasus look more mature than their peers from Central Russia, and claim to be independent, they are in fact in great need of nurturing attention from adults.

However, we cannot replace their parents. We have found that an important indicator of a child’s chance for successful adaptation is the family situation, and most important, the physical presence of parents. Some children at the Center, such as Milana and Kazbek, have all their close relatives with them in Moscow. Other families have been split by the war, as is the case with Akhmed and Tamila.

Akhmed and Tamila lived in Moscow with their mother and older sister. The mother and sister frequently traveled back to Chechnya to visit the rest of the family, so the children were often left in Moscow all alone. They felt very homesick. Sometimes they did not even have money for food, and we had to contribute money so that they would not starve. Given that they had been accustomed to a psychologically stable, safe family, and now the adults kept simply forgetting about them for weeks at a time, leaving them anxious and lonely, these children were clearly under severe stress, and we could hardly expect them to integrate into their environment or focus on their studies.

When the parents are present, even if they are not the most sensitive, the children have a better chance—at least they do not feel forsaken.

The family of Milana and Kazbek left the Chechen Republic before the beginning of military actions, in 1994. The parents, who

were sure that everything would soon be settled and they would be able to return home, did not send their children to school but taught them at home. Time went by, and Milana and Kazbek began to feel uncomfortable: they had few friends and not much to do. Eventually, their despotic father consented to let them go to school, but by then they had fallen behind academically and they were ashamed to be sitting in class with much younger students. However, staying at home, surrounded by incessant family quarrels, was equally impossible. Besides, their younger brother, who had started first grade in Moscow, was a good student who didn't give their parents any trouble. Milana and Kazbek realized that they were now second-rate not only on the street, but also in the family. The parents wanted to find some place for them to study, so in 1998 Kazbek, 15, and Milana, 16, first appeared at the Center...

We usually set academic goals in cooperation with parents and children, especially in the case of teenagers. In this particular case the goal we decided on was enrollment in, and successful completion of, "externat," a special school with an accelerated curriculum that would allow Kazbek and Milana to cover a year's courses in six months. For families, the psychological issues typically remain behind the scenes, unless parents or children approach us with a special request. The primary goal of the Center in relation to psychological support is practically always the same: to create an open and friendly atmosphere, which will foster a child's rehabilitation and self-expression.

Now Milana and Kazbek are studying at a university. Their father came to appreciate their efforts (and ours) and to understand that the children should get a proper education. They still turn to us for psychological support and even for academic help.

Certainly, the forecast is much more optimistic when the family considers the child's interests to be of primary importance.

Amirkhan, a boy who came from an aul (a mountain village), from a very simple family, resumed school in Moscow after losing a year of study. He quickly caught up with his classmates, however, and was soon asking his literature teacher with a mischievous smile, "Have you read this book? What about that one? You must have read the abridged version, but I read the entire text." He displayed an irrepressible passion for reading, and for studying in general. His family, who by now could have returned

home, have postponed their departure for his sake: The parents want Amirkhan to finish school and go to university in Moscow—then they will leave with a quiet heart.

What we have to deal with

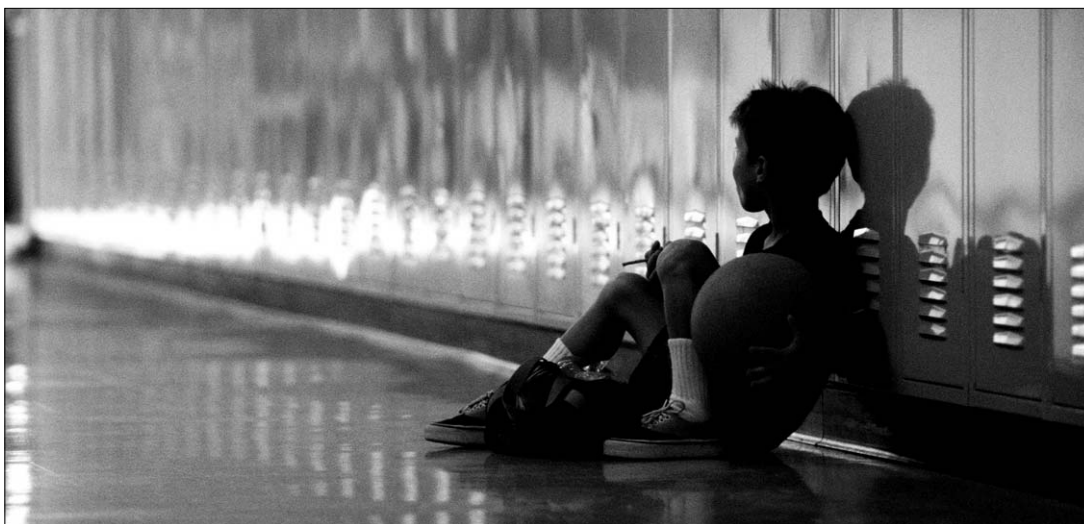
We should always keep in mind that the war in Chechnya is, in fact, still going on, and the Chechens perceive it as an ethnic conflict. To them, we are "the Russians," which means the enemy. The paradox of this war lies in the fact that Chechens are at times compelled to ask for and accept help from the "enemy." Understanding that it may be easier at first for children to accept support from members of their own ethnic group, we encourage them to get together with other students of the Center. Actually we consider such networking and communication to be an important component of the rehabilitation process. Here in Moscow the Chechens are dispersed throughout the city, and the Center provides them a place to meet and discuss their problems, to provide support for one another. Unfortunately however, this support is not always expressed in socially acceptable and civilized forms: Another psychological and pedagogical challenge we face almost daily is the need to suppress ethnic confrontation, and to counter the intolerance that spills over from the adults into the life of the children.

One fine day, all of our boys were set to "pay a visit" to the school where one of them—13-year-old Akhmed—studied, to "beat up the Russians" who had offended him. The staff learned about the plan by accident, during a group therapy session. Little by little we found out that the original conflict was not ethnic in nature—it was one of those petty quarrels that arise many times a day in any group of children. The real trouble is that quarrels between refugees and members of the local population immediately take on an ethnic coloring, and the adults who happen to be around sometimes add fuel to the fire. Fortunately, in this case we managed to convince the children that conflicts could also be resolved by dialogue. And our deputy principal set a good example by going with them to Akhmed's school and taking part in "peace negotiations" with the children.

How do we help them?

What is psychological adaptation, and who experiences it?

A person needs to adapt when he finds himself in a situation of disadaptation,



that is, at odds either with the entire world around him or with some components of it. According to Leo S. Vygotsky, disadaptation is an important normal stage in any change in “the situation of social development”: the stage that provides an opportunity to update norms, rules, and values (Vygotsky, 1984, p. 432). It becomes dangerous, however, when this stage drags on, interfering with normal development. Thus, psychological difficulties experienced by refugee children in adapting to their new environment are only natural. The task is to help them through their disadaptation with the least possible damage to their personalities, and direct them toward socially acceptable future development.

The majority of our children have not experienced physical violence, but they have suffered the harmful effects of living in a combat zone: some had to take refuge in cellars during bombardments, some had their homes invaded by bandits, some fled their native towns under continuous shelling, some were assaulted by children of other nationalities on their way home from school. These and similar facts of the children’s biographies give us a special perspective on their development. While working with refugee children we try in each case to identify which aspects of the social environment have changed abruptly, thus making them critical to the child’s development. Competent, focused intervention can help the child overcome these difficulties, particularly if he gets supportive care.

Zulya, an 8-year-old girl, was brought to us by her mother in 1999. The family had fled the bombing in Grozny via the so-called “green

corridor,” which was opened especially for refugees. When they left, there were three children in the family, but by the end of their trip there were only two—Zulya’s older sister was killed during one of the air attacks. The mother was suffering from severe depression. The father was trying to make ends meet by scraping together whatever work he could find. Zulya looked like a small, frightened animal. No one would even think of sending her to a normal school, as she appeared to be totally incapable of studying. She literally could not remember anything—even if we saw a glimmer of comprehension in class we could be sure that the next day she would come back as “tabula rasa.” At the Center, Zulya tried to study as best she could, but in the beginning the result was practically zero. In addition to psychological work with both mother and daughter, we decided to provide this girl with as many lessons as possible, both the required courses (mathematics, Russian) and supplemental courses (drawing, reading). Our sessions with her were based mostly on games involving motor activity, the way we would play with a small child. We tried to remove Zulya from her oppressive home situation for as many hours as possible, to fill her days with positive activities, to help her set her own educational goals. Zulya started the next academic year in a normal school, in third grade. We were very worried that she would not be able to function academically, but to our surprise she blossomed, and was only slightly below the average level of her class. Zulya continued to come to us for one more year for additional academic support, but as the months passed by she showed up less and less frequently.

Understanding refugee children

We should never forget that a refugee is, first of all, a person who has fled from the familiar, albeit dangerous, to the new

and unknown. When children who have not completely acquired their first culture are immersed in another, they experience a kind of personality split, which results in problems with their self-concept and search for identity, and their ability to distinguish between right and wrong. Kim Nguet Bah Tien, a child psychiatrist working with refugees in Paris, writes, "For a child-refugee who is faced with two cultures, two languages, and in particular for a teenager who has already reached the state of ambivalence due to his physiological and psychological development—being halfway from childhood to adulthood—the only example to follow when choosing his role in life are his parents, also refugees, who have lost their social, professional and private individuality. This fact will inevitably affect his individuality too" (Cherkasskaya, 1992, p. 155)

According to Ahern, experiences that subject a child to a certain risk include "trauma," "loss," and "severe deprivation" (Ahern, 1993, p. 285). When a child has seen another person injured, or has seen a body torn apart, or has himself been in mortal danger, he has experienced traumatic stress. Such situations may affect the mental health of adults, often causing lasting negative consequences, and children are even more vulnerable. Frequently children are traumatized if they witness violence against their parents.

One of our students, a nine-year-old Russian boy, kept crying out in his sleep after his mother was nearly shot in his presence. The son and his mother had lived in Grozny during the war. While they were walking down the street to get a bucket of water, federal soldiers mistook them for Chechens (the mother was wearing a scarf, and her skin was darkened from sunburn and dirt) and without ceremony flung the mother "up against the wall." To prove that she was actually Russian she had to show her white breast.

A child may "either witness other people's sufferings, or be the direct victim of violence" (Cherepanova, 1996, p. 78). In either case, he feels terror, horror, and helplessness. Some time after such stressors are ended, most children return to equilibrium. However, some may experience posttraumatic stress, which complicates their readjustment to normal life and leads to various "disadaptive forms of behavior" (same).

Many children who have experienced a psychological shock suffer from its consequences for a long time. As we already mentioned, family support plays a key role in their recovery. Under extreme conditions, parents appear to act as a buffer, softening the effect of mental stress on children. Therefore, children who find themselves in a stressful situation with their parents are able to bear those hardships much more easily than those who are removed from their parents to be taken away to a safe place.

Certainly, the causes of disadaptation are complex but, in our opinion, the primary cause should be sought in the family situation and in the family relationships. In particular, practically all refugee families suffer from a sharp loss of income and reduction of their social status. Frequently the parents cannot find jobs, some turn to alcohol under the pressure of circumstances, some are on the edge (or over the edge) of a nervous breakdown, so the children cannot get the parental support they so desperately need. Our experience shows that the most psychologically stable children are those from psychologically stable families.

Working with parents

As I have mentioned, we work almost exclusively with children who are in the care of family members, and therefore it is very important for us to know the family situation. In each case the family's effect on the child is different, but no child is unaffected. Family influences the development of the children, the forms of disadaptation they exhibit, and the effectiveness of various possible interventions. So whenever possible we try to involve parents in our work. First of all, we draw their attention to the fact that life is hard not only for them, but also for their children. Sometimes parents are genuinely surprised to realize this, because depression manifests itself differently in children and adults. A child may be hyperactive, and may seem importunate, capricious, and demanding, behaviors that do not in fact correspond to his true feelings of fear, melancholy, and depression.

Then we explain to the parents that nobody can help their child as much as they can. How? First of all, by overcoming—at least to some extent—their own stress, pain, and grief. The parents' mood

has a powerful influence on the child, and can slow down the process of adjustment. “Even the slightest stressful condition in parents is harmful for children as it provokes unhealthy symptoms,” writes Ahern (1993, p. 285). Understanding the psychological condition of the parents, we try to encourage them to try something that seems feasible to them. For example, they can talk with children about the things they have experienced (and this is helpful, not harmful, for children), they can talk about the missing members of the family, they can explain their present situation. In addition, they can share their hopes and plans for the future, and consider concrete strategies. If the parents are capable of doing this, life becomes easier not only for the children, but also for the adults themselves.

When we first met, Zulya’s mother complained that she could not even talk to her children—she was irritable, lost her temper with them at the slightest pretext, even beat them—and then felt guilty. The feeling of guilt toward their children is very familiar to most refugee parents: they have been unable to protect their children, and thus they have failed in their parental duty. To assuage their guilt, parents tend to place responsibility for everything that has happened—and everything that is happening—on circumstances. This in many ways jeopardizes any attempt at adaptation. The most difficult parents to work with are those who are absolutely indifferent to their children. They do not care in the least about their child’s feelings, wishes, or fears. For them, a child is merely a means to achieve their own goals.

Ibraghim’s mother appeared to be very affectionate, and her son seemed very attached to her. The thing that surprised us was that the mother would not let the boy leave her side, although he was by no means a baby (he was eight years old). She did not even want to hear about sending him to school. After he had studied for a year at the Center, we insisted that he be enrolled in school. Three difficult months went by, and eventually the boy got completely settled, his initial conflicts with his classmates and teacher forgotten. But in the summer his mother suddenly sent him back to the Chechen Republic to live with a distant relative, so that he would not be in the way during her court proceedings—she was suing

her former husband for possession of their apartment. The seemingly well-adjusted Ibraghim would do nothing to further her case—she needed an unhappy child, suffering from the actions of his monstrous father, and she wanted to appear to be a caring mother doing everything possible for the well-being of her son. A year and a half later she came back to us, requesting that we take the child back. The boy had grown and matured physically, but academically he lagged hopelessly behind. We accepted him but could do nothing to help him.

Fortunately, some children have parents of a very different kind.

During our first year, 6-year-old Ilya’s parents brought him to the Center asking us to prepare him for school. During his first sessions, the boy would sit clinging to the edges of his chair and pressing his lips together tightly. However he proved to be very talented and was quick to grasp everything we taught him. Still he had difficulty communicating, both with children and with adults. So at the end of the winter his teacher was moved to tears one day when she saw our Ilya go up to a strange boy on a sledding hill and suggest that they ride down together on his sled.

The credit for this success belonged not only to us. In fact, Ilya’s mother was primarily responsible. She played with her son and discussed a whole range of topics with him, she would bring us his drawings and ask us to interpret them, she tried to make use of our advice and of the psychological help provided by other experts, she maintained very friendly relationships with everyone who wanted to help her son, and she elicited warm feelings in all who dealt with her. All this helped Ilya overcome his difficulties, which resulted partly from his refugee status but also from the idiosyncrasies of his character.

What we should remember

The other two risk factors mentioned by Ahern, “loss” and “deprivation,” are an integral part of the life of any refugee. Children lose their homes, the things they are familiar with, their friends, and sometimes even their parents and close relatives. How they react to loss depends on the stage of their development and their potential ability to recover, but primarily on their age. Ahern provides data showing that preschool children who are especially attached to their parents display an even more passionate attachment in traumatic situations.

A mother approached us for help when her four-year-old son began to behave like an 18-month-old. The boy would cling to his mother, demand that she carry him everywhere, and would cry when she left. This behavior depressed his mother profoundly, as she could clearly remember when her son had been a precocious child: he could count to 20, could read, and was quite sociable and independent. She simply did not know what to do. She spoke sternly to him, scolded him, and was immediately ashamed of having done so. And saddest of all, she was at her wits' end, exhausted with the effort of coping with him. She was afraid that her son would never become his former self again. The situation became much easier for her when she learned that regression is a frequent reaction to stress, especially with such young children, and she could feel comfortable allowing the child the extra closeness he required.

Young schoolchildren also may change abruptly due to stressful situations. They become irritable, rude, out of sorts, and their academic progress slows. Parents, as a rule, complain that "it is impossible to deal with them," that they are "out of control." Mothers frequently blame such behavior on the absence or inattention of the children's father. They believe that these children need to be treated more strictly, when actually they need more support and care.

Teenagers' reactions to stressful situations are similar to those of adults. They lose control, and do not realize what they are doing. They are obsessed with a fear of becoming social outcasts. Their behavior may be quite erratic. Do you remember Akhmed and Tamila?

The people who work at "Civil Assistance" always knew immediately when Akhmed had arrived: either he started a fight, or his girlfriend ended up in tears, or if the girlfriend was away Akhmed started "bullying" younger children. He was seen and heard everywhere. He was impulsive and seemed not to think before—or after—he acted. It would be easy to conclude that he didn't give a damn about anything, that he couldn't care less about adults. However we realized the depth of his caring when on one occasion his mother failed to return from Chechnya on time. No one even knew whether she was alive. Akhmed was beside himself with worry, kept running back and forth in the classroom, and the only thing he could talk about was his plans for meeting the next train from Chechnya. His sister Tamila, on the other hand, acted very differently. She withdrew into herself, seemed apathetic and lethargic.

Conclusion

Posttraumatic stress influences the whole personality. The victim feels that the world no longer provides support for human life in general. "Our notion of existence collapses" (Greening, 1994, p. 93). Therefore assistance to sufferers of posttraumatic stress cannot be limited to overcoming symptoms of disadaptation, but should aspire to restore the child's favorable disposition toward people and toward the world in general, to restore his ability to live in the world and actively engage with it.

We are aware of this reality: Refugee children do not always have access to experts; they can rarely rely on getting qualified help. But we hope that the experience described above may help teachers and administrators who are integrating refugees into their classes and schools. Unfortunately, such schools are no longer rare, because the Chechen Republic is not the only "hot" spot in Russia, and Russia is not the only country where compelled migration of ethnic populations is taking place. Try to understand these children, and offer them your support.

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Teachers as Co-Learners and Advocates for Diversity

Susan Finn Miller

In her book *Language, Culture, and Teaching*, teacher educator and researcher Sonia Nieto (2002) relates her personal story of growing up in New York City public schools. She explains that her background—having poor parents with limited formal schooling who were immigrants from Puerto Rico—identified her as an “at risk” student. Her mother had not finished high school and her father had gone to school only up to fourth grade. So even though Nieto’s father was skilled at mathematics and owned his own small grocery store, and her mother was accomplished at fine handcrafted embroidery, the school personnel considered her family “culturally deprived and disadvantaged, another segment of the urban poor with no discernible competencies” (p. 3). Nieto credits her parents’ strong support for education, and her family’s move to a neighborhood with good schools, for her ability to overcome these low expectations.

My own desire to address the kind of inequity Nieto describes is what motivates my work with families and my interest in the role of culture in learning and school success. My work has entailed teaching English to speakers of other languages, teaching in family literacy programs; and also training and supporting teachers whose students come from various cultural and linguistic backgrounds, typically from lower socioeconomic groups. Throughout much of the world previously homogenous communities are becoming more and more diverse; and the children of newly arrived (and often unwelcome) immigrants, as well as indigenous people who do not speak the societal language, face many difficulties in school.

Education as Social and Political Process

What do teachers need to understand about cultural differences to work effectively with children from various backgrounds? What classroom techniques and strategies are effective in working with culturally and linguistically diverse learners? Sonia Nieto argues for a reconceptualization of education through a sociocultural lens. Such a reconceptualization understands teaching and learning as a fundamentally social process with “social relationships and political realities...at the heart” (Nieto, 2002, p. 5). More traditional U.S. views of teaching and learning are fundamentally psychological and individualistic in conception. It has been my goal to grow in understanding the role that families and the community play in children’s learning. I am interested in drawing effectively upon family and community strengths and resources to support literacy and language development for adults and children. In what follows, I share some of my observations about the role of culture in the schooling of culturally and linguistically diverse families, and offer ideas on how teachers can support these learners. Reflecting Nieto’s view that education is a social and political process, I write about teachers who advocate for their students, and teachers who see themselves as co-learners with their students. It is my view that understanding our work in these terms can help more children to succeed by establishing solid connections between the home culture and the school.

Many have argued that children from the mainstream in any given society succeed in school because they have been

socialized from birth in ways that prepare them for school (Heath, 1983; Taylor, 1983; Taylor & Dorsey-Gaines, 1988). I like the term *cultural synchronization*, which means, according to Irvine (1991), that teachers and learners who share a cultural background are more likely to understand one another; conversely, when they do not share a cultural background, serious misunderstanding and miscommunication are commonplace.

The search for explanations and solutions has often focused on the children and their families, instead of on the inequitable policies and institutional biases that preserve the status quo. Cummins (1995a) refers to a number of scholarly reviews showing that students from “dominated” societal groups (e.g., Native Americans, African Americans, Mexicans, and Puerto Ricans in the U.S.; Roma throughout Europe; Finns in Sweden; Turks in Germany; Afro-Caribbeans in Britain; Koreans in Japan; Albanians in France; indigenous groups in Australia, etc.) consistently do poorly in school. Ogbu (1996) refers to these groups as “involuntary minorities” and explains that the performance of these groups is poor compared to “voluntary immigrants” (e.g., the Punjabi in California, Gibson, 1996) who tend to do better in school. Significantly, Ogbu reports that when families immigrate to areas where they are no longer perceived as members of “dominated” groups, their children excel in school (e.g., Buraku and Korean students do poorly in Japanese schools but excel in the U.S.). The situation of the Roma (Gypsies) throughout Europe, according to the European Roma Rights Center (ERRC), reflects a similar problem (ERRC, online). Due to severe discrimination, Romani children have often been excluded from an equitable education. They are frequently placed in special schools for the mentally handicapped or segregated within regular schools and taught by under-prepared teachers in classrooms without adequate supplies. It is not unusual for Romani children to miss school frequently and to drop out of school before finishing.

Notwithstanding these harsh realities, efforts by educators to improve access to quality education for Roma are underway in Europe. Echoing the recom-

mendations of other experts regarding working with ethnically diverse groups (e.g., Beykont, 2002; Delgado-Gaitan, 2001; Nieto, 2002; Trumbull, Rothstein-Fisch, Greenfield, & Quiroz, 2001), the Union Romani organization is promoting the need for “intercultural education,” emphasizing the importance of preserving and honoring Romani culture (including literature, music, and language); and drawing upon the Roma culture for curricular content, including courses in Romanès, the Romani language, in the public schools. (Union Romani, online). [For additional information see article by Stasz on p. 8 of this issue.]

A Framework for Working With Linguistically and Culturally Diverse Students

Jim Cummins (1995a) has put forward a framework that holds promise for addressing the difficult issues involved in educating a diverse population. Cummins places great importance on the engagement of individual teachers to make a real difference for children. He suggests that teachers’ personal interactions with students and their families are mediated by their perceptions of their own role as it relates to four critical aspects of schooling: 1) incorporating a student’s native language and culture into the classroom; 2) encouraging the minority community to participate in their children’s education; 3) using constructivist teaching strategies versus transmission-of-knowledge strategies; and 4) advocating for equitable policies for minority children. Cummins argues that each of these dimensions of interaction can be viewed on a continuum, with one end of the continuum empowering students while the opposite end disables students. Each of these four areas allows teachers to serve as co-learners and as advocates.

“Adding” the Societal Language

As students add the prestige language to their linguistic repertoire, it is critical that we as teachers understand that our role is to foster the development of bi- or multilingualism. Moreover, as pointed out by Skutnabb-Kangas (1995), for the children of linguistic minorities, learning the societal language is a matter of

survival, not always a matter of choice. Teachers who understand this practical motivation view language teaching as additive rather than subtractive (i.e., students are not expected to lose the home language as they acquire the prestige language). Not surprisingly, a “subtractive” mindset yields significantly different results, the most serious of which is that children may gradually lose the ability to communicate with family members and lose touch with their cultural heritage. I know this sad reality from my work with parents who tell me that their younger children no longer fully understand their home tongue; one mother told me that she relies on her older children to interpret. Surely, it is unfortunate that so many children do not develop their bi-/multilingualism to its fullest advantage.

Teachers need to understand that a learner's first language should provide the foundation on which to develop skills in other languages

As teachers, we must emphasize to students and their families the many benefits, in our fast-changing world, of being able to use multiple languages. For instance, one Canadian Inuit teacher kept a “word wall” with new vocabulary written in both English and Inuit, and routinely reminded students of the advantages to developing their skills in two languages. Other teachers working with immigrants have had their students brainstorm to create a list of the pros and cons of learning languages, and then use their lists to write an essay on the topic of bi-/multilingualism. Journaling or other more structured writing exercises provide a means for students to express both the joys and the struggles they are experiencing as immigrants learning the societal language. Another possible writing and discussion topic is to ask students to compare various attributes of their native language to their new language. Such an assignment can go in many different directions, depending on the interests of the students. For instance, what linguistic devices are used in the poetry of the

students’ native language, as compared to the new language? How are the languages different in terms of their grammatical structure? How does each language express politeness, and what might be the cultural implications of this? What are the historic roots of each language? Language arts or social studies teachers in the upper grades might also include reading articles on related topics (e.g., the politics of bilingual education or governmental language policies), or reading memoirs of immigrants’ experiences.

Teachers as Co-Learners

Teachers need to understand that a learner’s first language should provide the foundation on which to develop skills in other languages. Cummins’s (1995a) work has provided strong evidence that exposure to and literacy instruction in the target language does not have the same positive effect on academic learning as does literacy instruction in the first language. We become co-learners when we structure classroom activities to first find out what children already know about certain topics, and then design instruction to build on this foundation. Such constructivist teaching methods and strategies, as advocated by Cummins (1995a) and many others, allow children to actively make meaning from academic content, by participating in setting their own learning objectives and collaborating with one another to achieve their goals. For instance, Ballenger (2000) describes how Haitian middle school students in a science class use what she terms “science talk” (i.e., free flowing conversations in small groups using both Haitian Creole and English) as a means to understand and explore important science concepts like metamorphosis. Another teacher, in order to build upon what students knew about math as well as to honor cultural diversity, had children create signs with the words for mathematical concepts in their native languages and then displayed the signs around the classroom.

Vogt, Jordan, and Tharp (1992) studied children in two different geographical areas of the U.S.—native Hawaiian children and Native American Navajo children—and found that understanding cultural differences was vitally important

to children's participation in class (see also Philips, 1972). Children in these groups were often taught by middle-class white teachers who, though caring, were unaware of important cultural considerations. In Hawaii, Vogt and her colleagues found that when teachers adapted their instruction to reflect routines Hawaiian children were comfortable with—such as asking questions of the whole group instead of calling on individual students, and allowing them to freely contribute to a story by relaxing the “one person at a time rule”—children were much more actively engaged in their lessons (p. 57). However, the techniques that worked best in Hawaiian classrooms were not always effective with the Navajo children. For instance, the Hawaiian students flourished when working together in mixed-gender small groups, but the Navajo children worked best in same-gender groups. The Hawaiian children respected teachers who displayed warmth and firmness, but the Navajo students respected teachers who lectured about honorable behavior. It is critical for teachers to recognize the classroom implications of these culturally influenced attitudes and behaviors.

Involving Families

As Cummins recommends, inviting family and community involvement in the school is crucial. However, this involvement should be much more than adults' volunteering in children's classrooms or attending school events. As pointed out by Australian educators Cairney and Ruge (1997), if bridging cultures is the goal, communication must be more than one way from teacher to parent: A reciprocal and respectful dialogue is what is called for. Moll,

Amanti, Neff, and Gonzalez (1992) suggest that such a reciprocal and symmetrical relationship between parents and teachers actually entails a role reversal on the part of the educator, who becomes the learner in order to gain knowledge about the family. This relationship not only builds understanding and rapport but also taps the “funds of knowledge” within a family, which can be fruitfully exploited as texts for learning in the classroom. Teachers in Moll et al.'s study used home visits as a means to get to know Mexican immigrant families. Other teachers have used dialogue journals as a tool to include families in their children's learning and as a means to explore students' experiences and strengths

(Doorne, 1995). Dialogue journals serve as a conversation in writing between a student and a teacher and can be sent home for parent input. It is obvious that communicating effectively with parents requires using a language with which parents are comfortable. Valdés (1996) reminds us that it is also important to realize that some parents, for a variety of reasons, have had limited schooling, and may need support and guidance to understand the culture of their children's new school, including what teachers expect from parents. Ideally school personnel should recognize that they have as much to learn from parents as parents have to learn from the school.

Many learning activities can be structured to involve students' families. One such idea is a unit on names. First the teacher could share the origin and significance of his or her name. Students could then interview family members learn about their own names. Were they named for a family member? Does their



Photo: Bird Stasz

name have a special meaning? This lesson can involve students in writing and sharing their stories in peer editing groups, and ultimately presenting the stories of their names to the whole class. For younger children, teachers can invite parents to explain their child's name.

A unit focused on family history can be similarly structured. One teacher, Jim Hughes (2000) sent home a letter to parents explaining the assignment and included a short piece of writing based on his own family history as a model. Another idea is to focus on a favorite childhood fable, a fairy tale, a family heirloom, or a childhood game. Parents might be invited to come to class to tell stories or to model how to play a favorite childhood game. The benefits of using multicultural literature, particularly that which is representative of the students in the class, are obvious (e.g., Ada, 1988). For elementary teachers, who often engage children in drawing, another important and simple thing is to provide crayons and paper in colors that reflect the different skin tones of diverse children.

McCaleb (1994) describes how one kindergarten teacher sent home a letter (in a language understood by parents) acknowledging the parents' role as their children's first teachers and inviting them to share with her what they had taught their children. The letter also requested pictures of the adult family members for a bulletin board display. When families came to the classroom for Back to School Night, they were attracted to the picture display and led to engage in conversation with other parents. The family bulletin board was an effective tool to help families feel welcome. During the evening, the teacher talked with the parents about their role in their children's learning, and about her high expectations for all the children. She engaged parents in a discussion about what they wanted their children to learn in the coming year and wrote their responses on the board. She also shared information about her life, including a booklet with pictures of herself and accompanying text. This kind of warm and respectful communication allowed the parents to see their own contributions as vital and to view this teacher as eminently approachable.

Examining Our Cultural Assumptions

As teachers in diverse classrooms, we must be willing to probe our own cultural assumptions in order to work effectively with our students. A poignant example of one educator's cross-cultural learning is Ballenger's (1992) accounting of how she learned to communicate with her Haitian preschool children from immigrant families. Prompted by the disruptive behavior of the children in her class, Ballenger sought out her Haitian colleagues who seemed to have no such problems with their classes. She learned first through observing Haitian teachers and parents and then talking with these adults about how to improve her communication with the children. Ballenger learned that the children's expectations regarding her behavior as an authority figure affected her communication with them. When she communicated indirectly with the children and relied on individual or personal examples to try to motivate behavior, she was unsuccessful. When Ballenger began to emulate the Haitian "language of control," drawing on connections to family and community to motivate the children (e.g., "When your mother talks to you, don't you listen?... Do you want your parents to be ashamed of you?"), she improved her ability to communicate. Ballenger concurs with Delpit (1995) in offering the following advice to educators,

The process of gaining multicultural understanding in education must...be a dual one. On the one hand, cultural behavior that at first seems strange and inexplicable should become familiar, on the other hand, one's own familiar values and practices should become at least temporarily strange, subject to examination. (p. 207)

Teachers as Advocates

There are many ways, both inside and outside the school, that we as educators can play an active role as ambassadors for the culturally and linguistically diverse learners we teach. Barbara Agor (2000) writes about her experience teaching middle school English language learners who must leave their regular classes for their English tutoring. Fearing that her students might be stigmatized by being pulled out of class, Agor routinely invites the other teachers to bring their

students to her classroom to see the projects created by her students. When these students from the mainstream classes visit, they are often envious of the kinds of engaging activities her language students have been doing, rather than seeing the ESL students as disadvantaged.

Teachers serve as advocates for their students when they foster a positive multicultural learning environment in their schools. Another way to influence the school milieu is to involve culturally and linguistically diverse learners in teaching other students. One high school science teacher, reflecting his strong belief in his students' potential, trains his students to deliver science instruction to other students (Jameson, 1998). This teacher first engages his students in simple experiments designed to demonstrate important scientific principles. He then trains peer tutors to engage other students in the same experiments and to lead a discussion about the scientific principles. Similarly, Heath and Mangiola (1991) describe in rich detail a program where low-performing fifth-grade language learners were carefully trained to tutor first graders in reading. The authors discuss the significant benefits for both groups of learners, both psychological and academic. Heath and Mangiola also note how much the children's teachers learned from discussions with the student tutors, who frequently offered exceptional insight into the literacy development of their young mentees.

Teachers can be advocates for minority language speakers by speaking out for equitable language and education policies in the school (for exemplary U.S. models see Crandall & Greenblatt, 1998, and Crandall, Bernache, & Prager 1998). Valdés (2001) discusses how vital it is for children who are learning a language to interact as much as possible with those who speak the language well. Therefore, it is misguided to segregate second language learners for much of the school day, unless such grouping is designed to provide bilingual support.

A relatively easy step schools can take to improve communication is to set up a telephone voice mail system and a homework hotline in a language parents

understand. Moreover, we can advocate hiring more individuals from the minority communities as teachers, teacher's aides, and as parent liaisons who can serve as important role models, as well as providing vital language support for children and families.

A monolingual bias exists in many places throughout the world, with speakers of less prestigious languages being excluded from an equitable education

As a personal example, my colleagues and I, hoping to help teachers better understand the issues faced by immigrant families, invited a panel of parents from Bosnia, China, and Iraq to address a group of teachers from several schools in our community. The English these parents spoke was not perfect, but they communicated with immense power, sharing with the teachers the struggles they have faced as immigrants, including their efforts to support their children's education and learning of English. All the teachers left the meeting that day with a deeper understanding of the importance of their work with families, and many said they now planned to invite immigrant parents to address the teachers at their own schools.

Skutnabb-Kangas (2000) takes the strong position that all teachers should be able to function in at least two languages. I agree that this is an ideal worth striving toward. Skutnabb-Kangas argues that a monolingual bias exists in many places throughout the world (particularly the Anglo world), with speakers of less prestigious languages being excluded from an equitable education (see Glenn & de Jong, 1996, for a review of immigrant education in twelve nations). However, in a critique of Skutnabb-Kangas, Handsfield (2002) writes about the importance of engaging all teachers as agents of change. While having more teachers who are members of language minority groups is vitally important, all educators who are working in diverse classrooms need to be engaged now. It is critical to have more teachers who speak the languages of the children they are

teaching; however, it is also important that all teachers inform themselves about the processes of language acquisition. With this knowledge, teachers can play an essential advocacy role, helping others understand that language is dynamic and ever changing, and that accents and nonstandard formulations are to be expected from anyone who is learning a language; thus, language learners should not be stigmatized or judged as inferior based on the way they speak (Lippi-Green, 1997). Nor should students who are learning a language be held back from academic pursuits because their language production does not exactly match an accepted standard (Valdés, 2001). Such decisions should be made on whether a student can demonstrate mastery of academic material, not on subtle imperfections in speaking or writing.

It seems to me that Cummins's recommendations are realistic. In fact, bilingual and multicultural policies in Canada (Cummins, 1995b; Genesee, 1995) and Australia (Lo Bianco, 1997), which foster bilingualism and support the preservation of heritage languages, provide evidence that such recommendations, though not without challenges, can be effective. Cummins's framework focuses on the interactions of individual educators; however, more radical steps that work to redistribute power are also needed. Bridging the gap in cross-cultural understanding will require more individuals from minority communities and from diverse backgrounds to participate in decision-making around school policies, but all teachers can play a vital role in bringing about needed change, as co-learners and as advocates.

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Word Analogies as Tools for Critical Thinking, and More!

Scott C. Greenwood, Jennifer L. Joiner, and Kelly Huff-Benkoski

It is fitting to speak of every human cognitive reaction – perceiving, imaging, remembering, thinking, and reasoning – as an effort after meaning. We have seen that in perceiving, the data presented have to be actively connected with something else before they can be assimilated.

Bartlett, *Remembering*, 1932, p. 44

Remembering is a special form of the general problem of meaning; it occurs when a particular group of stimuli is described as belonging to the experience of “the rememberer.” In the classroom, analogical reasoning is a means of making the connection between prior knowledge and the present concept or situation in order that the data might be assimilated.

As word analogy aficionados who have found delight and utility in solving and developing analogies with children of various ages over the years (Greenwood, 2003; Huff-Benkoski & Greenwood, 2000), we were dismayed and disappointed when we read in the newspaper recently that here in the United States, the Educational Testing Service (ETS) was dropping analogies from the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT). We had never been too enamored of analogies in the *testing* realm, but we sure did (and do!) like them for *teaching* vocabulary, concept development, and generally connecting the unknown to the known.

We are assuming that folks have argued that real-world adults do not routinely go around solving classic A:B::C:D multiple-choice word analogies such as

RODENT:MOUSE::MARSUPIAL : _____.

Fair enough, they don't. But we fear that the message from ETS will have ripple

effects concerning word analogies as classroom tools. Rightly or wrongly, testing messages were often the “Trojan Horse” that induced teachers to give analogy instruction some prominence—they started using analogies in the classroom to help “get kids ready” for the standardized tests. Along the way, they discovered that analogies were a lot of fun for kids, and were good for teaching. Of course, a test-taking high school junior is not asked to verbalize his reasoning for his choice, but that's another matter.

The research on word knowledge as it relates to reading comprehension is quite clear, and few would argue that providing youngsters with tools to enhance vocabulary growth is a bad thing. Findings regarding the transfer of children's verbal analogy skills directly to drawing inferences or comprehending, say, expository text, have been more equivocal.

At any rate, what follows is a plea, a polemic of sorts. It will be buttressed with some specifics on how and why to use analogies effectively—beyond testing!

Analogies: What the Literature Says

Broadly defined, an analogy is a comparison between two distinct domains of knowledge. We reason analogically whenever we make a decision about something new in our experience by drawing a parallel to something previously experienced (Sternberg, 1977). The term can also be applied to a very specific type of reasoning problem. With the power to evoke rich, almost instantaneous mental pictures, word analogies challenge students to transfer knowledge from a familiar to an unfamiliar domain (Harrison & Treagust, 1993). Understand-

ing word analogies requires the ability to discern relationships between words, and the knowledge that the first pair is an analogy, and must have the same relationship as the second.

Analogies have been widely researched with a variety of audiences (Huff-Benkoski, 1998). Studies have repeatedly found that analogy instruction does enhance analogy proficiency, from younger to older populations, from gifted to learning disabled. More elusive has been the previously mentioned general transfer of analogy study to reading comprehension (Bean, Singer, & Cowan, 1985; Judy et al., 1988).

Word analogies challenge students to transfer knowledge from a familiar to an unfamiliar domain

Experience and research are consistent regarding the usefulness of word analogies in the classroom, even with young children (Huff-Benkoski & Greenwood, 2000). There now exists, in many quarters, the agreement that:

- Analogies can be applied in all disciplines to put new concepts into familiar terms.
- Analogies provide a means for developing inductive and deductive reasoning, thinking in sentence patterns, and enriching vocabulary.
- Analogies require students to look at specific details, use multiple meanings for context, think (and explain their reasoning!) divergently, and draw conclusions based on evidence.
- Analogies have real-world application for students, extending school knowledge to real-life situations and contexts beyond the classroom.

The classic verbal proportional analogy tasks (e.g., MAN is to CENTAUR as WOMAN is to MERMAID) lend themselves to specific categories (e.g., cause and effect; part to whole; worker—tool; adult—young). These categorizations should be coupled with direct instruction, modeling, and thinking aloud by the teacher. Subse-

quent steps would involve the transfer of control to students, as they too verbalize and think aloud, resulting in deep knowledge and thorough understanding.

A Process for Analogy Instruction

We believe analogy instruction should initially be delivered according to the principles of direct instruction, that is, the teacher controls pacing and presentation using sequenced, structured materials, explicit explanations, extensive content with frequent repetition, monitoring of student performance, immediate feedback, and independent practice. That being said, the teacher must simultaneously be looking toward differentiation, moving students along the continuum, and teaching to the application level, with students eventually generating their own analogies and explaining their thought processes. Throughout the entire process, the teacher as “expert other” must provide appropriate scaffolding, as the students gain competence and confidence. Woven throughout, of course, is the necessity for a great deal of assessment, for the teacher must know where the children *are*.

The first author (Greenwood, 1988) originally developed an analogy instruction process for middle school students. That model was then adapted (Huff-Benkoski, 1998; Huff-Benkoski & Greenwood, 1994, 2000) for younger children.

Steps in the Model

A part-whole-part-whole system is put into place. Teachers, please think of this as a framework to further adapt and tinker with. It will only be as good as you make it, for we recommend that you tailor it for your students and gradually relinquish control to the children.

1. Write a multi-meaning word on the board (e.g., bank, record, switch, pupil). Ask for pronunciation and *one* definition of the word. Then ask for another (note that “record” is both multi-meaning and pronounced two ways). Make the point that one definition is not more “correct” than another without context. Tell the students that *analogies* are comparisons that carry built-in contexts. You can build it this way: what is the relationship

between *bank* and *vault*? What is the relationship between *record* and *song*?

2. Build to whole analogies, both orally and on the board. Start with easy ones like *grass* is to *green* as *snow* is to _____. *Dolphin* is to *mammal* as *frog* is to _____. Then move the blanks around as in _____ is to *woman* as *boy* is to *man*. Elicit a definition of an analogy as the students explain their choices: "analogy involves figuring out a relationship between two words, and then choosing or discovering the most similar relationship with two other words."

3. Next, tell the students that you're going to break the pieces of analogies apart. Two grouping activities are deletion and addition. First have students take away one item from a group of four:

Africa, Australia, North America, Germany
knee, elbow, wrist, head
microwave, blender, refrigerator, curling iron

Have them choose their best answer, then "turn and talk" to a partner about their reasoning. Note that in the first example the test maker (the first author) was thinking that *Germany* should be pulled out because the other three are continents. However, a divergent thinker might choose *North America*, because it is two words whereas the others are one word. Encourage this kind of thinking, as long as students can verbalize good reasoning. In the *knee, elbow, wrist, head* example, we want the students to be as precise as possible without limiting them. We're looking for them to see that the first three are body parts, just as the head is, but additionally that they are joints.

Next, the students are given groups of three words and are asked to supply a word of their own that does belong with the grouping.

Some examples are:

fall, spring, summer, _____
blue, yellow, green, _____
Atlantic, Pacific, Indian, _____
Kazakhs, Romanians, Latvians, _____

Again, we encourage the students to verbalize their reasoning processes. It is

important for students to recognize shades of meaning; in this format there is often more than one "correct" answer. We do try to guide the children's recognition that there can be "better" (i.e., more precise) answers, depending on the reasoning offered. For example, in the grouping *orange, lemon, lime, _____*, a child may reason that they are all fruits and add *apple*. We'd honor that reasoning and that answer. However, when another youngster says they're all citrus fruits and adds *grapefruit*, we do recognize that that's a more precise answer than the previous one.

The next subpart, and the final stage before bridging back to whole analogies, is what we term the "stem sentence." This requires explicit verbalization of the relationship between the known words. It also is the beginning of categorization of the analogies, identifying the type. Depending on the age and prior experience of your students, it also involves bridging from *mammal* is to *fur* to *mammal* : *fur* to "a *mammal* is covered with *fur*." This is the time to start building back to more categories of (at first) half analogies such as:

Carelessness causes an *accident*...

A *whistle* is a tool used by a *lifeguard*...

A *judge* is found in a *courtroom*...

When students are off base with their answers, we try to delve further and have them verbalize their thinking. Again, we are looking for the most precise answer available. In preparing students for the whole analogies they will be confronted with and solve, we feel we need to remind them about "thinking like a test maker" when they encounter multiple-choice situations. There *will* be times when they have to choose the "best" answer from among several choices.

4. Now comes the full return to the complete analogy. Don't surrender to the clock at this point! Take the time to be explicit, depending on the needs of your students. Write a few three-part, complete analogies on the board:

finger is to *hand* as *toe* is to _____

watch is to *wrist* as *ring* is to _____

brush is to *teeth* as *comb* is to _____

To use the middle example, they'll bridge from *watch* is to *wrist* to "a *watch* is worn on the *wrist* just as a *ring* is worn on the *finger*." A visual organizer helps the students to discern the steps that they go through, which typically include:

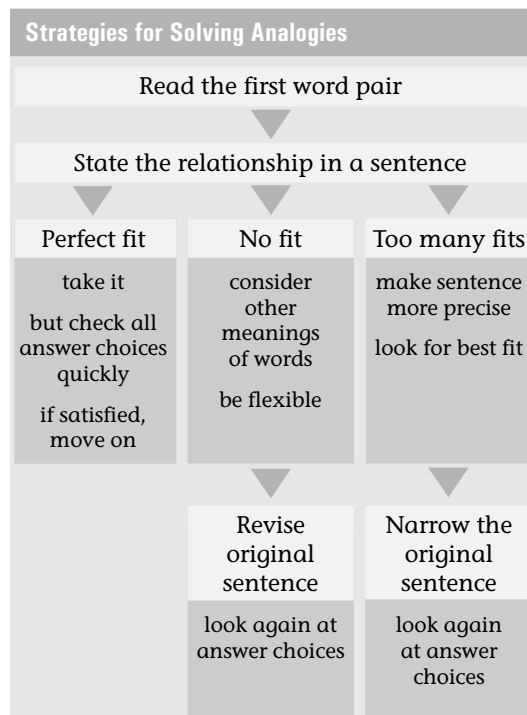


Figure 1

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Step One: Look for the relationship in the completed set of words. Then state that relationship in a phrase or sentence, being careful to keep the two words in the correct sequence.

Step Two: Find the word that, as closely as possible, makes the unknown half of the analogy the same as the known half. Be prepared for multiple-choice or open-ended formats.

Step Three: State the entire analogy; if it's multiple-choice, check among the other answers and make sure you have the most precise fit.

Encourage your students to verbalize their own reasoning processes and to listen to peer explanations. We next give the children a teacher-prepared handout containing about twenty three-part open-ended analogies. We'll do a few together, discuss them; then the students do the rest on their own. A couple of pointers follow:

- Rich vocabulary should be used, but it should have been previously introduced and reinforced in daily instruction—this should *not* be the students' first encounter with these words.
- Particularly for younger children, environmental print and the acceptance of inventive spellings will allow them to focus on meaning.
- From our experience, students should practice as needed and necessary, with careful teacher monitoring. Answers and exemplars can be preserved on a large piece of chart paper. Have students work in pairs, triads, or other grouping arrangements—this will allow the children to draw energy from each other and to seek reciprocity.

Applications Across the Curriculum

Teachers should use analogies to stimulate thinking and reasoning skills across the curriculum. This will allow students to establish relationships between concepts and vocabulary, creating further understanding. Through guided practice, students will learn to think analogically, creating cross-curricular analogies for their fellow classmates. Teachers can use the student-created analogies for further discussion about a particular topic. Although analogies can be applied nearly anywhere across the curriculum, we have found them particularly useful for social studies and science connections. There are limitations in subjects such as mathematics, where students are not introduced to as much new vocabulary (Greenwood, 1988).

Through guided practice, students will learn to think analogically, creating cross-curricular analogies

Analogies can be used across a wide span of grade levels as well. At the middle and high school levels, analogies aid in the acquisition of new concepts and vocabulary in various content areas. Additionally, younger students can reason analogically with the aforementioned proper scaffolding, particularly when thematic units are created in such a way as to stimulate student response.

Cross-Curricular/Cross-Grade-Level Examples of Analogies

Categorization

Remind your children that these are grouping activities, not whole analogies. Remember to have them explain their reasoning, and to encourage divergence.

Circle the one that does not belong. Be sure you can explain your reasoning.

1. circle, square, nine, triangle (nine)
2. orange, carrot, apple, banana (carrot)
3. sun, rain, snow, sleet (sun)
4. Europe, Chile, Africa, Asia (Chile)
5. Volkswagen, BMW, Mercedes, Saab (Saab)
6. fins, paws, scales, gills (paws)

Add one item to the following lists. Be prepared to explain your reasoning.

1. Monday, Tuesday, Friday _____
2. two, four, six, _____
3. pancakes, muffins, cereal, _____
4. carbon, oxygen, hydrogen, _____
5. nucleus, cytoplasm, chromosomes, _____
6. inch, centimeter, foot, _____

Stem Sentences

Your students need to put the words into a phrase that explains the relationship. They should pay attention to word order.

Write a sentence or phrase that explains the relationship between the following pairs of words.

1. robin : bird a robin is a type of bird... (as a **cobra** is a type of **snake**)
2. fork: food _____
3. finger: hand _____
4. Romeo: Juliet _____
5. synonym: thesaurus _____
6. addition: perimeter _____

Entire Miscellaneous Analogies

What is a word that "fits" in the analogy?

1. Halloween: October :: _____ : December (Christmas)
2. piglet: pig :: _____ : goose (gosling)
3. teeth: chew:: lungs: _____ (breathe)
4. automobile: gasoline (petrol) :: sailboat: _____ (wind)
5. dinosaurs : paleontologist :: dolphins : _____ (marine biologist)
6. Confederate: South:: Union : _____ (North)
7. Thumper: rabbit:: _____ : deer (Bambi)
8. man: dog:: girl: _____ (see notes)
9. helicopter: _____ :: hummingbird : eagle (jet)
10. confused: _____ :: angry: livid (see notes)

Social Studies and Science Analogies

1. isthmus: land:: _____ : water
2. Oswald: J.F. Kennedy:: _____ : R.F. Kennedy
3. Whitney: cotton gin:: _____ : steamboat
4. San Francisco: trolley car:: Venice : _____
5. Moscow: Kremlin:: London: _____
6. intestines: digestive:: veins: _____
7. _____ : cell:: yolk: egg
8. bacteria: _____ :: euglena: protist
9. water: H₂O:: _____ : Fe
10. koala: Australia:: _____ : New Zealand

Notes

The analogies on this page were all created by students thirteen years of age or younger. The analogies in the "Social Studies and Science" section are examples of the possibilities in making content area connections. The first author cited miscellaneous analogy #8 in an earlier work (Greenwood, 1988). It was created by a seventh grader who had been watching reruns of old movies on a Saturday afternoon. Additionally, earlier that week her class had had direct instruction in clichés. The movie was *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*, starring Jane Russell and Marilyn Monroe. Yes, the answer is "diamonds"! In miscellaneous #10, a sixth grader created a degree analogy. He knew that *livid* was a stronger word for *angry*, so his answer was *delirious*. In an analogy such as miscellaneous #7, a perfectly bright or able child might very well be unable to provide an answer, depending upon prior knowledge. Use such opportunities to help students broaden their horizons, but please be clear that they should not get "hung up" or fret over such items.

The thinking and reasoning skills that students develop through the use of analogies become significant components in their future critical thinking. Teachers at all academic levels can capitalize on analogies to help students make connections in their learning.

Just because they're rotten readers and rotten spellers, doesn't mean they're rotten thinkers, talkers, and reasoners!

Vignette: Recently we were doing a demonstration lesson on analogies to a multiage 6th and 7th grade class at a local middle school. Included in the class were five “identified” learning support students, accompanied by their teachers. The Learning Support teacher came to us, very enthused, and related how surprised and pleased he had been at his students’ performance, both individually and in various grouping formats. Our response, “Just because they’re rotten readers and rotten spellers, doesn’t mean they’re rotten thinkers, talkers, and reasoners!” Quite the contrary.

Extensions

In using analogies in the classroom, teachers become facilitators in the process. Therefore, we thought it would be appropriate to provide some supplemental activities that could be adapted to meet the needs of individual students and curricula. Small group work would be appropriate for these activities, which are adapted from the work of the first author (Greenwood, 1993, 2003).

Artful Analogies

Invite students to draw analogies. No words should be used on these posters—only figures, shapes, or colors to represent ideas. Display these around the room.

Analogy Mapping

Demonstrate to students various mapping techniques that can be used to depict analogy relationships. Begin by constructing the diagram below on the board. In the center circle, write the type

of analogy relationship. Then in the surrounding circles, fill in related word pairs that fall under the category (Figure 2). Once students understand this mapping technique, turn them loose to create their own diagrams. This can easily become a group project, with students researching and adding new word pairs over a designated period of time.



You can refine this mapping design by writing the category and subject in the center circle. See the example below.

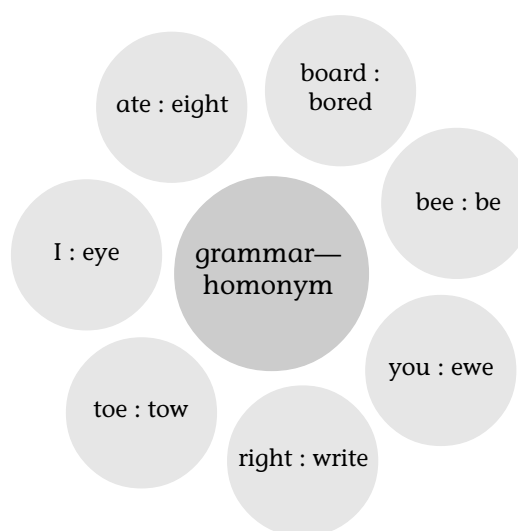


Figure 2

Used with permission

All Hands on Deck

Have students construct an analogy card game. Tell them to write words or draw concrete objects on card-sized pieces of paper. Some of the cards should be labeled as “wild cards.” The game begins

as a player or team of players draws seven cards and tries to arrange any four of them into a logical analogy. They may draw additional cards if necessary, but will lose points for each card drawn after the original seven. A wild card allows students to substitute any object he or she wishes.

Brainstorm Brew

Ask students to brainstorm a list of items, activities, or feelings. Arrange the items in pairs according to what seem to be the most interesting relationships. (See example below.) Then have the students choose a word pair and write an explanation showing how the two items are related. The explanation could have either a humorous or serious tone.

rock music	detective
family	football
breakfast	vacation
typewriter	car
friendships	politics
English class	cloud

Matching Pairs

Using analogies written by students, prepare a sheet of incomplete analogies. Construct a matching exercise by dividing the word pairs in the analogies and arranging them in two columns (making sure that the matching parts are in separate columns). Ask students to match the word pairs to build complete analogies. This activity could be planned and written by the students themselves.

Conclusion

Busy practitioners must be able to discern what is essential to maximize student learning. Properly scaffolded analogy instruction, we feel, should absolutely qualify as a “keeper.” If teachers are to be truly accountable for student learning, they certainly must encourage flexible, creative thinking that connects the known to the novel, that capitalizes on students’ creativity and pattern-seeking and desire to make meaning. In 2003, as well as 1932, active connections between the known and the novel are still essential.

Analogies are “critical” tools! Use them, enjoy them, teach them!

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Strengthening the School— University Partnership

Andrea Erdei and Zsuzsa N.Tóth

Working at a teacher training institution, our main objective is to prepare our students as best as we possibly can for the teaching profession. But however lengthy and detailed our coursework might be, however practice-oriented the methodology seminars are, there is still one thing we cannot provide trainees with at the college: real practice. In the somewhat idealised and decontextualized seminar environment, teacher candidates do not experience the wear and tear of ordinary schooldays, the ups and downs of the profession, and the situations that arise when working among pupils. It is only by collaboration and close cooperation with the practice schools that we can achieve our goals. Our effectiveness as teacher educators depends on the success of this cooperation.

Both authors of this article are EFL teacher educators and members of a team of 25 instructors in the English Language and Literature Department at the Teacher Training College of Eötvös Loránd University in Budapest. Our students study for the equivalent of a bachelor of arts degree in TEFL, which qualifies them to teach English language and literature to learners 10 to 16 years of age.

Being aware of the importance of the practicum, we set out to discover how we might improve both the department's relationship with the school-based mentors and the connection between our methodology seminars and the candidates' teaching practice. For this purpose we conducted a survey and interviews with the school-based mentors and developed a questionnaire that was completed by our graduates. Based on this research, we introduced changes in

the training program itself and in the allocation of tasks and responsibilities in our department.

In this article we begin with a description of our program as it existed and present the research methods and the modifications introduced. The questions for the interview are included in the text. The questionnaire given to graduating students, and our criteria for evaluating their teaching performance, appear in the sidebars.

Description of the teacher training program at Eötvös Loránd University

Prospective secondary school teachers of English as a Foreign Language must complete four years of study for a BA degree. Our students start preparing for the teaching profession from the moment they set foot in the university. During the first three years the Department of Education and Educational Psychology conducts a range of compulsory and optional seminars on various issues of education and schooling. Students' completed assignments (interviews, surveys, essays, video-recorded micro-teaching sessions) are collected into a portfolio, which is presented and evaluated at the end of their studies as part of the certification process.

In the third year of study, content area methodology (in this case English as a Foreign Language) is introduced, and it remains the focus of the program until graduation. In the methodology curriculum, instructional content is addressed over four consecutive semesters. In methodology seminars, teacher candidates must participate actively and are encouraged to draw conclusions from what they have experienced.

The trainees' introduction to the theoretical background of teaching and learning a foreign language is complemented by Teaching Practicum Module 1. In the first semester, the practicum involves two visits to assigned practice schools to observe demonstration lessons. Typically a group of 10–14 teacher candidates, accompanied by their seminar leader, visit a school and observe lessons. The seminar leader then moderates a follow-on discussion with the mentor who conducted the lesson. Mentors are school-based practitioners who conduct demonstration lessons and supervise the professional development of 5–6 teacher trainees each academic year, helping them prepare for their own demonstration lessons, which are given in the mentor's regular classes (in Module 2 of the Teaching Practicum). Mentors are involved in counselling throughout the year and in grading students' performance at the end of each semester.

This school visit offers teacher candidates their first exposure to a possible future practice school and the teacher who might serve as their mentor for the Teaching Practice Module 2. University students are required to react to the school visit by selecting specific observation criteria and writing up observations based on their classroom visits and on readings from the relevant professional literature.

Our department has a contractual relationship with 10 practice schools and with 12 mentors working in these schools. In the second semester, as the pre-service teachers address more practical issues in their methodology courses, they make six scheduled visits to practice schools to delve more deeply into the teaching profession and to get more insight into the teaching of English as a foreign language. These visits are organized so that students visit a different mentor on each occasion, to see different approaches to teaching.

During their methodology seminars, students are given the opportunity to practice presenting various language points in front of their fellow students, in a "peer teaching" or simulation situation, before they find themselves in a real classroom the following year. The group discusses these lessons under the supervision of the seminar leader, and participants provide feedback to one another,

so that trainees can learn both to capitalize on their strengths and to compensate for their weaknesses.

In the fourth year of study each student is assigned to a mentor in a practice school for their practicum experience. Teacher candidates attend their schools three days a week for two five-week periods. This is where their close cooperation with their mentor begins, as only two to three trainees are assigned to each mentor for each five-week period. Each mentor's trainees form a "learning group." They visit and discuss one another's lessons, and help one another to develop. Trainees are required to teach 16–20 lessons before they present an "exam teaching session"; this session is graded and weighs heavily in the awarding their degree.

Connecting the trainees' experience in the classroom with the methodology seminars would allow each to enhance the effect of the other

Problem setting

Although both the syllabus of the methodology seminars and the practicum placement had been designed to serve the needs of teachers-in-training, there was little or no connection between the seminar leaders and the mentors, and neither attempted to build on the other's work. In addition, there was no synchronization of the issues covered in methodology seminars with those in the practice schools. Connecting the trainees' experience in the foreign language classroom with the content of the methodology seminars would allow each to enhance the effect of the other, but such a connection called for carefully organised collaboration.

Survey methods: Interviews and questionnaires

To find out how we could improve the relationship between seminar leaders and school-based mentors, we decided to question both the mentors and our trainees. To explore their experiences with the trainees, their opinions on the content of the methodology seminars, and their concerns about school-univer-

sity cooperation, we interviewed the mentors using the following questions:

- How long have you been working as a mentor for teacher trainees?
- What do you like most in this work?
- What do you consider to be most difficult in this work?
- What do you identify as your strength in being a mentor?
- In which areas related to this work do you feel uncertain?
- Do you feel the necessity of regular further training? What issues would you address?
- How do you assess the trainees' language competence and professional competence?
- How do you work with the trainees assigned to you? Do you consider "learning groups" important in developing competence?

- With what issues do trainees come to you most often for help?
- What is your opinion about the way exam teaching sessions are run? Which criteria do you consider vital to the evaluation?
- How do you think methodology seminar leaders can best help you in your work with the trainees?

A questionnaire was also given to 69 graduating students asking them about their experiences with the Teaching Practicum. The primary focus was on Module 2 (the 10-week-long practice teaching under the supervision of a mentor). The questionnaire included an evaluation of the practice school and the mentor, as well as an assessment of the methodology seminars, in particular their efficiency and usefulness in preparing students for the teaching profession (see questionnaire in Sidebar 1).

Sidebar 1. Questionnaire about the Teaching Practicum in English as a Foreign Language

Dear graduating English-major students,
Please answer the set of questions below to help us determine how effective and successful the Teaching Practicum in English as a Foreign Language has been, and what modifications are needed in the EFL curriculum to provide a more effective training programme for our students.
Thank you in advance.

1. Do you consider the 10-week-long teaching practicum module...

- ☐ unnecessarily long?
 - ☐ adequate?
 - ☐ too short for its purpose?
- Please tick as appropriate.

2. How satisfied were you with the assigned practice school?

Indicate your opinion by marking the appropriate value on a scale of four:
1 – inappropriate
2 – reasonable
3 – good
4 – excellent

- ☐ school atmosphere
- ☐ the classrooms
- ☐ technical equipment
- ☐ availability of teaching materials
- ☐ the composition of classes

3. How satisfied were you with the work of your mentor?

Please tick as appropriate.

- ☐ totally satisfied
- ☐ not very satisfied
- ☐ not satisfied at all

4. How often did you receive feedback from your mentor after you presented a lesson? How was the feedback given?

Please tick as appropriate.

- ☐ orally
- ☐ orally AND in writing
- ☐ after each and every lesson
- ☐ not always
- ☐ too rarely

5. In your opinion, what are the qualities of a good mentor?

Please mark the appropriate value on a scale of four:
4 – extremely important
3 – important
2 – not very important
1 – unimportant

- ☐ relates to students with patience
- ☐ open-minded
- ☐ strict
- ☐ helpful
- ☐ often uses praise
- ☐ encourages even when giving critical judgement/feedback
- ☐ does not force his/her ideas on students
- ☐ open to discussion in case of a difference of opinion

- ☐ guides students to a lot of resources and supplementary material
- ☐ teacher candidates can learn new language teaching techniques from him/her
- ☐ loves teaching
- ☐ an expert in the field
- ☐ serves as an example to students
- ☐ Other (Please specify.):

6. What did you learn most from during your teaching practicum?

Please evaluate each element using the following numbers:

- 4 – Extremely beneficial.
- 3 – Very useful.
- 2 – Important.
- 1 – Not necessary at all.
- 0 – Not applicable. (We did not do this.)

- ☐ observing lessons delivered by mentor
- ☐ discussion after the lesson delivered by mentor
- ☐ observing lessons given by fellow students
- ☐ discussion after the lesson given by a fellow student
- ☐ planning lessons together as a small group
- ☐ planning lessons individually
- ☐ discussion of lesson plans with mentor
- ☐ actual teaching
- ☐ group discussion after your lesson
- ☐ individual discussion of your lesson with mentor
- ☐ discussion after your lesson with the methodology instructor present

7. To what extent do you feel the methodology seminars prepared you for the teaching practicum?

Please answer with Y = yes or N = no in front of each line.

- ☐ teaching grammar
- ☐ presentation of new vocabulary items
- ☐ teaching pronunciation
- ☐ language skills development
- ☐ lesson planning
- ☐ classroom management
- ☐ evaluation and assessment
- ☐ building rapport
- ☐ motivating learners
- ☐ correction
- ☐ making test papers
- ☐ using a course book and supplementary material
- ☐ using visual aids
- ☐ playful activities for the purpose of language teaching

8. In which field do you feel you have improved during your teaching practice?

Please tick as appropriate.

- ☐ language competence
- ☐ confidence in managing a lesson
- ☐ independence in planning
- ☐ relationship with pupils
- ☐ sense of vocation as a teacher
- ☐ self-awareness

9. How important do you consider the following criteria for the evaluation of the exam teaching session?

Please mark each element with one of the following:

- 4 – extremely important
- 3 – important
- 2 – not very important
- 1 – unimportant

- ☐ clear lesson plan
- ☐ variety within the lesson
- ☐ adequate use of visual aids
- ☐ effectiveness (= learners acquire new knowledge or skills during the lesson)
- ☐ clear instructions
- ☐ each learner is fully involved
- ☐ adequate pacing
- ☐ good classroom atmosphere
- ☐ topic and activities tailored to learners' needs and interests
- ☐ good language proficiency of teacher
- ☐ selective use of L1 (mother tongue)
- ☐ appropriate feedback given to learners (correction, evaluation)
- ☐ real communication encouraged in the classroom

10. Do you plan to work as a teacher after graduation?

Please tick as appropriate.

- ☐ Yes, certainly.
- ☐ Definitely not.
- ☐ I have not decided yet.

If you are planning to teach, which type of school would you choose to work in?

Please tick as appropriate.

- ☐ primary school (7 to 14)
- ☐ secondary school (14 to 18)
- ☐ language school (private sector – only language teaching)
- ☐ public education AND language school

In order to enable us to assess the efficiency of the teaching practicum module in detail, please provide the following information:

What is your other major?

In which school did you complete your teaching practicum?

Who was your mentor

Thank you for your answers.

We wish you all the best for the coming exams.

Survey findings and resultant modifications in the training program

Formalized assessment criteria for “exam teaching sessions”

We were happy find that the mentors (without exception) were satisfied with the content and methods of the seminars, and the preparedness of the trainees with regard to knowledge of methodology. However, the most pressing issue that was raised in the mentor interviews appeared to be the **evaluation of the “exam teaching session.”** While this evaluation is weighed heavily in determining the trainee’s degree, grades apparently depended greatly on the subjective approach of the faculty member assessing the session. A formal system of assessment was called for to standardize this procedure.

Based on our experience as regular assessors, and on feedback from both mentors and trainees, we developed a rubric for use at the exam teaching sessions of TEFL trainees. We described only the highest level (level 5) performance in detail: The trainee who demonstrates skilfulness and efficiency in each of the criteria receives the highest possible score, and in the case of a weaker performance, points are deducted. The assessment focuses on the

following major points: planning, implementation (lesson content), and personal and professional qualities (see Sidebar 2 for evaluation sheet). In describing the criteria we attempted to represent the various factors and elements of a successful lesson proportionally, allocating different numbers of points to them.

With the requirements presented in this format, trainees are more aware of what they need to work on in order to succeed

The **evaluation criteria** are communicated to trainees at the beginning of their teaching practicum, so they can prepare systematically for the exam teaching session with the help of the mentor and the learning group.

With the requirements presented in this format, both the seminar leaders and the mentors are now more careful to ensure that they address each and every issue involved in the final evaluation during the four semesters of Module 2. At the same time, trainees are more aware of what they need to work on in order to succeed.

Sidebar 2. Criteria for the Assessment of English Majors’ Exam Teaching Lessons

AREAS FOR OBSERVATION		DESCRIPTION of LEVEL 5 PERFORMANCE	SCORES
I. PLANNING	1. Aims and objectives	The learning objectives are appropriate in relation to aspects of the curriculum. The plan clearly indicates the knowledge and skills the pupils will acquire from this lesson.	0 / 1 / 2
	2. Learners’ needs	The activities devised build on learners’ existing skills and knowledge, match their capabilities and individual characteristics, and motivate and challenge the learners.	0 / 1 / 2
	3. Resources	T supplements the textbook with additional instructional materials and uses a variety of sources to facilitate learning.	0 / 1 / 2
	4. Activities	The sets of activities provide variety to ensure interest as well as repetition to promote consolidation. Alternative and back-up activities are available.	0 / 1 / 2
	5. Techniques	The choice of strategies and techniques enhances learning; techniques are appropriate for maintaining interest and achieving learning objectives.	0 / 1 / 2
	6. Feasibility	T thoroughly and realistically prepared all aspects of the lesson to successfully implement it in the classroom.	0 / 1 / 2
Subtotal: 12 /			

Sidebar 2. Criteria for the Assessment of English Majors' Exam Teaching Lessons

AREAS FOR OBSERVATION			DESCRIPTION of LEVEL 5 PERFORMANCE	SCORES
II. LESSON CONTENT	1. Structure	a. Context	The lesson is linked to previous and future work.	0 / 1 / 2
		b. Framework	The lesson demonstrates a fully realised process of introducing, elaborating on, and consolidating content.	0 / 1 / 2
		c. Progression	There is logical coherence between the stages of the lesson, with natural transition between activities.	0 / 1 / 2
	2. Material	a. Course book and supplementary material	Course book and resource book extracts meet the learning objectives, learner needs, and show relevance to the target language culture. With appropriate additional activities T skilfully compensates for the shortcomings of the set textbook.	0 / 1 / 2
		b. Teaching aids	Clearly structured board work, good quality visuals. Carefully prepared handouts (where applicable) are used.	0 / 1 / 2
		c. Equipment	T demonstrates the necessary skills of operating technical equipment (cassette recorder, video, OHP, computer, etc.).	0 / 1 / 2
	3. Class Management	a. Instructions	Focussed, clear, brief. In case of complex instructions, demonstration and/or examples are used.	0 / 1 / 2
		b. T's questions and checking understanding	T skilfully varies the use of different question types to prompt real communication, and makes use of opportunities to provoke longer answers. T applies various effective techniques for eliciting information and checking understanding.	0 / 1 / 2
		c. Use of L1	T uses L1 appropriately and selectively.	0 / 1 / 2
		d. Timing and pacing	Time allocations are appropriate for activities; T takes into account individual differences. Learners are neither held back nor rushed; adequate wait times are provided. A good balance between energizing and calming activities is achieved.	0 / 1 / 2
		e. Organisation of activities	T demonstrates varied interaction patterns and adjusted roles as appropriate for learning objectives and content of activities.	0 / 1 / 2
		f. Error correction	T selects from multiple approaches and a wide range of correction techniques in accordance with the focus of the activity.	0 / 1 / 2
		g. Feedback and evaluation	T gives constructive feedback on the learners' progress and achievements. T is aware of pedagogically sound, fair, and systematic procedures to evaluate learners' performance; formal evaluation criteria are communicated to learners.	0 / 1 / 2
		h. Discipline	T is able to establish and maintain a balance between discipline and a relaxed working atmosphere.	0 / 1 / 2
	4. Climate for Learning	a. Communication	Meaningful practice is present and genuine communication is generated regardless of the learners' level. Language skills are emphasized over knowledge of language items. (In case of presentation of new items, learners are given the opportunity to use knowledge in context, in meaningful situations.) T encourages learners to express their ideas and opinions, and promotes interaction among them. Learner talking time is increased to the maximum possible.	0 / 1 / 2
		b. Environment	T creates an inclusive environment in which all learners actively participate, and adapts the physical arrangement of the classroom to reflect lesson needs and facilitate the grouping of learners for effective interaction.	0 / 1 / 2
		c. Learner autonomy	T demonstrates learner-centered practices to facilitate learning, caters for different learning styles, and incorporates developing learning strategies into the lesson. T encourages learners to take responsibility for their own learning.	0 / 1 / 2
Subtotal: 34				

Sidebar 2. Criteria for the Assessment of English Majors' Exam Teaching Lessons

AREAS FOR OBSERVATION		DESCRIPTION of LEVEL 5 PERFORMANCE	SCORES
III. PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL QUALITIES	1. Rapport	T relates to learners in a consistent way, showing interest in them as individuals and respecting their ideas and opinions. There is a positive classroom atmosphere of fairness, confidence, and collaboration.	0 / 1 / 2 / 3
	2. Presence	T is able to hold learners' attention; his/her voice is clear and varied; speech is articulate; T uses space and non-verbal communication to good effect.	0 / 1 / 2
	3. Language proficiency	T has intelligible pronunciation, speaks fluently with accurate vocabulary and grammar. T makes no mistakes when teaching pre-prepared material, self-corrects occasional errors in spontaneous communication.	0 / 1 / 2 / 3
	4. Language awareness	T provides learners with both linguistically and culturally adequate models and examples of the target language. T exploits L1 when it contributes to making meaning and effective learning.	0 / 1 / 2 / 3
	5. Attitude	T is aware of own strengths and weaknesses; is willing to reflect on his/her planning and action.	0 / 1 / 2 / 3
			Subtotal: 14 /
			TOTAL: 60 /
Grades allocated to scores: 0 – 29 : unsatisfactory (1), 30 – 37 : satisfactory (2), 38 – 45 : average (3), 46 – 53 : good (4), 54 – 60 : excellent (5)			

A new administrative responsibility: The Teaching Practicum Coordinator

In our department responsibilities are shared, and people work in teams according to subject matter (culture and civilisation, language development, linguistics, literature, methodology). Section coordinators, who manage and coordinate the work of a team, also serve as assistants to the head of the department, and as contact persons for students in issues relating to their section.

Previously one person—the coordinator for the methodology section—was responsible not only for curricular issues and coordination of research programs, but also for the organisation and management of the Teaching Practicum. From the survey results it was clear that the job of organising and managing the Teaching Practicum was so demanding that we needed to create a separate position of **Teaching Practicum Coordinator**.

The job is now undertaken by a methodology instructor, who is responsible not only for conducting his/her own seminars but also for the organi-

zation of Teaching Practicum Module 1 (school visits for the 70–90 students majoring in English in a given academic year) and Module 2 (trainees' teaching practice). The coordinator keeps in close contact with the mentors, and makes weekly visits to the practice schools to see trainees in action and advise them on further development. To allow for these visits, the coordinator's university teaching load is reduced by four lessons per week.

The job of coordinator is held by a different faculty member each academic year. This rotation system has met with the approval of the university faculty, the mentors, and the trainees alike, because it gives the coordinator the opportunity to get to know each mentor personally, to interact with more of the trainees, and to keep in day-to-day contact with the practice schools.

Workshops for school-based mentors

In our interviews, the mentors expressed a need for professional forums, workshops dealing with the latest developments and trends in foreign

language teaching methodology. As a result, we have started to outline a one-week professional development program for all our mentors, with contributions from our entire methodology faculty.

Modifications in the methodology seminars

Having evaluated the questionnaires, we concluded that students were generally satisfied with the content of methodology seminars. However, they did express a wish for more practice and less theory. Based on this feedback, we introduced **changes in the methodology curriculum**. In the first two semesters of the program, which constitutes students' introduction to the theories and practice of TEFL, we agreed to include a **45-minute mini-lesson** (the length of a school lesson) that would draw from the theoretical background to illustrate important points to students, and let them discover the underlying theoretical principles for themselves, rather than having the principles first explained to them. However, the inclusion of such mini-lessons is at the discretion of each seminar leader.

In the final semester of the program, the seminars focus on the National Core Curriculum and address issues of testing, assessment, learner training, and syllabus design. Teacher candidates are required to develop a **20-lesson mini-syllabus** for a learner group of their choice (selecting any grade level, language level, or number of learners) that addresses a particular need and/or objective (e.g., improving vocabulary by developing reading skills, grammar practice by developing oral language skills, etc.). This mini-syllabus must be accompanied by a needs analysis conducted by the teacher candidate, and a test designed by the candidate to check the achievement of the stated objectives. Seminar content is introduced gradually and immediately applied to the trainees' work in their other courses.

Epilogue

The above-mentioned changes were introduced in the past academic year [2001–2002], and we are regularly monitoring their implementation. The

first year's experience and feedback have led us to believe that these measures, long-awaited and favoured by all involved, have ensured a better working relationship between the practice schools and university faculty, at least at the departmental level.

One of the major changes is applying formal evaluation criteria to trainees' performance, and we know that getting used to such a change takes time and effort. Constructive feedback from both the mentors and our colleagues is surely welcomed. We are presently organizing a workshop in which university faculty and mentors will be given the opportunity to discuss and interpret each of the criteria included in the evaluation, and exchange suggestions for effectively using the criteria with trainees in their professional development.

Documents consulted:

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Strategic Moves

Writing to Learn With SPAWN Prompts

William G. Brozo

Strategic teaching involves structuring classroom activities and assignments in ways that help students think critically about what they read and what they are learning. Language-based processes are a vital part of strategic teaching, and students should have a variety of opportunities to use them as tools for learning. One important such process is content-focused writing.

SPAWN (Martin, Martin, & O'Brien, 1984) is an acronym that stands for five categories of writing options (see Sidebar). These categories offer teachers endless possibilities for generating thought-provoking and interesting prompts related to a topic of study. These prompts are designed to elicit considered and critical written responses by students. Teachers from a variety of levels and subject areas have found SPAWN writing to be especially helpful in stimulating stu-

dents' creative and critical thinking, while also providing a way for them to reflect on their new knowledge (Brozo & Simpson, 2003).

Miss Belin's second-grade students engaged in SPAWN writing throughout a weeklong science unit on "Winter." Along with the chapter on seasons in their science textbook, the class read (or listened to) magazine and newspaper articles, as well as several children's books on the topic, including *Snow Day* (Maestro & Maestro, 1989) and *Katy and the Big Snow* (Burton, 1974). Some of Miss Belin's SPAWN prompts for this unit follow:

Special Powers—We have just read about a Russian city that lost power during one of the worst cold spells on record. If you could do something to make sure those people had power for heating and cooking, what would that be and why? What could happen as a result of these improvements?

Problem Solving—In *Snow Day* the author presents many

problems people face when a snowstorm hits their city. Write as many solutions to these problems as you can imagine.

Alternative Viewpoints—We have been reading about snow and its connection to the water cycle. Tell a story about this process as though you were a snowflake.

What If?—In *Katy and the Big Snow*, the snowplow called Katy is asked to clear the entire city of snow. What would happen if Katy broke down or got stuck in the snow? When writing, think of how dependent the people of the city were on Katy's snow plowing ability.

Next—We have been learning about different types of frozen precipitation, such as snow and sleet. What type of precipitation do you think we will learn about next and how do you think it forms?

Mrs. Nebraska has her eighth-grade history students keep a "learning log" to record their written responses to the daily SPAWN prompts she provides them. The logs are spiral-bound notebooks with personalized covers. Mrs. Nebraska's students keep their logs stacked on a table, and they retrieve the logs when they enter the classroom. Their entries are dated and labeled with the prompt given them that day. Sometimes, a SPAWN prompt greets them on the board, and they respond in their logs before the day's lesson begins. This kind of prompt usually anticipates what will be covered in that day's lesson, e.g.,

S – Special Powers

Students are given the power to change some aspect of the text or topic. Their writing should explain *what* was changed, *why*, and the *effects* of the change.

P – Problem Solving

Students are asked to write possible solutions to problems posed or suggested by the books being read or material being studied.

A – Alternative Viewpoints

Students write about a topic or re-tell a story from a unique perspective.

W – What If?

Similar to *Special Powers*, the teacher introduces a change in some aspect of the topic or story, then asks students to write based on that change.

N – Next

Students are asked to write in anticipation of what the author will discuss next, explaining the logic behind their conjecture.



Problem Solving: We have been reading about how most people in the United States were isolationists at the start of World War I. How do you think U.S. President Wilson can convince his country to enter the war?

Next: We learned yesterday that Germany has decided to use poison gas as part of trench warfare. What do you think the Allies will do next?

On other days, Mrs. Nebraska introduces a writing prompt at the conclusion of the lesson. These prompts typically ask students to reflect on, or think more critically about, what they have just learned:

Special Powers: You have the power to change one important event leading up to Romania's entry into World War I. Describe what it is you would change, why you would change it, and the consequences of the change.

What If? What might have happened if Bulgaria hadn't entered the war on the side of the Germans?

After her students had read about Germany's submarine fleet and its use against the British blockade, Mrs. Nebraska used the process of **Alternative Viewpoint** writing to assess their recall of one critical event, the sinking of the passenger liner, *Lusitania*. First, she wrote on the board "The Sinking of the *Lusitania*" and drew a large circle around it. Then she asked the class to brainstorm as many witnesses to the event as possible. Mrs. Nebraska drew multiple lines from the main circle and wrote as students called out. When students had exhausted all

of their ideas, they were asked to select one of the witnesses listed and write a description of the torpedoed ship from that person's perspective. The description could take a number of forms: a newspaper article, a diary entry, a conversation, a letter, or just thoughts. While Mrs. Nebraska encouraged the class to be creative, she also emphasized the importance of being historically accurate.

Jon wrote a brief memoir from the perspective of a U-boat commander who had fired on the ship. Katrina described the catastrophe from the vantage point of two passengers, a mother and her daughter, floating in a lifeboat as the liner was sinking. Peter selected a unique point of view, that of the *Lusitania's* captain. His learning log entry read:

7 May 1915 - 14:12 GMT - Kinsale Head, Ireland

Attacked today. German U-boat #20. Torpedoed amidship between the boilers and coal room. Panic everywhere and sinking fast. My orders are to prepare lifeboats and rafts for the women and children first, but these are ignored. I watch helplessly while everyone, including cowardly men, fights their way into whatever will float. Within minutes a second explosion. Maybe another torpedo or perhaps the coal dust ignited. At this point it hardly mattered. We were listing hard to starboard. Within the hour she was lost and so were the souls of 1,198 of my passengers and crew, including 138 Americans. Something must be done to stop the submarine threat and the wanton destruction of unarmed non-military vessels. Maybe Mr. Wilson and his countrymen will now join the fray. I pray they must.

WT Turner

It is worth noting how Peter managed to incorporate several

key historical details related to the *Lusitania's* sinking into this brief but engaging text. This told Mrs. Nebraska that he did recall relevant information surrounding the event, such as dates and times, the location of the attack and the explosions, the number of casualties, and the importance of the event for the United States.

In both Mrs. Nebraska's and Miss Belin's classes, *SPAWN* prompts offered students interesting writing options related to the topic under study that required solving problems, imagining other possibilities, predicting future developments, and taking on alternative perspectives. This type of content-specific writing has a place in the strategic teaching repertoires of all teachers because it can increase student motivation to learn, engender creative and critical thinking, and promote long-term recall.

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Pros and Cons

The Business of Education

Christopher G. Robbins

Let us take up this unique chance; and I hope that through many a trial and error we will indeed take it up, once we finally understand, or be forced to understand by the boomerang effects of our ignorance, that there is no acceptable substitute for a dialogue. (Bauman, 2002, p. 16)

When I began the teaching year last August, the administration greeted teachers with in-service classes. I was hopeful. Here I thought we might learn about a system-wide intervention to help the children and their families; we might organize across classrooms; or agree to schedule weekly or monthly family reading nights; or develop parent-student-teacher tutoring groups. Our efforts, I hoped, would address larger, pressing concerns of the community and “these various groups [could] come together and raise the fundamental question of how they may enlighten each other, and how through such an exchange...a mode of practice might emerge in which all groups may benefit” (Giroux, 2001, p. 240).

I was awakened from my daydream by a video that was purportedly designed to address the problems we would face as classroom teachers. The video’s unabashedly corporate perspective became clear to me when I heard an elementary school student on the training video state: “The plan works great...we know who the *workers* and the *slackers* are in the class” (see JC Penney Leadership Institute on School Improvement #7, 2000). Arguably, the term

“worker” has some positive connotations, but “slacker” suggests someone who is lazy, less productive, less competitive, and, in business parlance, a risk to the “company” (thus giving new definition to “at-risk” students).

I was especially concerned with the lack of any discussion of how the “slackers” might be helped, outside of feeling pressured to perform by their less lethargic peers. But any idea of working cooperatively, with a focus on individual needs within a larger learning community, is thoroughly undermined by pressures to compete. The absence of dialogue about helping “slackers”—both on the video and within our staff—was indicative of a larger free-market principle that seems to have become commonsensical in American society: There must be winners/“workers” and losers/“slackers” for business communities to function. Furthermore, I was distressed that the majority of teachers were not alarmed by the blurring of distinctions between the classroom and the corporate

workspace, and the resulting loss of the notion of school as a learning community and public space.

Other business-oriented practices were already operating in the school. A “job corps” employed students to augment the support staff, serving as “garbage persons,” “lunch runners,” “store staff,” etc. Teachers often had to dismiss students from class instruction to perform their job corps duties, regardless of whether the students were developing adequately as learners.

I find these current trends in education troubling. Beyond the simple substitution of business vocabulary to refer to students and teachers, there are two serious issues: (1) students’ perceptions of learning and their role as citizens, when schooling and learning are defined by corporate jargon; and (2) the creation of false hope. One of my goals for schools is that the majority of children will develop an interest in the broader world, and the ability to discern and reform inequalities in that world. As teachers, we





must be concerned when school systems force students to define themselves as workers or slackers, as opposed to learners and critical citizens. In fact, we are painting a false picture of the demands of current capitalism for students when we blatantly teach them to labor, instead of teaching them how to learn and to think critically so that they are prepared for life in an increasingly diverse, rapidly changing, and unpredictable society that cannot promise anyone a job, let alone a living wage, now or in the foreseeable future.

What role can teachers and students have in interrupting these trends? If we are complacent about structuring our classrooms according to this workplace ideology and terminology, we are agreeing to the injection of brute capitalism into yet another social space (Fitzsimons, 2000, p. 505). Community spaces that are not sponsored (and, therefore, not defined) by commercial interests are becoming few and far between. Increasingly, schools and other vital public institutions are being privatized, to the benefit of a few large corporations. But the adoption of business-based philosophies by schools is something that teachers, students, and parents can—and should—confront. There is a fundamental difference between how students will see their place in society if they learn how to be citizens, and what they will do in society if they only learn how to be workers. Admittedly, this is not an either/or situation, but again, it points to the range of identities that teachers may make available in the classroom, identities in which students ac-

tively invest during their formative school experience. For example, if we ask a fifth grader what he/she did in school today, and he responds that he delivered lunches, we have much to be concerned about, especially if fulfilling a job position substitutes for (or interrupts) literacy education. Language—words and the values we attach to their meanings—defines the relationships between teachers and students and the larger community and world. Accordingly, should the language we use in our classrooms concern learners or laborers?

In closing, my interest is in calling attention to the role that schools might assume as laboratories for democracy. In part, I wish to help students understand and transform unjust situations that directly involve them. I am also concerned with the ways in which students and teachers worldwide are becoming connected, directly and indirectly, by the experience of having “[t]he real matters of...social organization [schooling a constitutive element] determined by market forces” (McChesney, 1998, p. 9). I am writing in hopes of engaging teachers in a global conversation about how the vocabulary and practices of business—“speed,” “efficiency,” “accuracy,” “standards,” and “competition”—are replacing educational practices and ideals such as “deliberation,” “exploration,” “cooperation,” “compassion,” “social justice,” and “learning.” Why should we set children up to compete—on unequal grounds—by unashamedly mirroring the corporate world in the classroom? Why would we not

instead choose to learn as members of a community?

The larger question, I suppose, is “should teachers engage themselves, their students, and their communities with projects designed to explore (and interrupt) the negative consequences of (global) business, especially as they affect the teaching-learning process?” My partial answer to this question borrows again from Zygmunt Bauman (2002), “we are all dependent on each other, and nothing that we do or refrain from doing is indifferent to the fate of everyone else” (p. 17).

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Teaching Tips



Interactive Conferences

Calista Koval and Marie Olenych

No matter how tactful a teacher may be, parents have difficulty accepting a professional's judgment of their child's progress, especially when that child is not progressing as well as the parents had hoped. This problem is avoided when teachers stop telling parents about student progress and instead give parents the opportunity to determine for themselves their child's achievement level. To this end, we have developed and implemented what we call the Interactive Conference.

To begin, we created a Student Performance Notebook. The notebook is divided into three main sections: reading, writing, and math. The first page of each section lists the criteria we use to evaluate the child's work.

The reading section consists of a passage for the child to read to his/her parents. After the child reads, parents return to the criteria page where instructions tell them to place an X next to the level at which they believe their child is functioning.

The writing section contains a writing sample from each child in the class. The children's names are removed from the samples and numbers are used in their place. As the parents and their child survey these samples, it becomes evident which samples meet the criteria for each level and where their child stands in relation to these criteria. Parents then place an X next to the writing level that indicates their child's level of performance.

The math section contains activities using manipulatives and



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work sheets with clear directions for parents to use with their child. Following the activities, parents turn to the math criteria and place an X next to the level that indicates their child's performance level.

When the parent and child have completed all the activities, the teacher joins them to discuss the conference and answer any questions. The parents' comments may amaze the teacher, e.g. "I thought my child had made a lot of progress and he has. But it seems he still has areas that he needs to work on." Wow! Parents drew their own conclusions regarding their child's learning and progress. When this happens we feel we have successfully overcome parental resistance to teacher feedback.

At this point in the conference we discuss ideas the parents can use for working with their children at home. Depending on the child's needs, suggestions may

include both enrichment and remediation activities.

When the parents and their child leave the conference, we write up the results and include our suggestions for parental involvement. These notes are then mailed to parents and a copy placed in our files.

Parental reaction to these interactive conferences has been very positive. Through such interactions parents gain an understanding of the curriculum, the assessment process, and the progress of their children.

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Writing for Thinking Classroom

Thinking Classroom (also published in Russian as *Peremena*) serves as an international forum of exchange among teachers, teacher educators, and others interested in democratic teaching practices. It seeks to encourage professional development, research, and reflection. Authors are invited to submit articles that focus on active inquiry, student-centered learning, alternative assessment, and other aspects of educational change. Due to the international nature of the journal, articles should address issues that appeal to a wide audience, and terms or examples that are specific to a particular country or region should be explained in the text.

Thinking Classroom strives to maintain a balance of practical and theoretical information. The writing should take the form of a narrative, rather than a formal research report. Examples from classroom experience, quotations from colleagues or students, or examples of students' work can help communicate ideas to journal readers.

In addition to original submissions, *Thinking Classroom* will consider for publication articles that have appeared previously in national journals with limited circulation, to present these works to a wider international audience.

Format for Submissions

- Submissions are accepted in English or Russian.
- Articles should not exceed 5,000 words in length.
- Articles should be submitted electronically, preferably in .rtf format as an attachment to e-mail, to **bmichaels@reading.org**.
- The full name(s) of the author(s) should be included on a cover sheet, but this information should not appear in the body of the manuscript, as submissions are reviewed anonymously. The cover sheet should also include complete author contact information (**postal address and e-mail address**).
- References to articles or books cited must be complete. For journal articles include author, date of publication, title of article, title of journal, volume number, and page numbers (where article appeared). For books include author, year of publication, title, location and name of publisher. Additional details and examples can be found online at http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/research/r_apa.html
- If an article includes samples of writing or artwork produced by students, the author of the article must obtain written permission for their use. Likewise, if photographs are submitted to accompany an article, written permission must be obtained from both the photo subjects and the photographer. (A parent or guardian must give permission for use of a child's photographs or schoolwork.) Permission forms in English and Russian may be downloaded from the journal website at <http://www.reading.org/publications/tc/permissions.html>
- The editors rely on a system of anonymous peer review to help them select articles for publication.

Letters to the Editor, **Reviews** of books or websites, and contributions to **Look Who's Talking** should also be sent to **bmichaels@reading.org**.

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Announcements

Call for Papers: Language and the Future of Europe

The Centre for Transnational Studies School of Modern Languages, University of Southampton, UK, will host an international conference on *Language and the Future of Europe: Ideologies, Policies and Practices* 8–10 July 2004. This conference will explore the tensions between national and transnational interests in contemporary Europe in terms of conflicting language ideologies, policies, and practices. Additional information at <http://www.lang.soton.ac.uk/lipp/> or by e-mail from Christopher Brumfit, Professor of Language in Education, cjb1@soton.ac.uk. Deadline for proposals is 31 January 2004.

Conference: Linguistic Foundations of Cross-cultural Communication

The Nizhny Novgorod Linguistic University (Nizhny Novgorod, Russia) announces an international conference “Linguistic Foundations of Cross-cultural Communication” which will take place on 14–15 November 2003. Topics include cross-cultural communication (particularly in relation to language teaching and translation), semantics and language acquisition, language and society, and concepts and constants in language, literature, and art. Additional information is available from Anna Gladkova (conference secretary): angladkova@lunn.ru

Conference: Regional National Policy

The Russian Association of Indigenous Peoples of the North (RAIPON) and the Kemerovo Regional Administration will hold an international conference on “Regional National Policy: Historical Experience and Marks Effectiveness Criteria” in Kemerovo, Russia, 24–28 November 2003. The purpose of the conference is to evaluate the effectiveness of national policy on the regional level, predict interethnic conflicts, and develop a regional net of ethno-social and ethno-ecological monitoring. Applications for participation in the conference will be accepted until 15 August 2003. For information and application, fax request to (3842) 58 38 85 or e-mail: <gnp@kemsu.ru> or <sdv@kemsu.ru>

World Congress on Reading

International Reading Association's *20th World Congress on Reading* is scheduled to take place in Manila, Philippines, 26–29 July 2004. The Congress theme is “Literacy Across Cultures” and topics include classroom strategies, early literacy, second language learning, family literacy, and teacher education/professional development. Information is available online at <http://www.reading.org/meetings/wc/>

Nominations for International Reading Association Awards and Grants

The International Reading Association sponsors awards to recognize outstanding educators, writers, researchers, and journalists. Information on all Association awards (including guidelines and application forms) is available online at www.reading.org/awards/. The following awards have application deadlines in the fall.

Children's literature

Six **IRA Children's Book Awards** at US\$500 each will be offered for an author's first or second published book. Awards will be given for fiction and nonfiction in three categories: primary (ages preschool–8), intermediate (ages 9–13), and young adult (ages 14–17). This award is intended for newly published authors who show unusual promise in the children's book field. Books from any country and in any language copyrighted during the 2003 calendar year will be considered. Entries in a language other than English must include a one-page abstract in English and a translation into English of one chapter or similar selection that in the submitter's estimation is representative of the book. For guidelines, write to Executive Office: exec@reading.org. Entries must be received by November 1, 2003.

The **Paul A. Witty Short Story Award** is given to the author of an original short story published for the first time during 2003 in a periodical for children. The award carries a US\$1,000 stipend. The short story should serve as a literary standard that encourages young readers to read periodicals. For

guidelines, write to Executive Office: exec@reading.org. Completed entries must be received by December 1, 2003.

Professional Development

The **Constance M. McCullough Award**, which carries a monetary prize of US\$5,000, is awarded annually to assist a member of the Association in the investigation of reading-related problems and to encourage international professional development activities that are carried out in countries outside North America. This award represents a specific means for working toward as many as three articulated goals of the Association: advocacy, professional development, and emerging global issues. For guidelines, write to Council and Affiliate Services Division: gcasey@reading.org. Proposals must be postmarked by October 1, received by October 10, 2003.

The **Developing Country Grants** are awarded to members of the Association residing in developing countries who seek support for literacy projects in their own countries. The number of grants (each up to US\$2,000) will be determined by the amount of donations made to this fund as of June 30 each year. For guidelines, write to Council and Affiliate Services Division: gcasey@reading.org. Proposals must be postmarked by October 1, received by October 10, 2003.

The **Gertrude Whipple Professional Development Grant**, which carries a monetary prize of up to US\$5,000, is awarded to assist a member with the planning and creation of professional development projects, the production of high-quality materials, the marketing and scheduling of meetings and workshops, and the logistic support for conducting them. For guidelines, write to Council and Affiliate Services Division: gcasey@reading.org. Proposals are reviewed by a committee throughout the year.

Research

The **Albert J. Harris Award** is a US\$1,000 award granted annually for an outstanding contribution on the topics of reading disabilities and the prevention, assessment, or instruction of learners experiencing difficulty learning to read. Pub-



lications that have appeared in a professional journal or monograph between June 1, 2002, and May 31, 2003, are eligible and may be submitted by the author or anyone else. Nominees do not need to be Association members. Copies may be duplicated from the actual publication; reprints are also acceptable. For guidelines, write to Research and Policy Division: research@reading.org. Completed entries must be received by September 15, 2003.

The **Dina Feitelson Research Award** is a monetary award for an exemplary work published in English in a refereed journal that reports on an empirical study investigating aspects of literacy acquisition such as phonemic awareness, the alphabetic principle, bilingualism, or cross-cultural studies of beginning reading. This year's award will include publications from June 1, 2002 to May 31, 2003. Nominees do not need to be Association members. For guidelines, write to Research and Policy Division: research@reading.org. Completed entries must be received by September 15, 2003.

The **Outstanding Dissertation of the Year Award** is a US\$1,000 annual award supported by a grant from Scott Foresman. The competition is open for dissertations in reading or related fields completed between May 15, 2002, and May 14, 2003. Studies using any research approach (e.g., ethnographic, experimental, historical, survey) are encouraged. Each study will be assessed in light of the approach, the scholarly qualification of its report, and its significant contributions to knowledge within the reading/literacy field. For guidelines, write to Research and Policy Division: research@reading.org. Completed entries must be received by October 1, 2003.

Service

The **International Citation of Merit** is given biennially in even-numbered years to a person clearly visible through international activities in the field of literacy whose activities are for the benefit of countries other than, as well as, the nominee's country. For guidelines, write to the Executive Office: exec@reading.org.

The **Special Service Award** is given from time to time for unusual and distin-

guished service to the Association. Those wishing to nominate someone for this award should request an application from the Executive Office: exec@reading.org. Completed entries must be received by October 15, 2003.

The **William S. Gray Citation of Merit** is awarded to a nationally or internationally known person for outstanding contributions to the field of reading. Those wishing to nominate someone for this award should request an application from the Executive Office: exec@reading.org. Completed entries must be received by October 15, 2003.

Teacher

The **Arbuthnot Award** is a US\$500 award to honor an outstanding college or university teacher of children's and young adult literature. Nominees must be Association members, affiliated with a college or university, and engaged in teacher and/or librarian preparation at the undergraduate and/or graduate level. For guidelines, write to Executive Office: exec@reading.org. Completed entries must be received by October 15, 2003.

The **Eleanor M. Johnson Award** recognizes a current outstanding elementary classroom teacher of reading/language arts. The award carries a US\$1,000 prize supported by a grant from Weekly Reader Corporation. Candidates must be Association members, have a minimum of 5 years' teaching experience, and be endorsed by four individuals. For guidelines, write to Executive Office: exec@reading.org. Completed entry forms must be returned by November 15, 2003.

The **IRA Presidential Award for Reading and Technology** honors educators who have made an outstanding contribution to the field of reading education through the use of technology. The award is sponsored by Riverdeep—The Learning Company. There will be one grand-prize winner, and regional winners in the U.S., Canada, and outside North America. All entrants must be full-time educators or administrators with a valid teaching credential who work directly with students ages 5–18 for all or part of the working day. For guidelines, write to Executive Of-

fice: exec@reading.org. Entries must be received by November 15, 2003.

The **Nila Banton Smith Award** is a US\$1,000 award to honor a middle or secondary school classroom teacher or reading teacher who has shown leadership in translating theory and current research into practice for developing content area literacy. The recipient of this award should have demonstrated excellence at the Classroom Level in addition to either the Building Level or District Level. Applicants must be actively teaching students in the 7th- to 12th-grade range or equivalent and be members of the Association. For application forms, write to Executive Office: exec@reading.org. The nominee's vita and a letter explaining how the person fits the criteria should accompany nominations. Completed entries must be received by November 15, 2003.

The **Outstanding Teacher Educator in Reading Award** honors an outstanding college or university teacher of reading methods or reading-related courses. Nominees must be Association members, affiliated with a college or a university, and engaged in teacher preparation in reading at the undergraduate and/or graduate levels. For guidelines, write to Executive Office: exec@reading.org. Completed entries must be received by October 15, 2003.

The **Regie Routman Teacher Recognition Award** honors an outstanding regular classroom elementary teacher of reading and language arts in grades K–6 (ages 5–12) dedicated to improving teaching and learning through reflective writing about his or her teaching and learning process. The US\$1,000 award is supported by a grant from Regie Routman. All applicants must be Association members. For guidelines, write to Executive Office: exec@reading.org. Completed applications must be received by November 1, 2003.

The **Travel Grants for Educators** provide support to educators from any country for meetings (across continents) sponsored by the Association. Applicants must be members of the Association or one of its affiliated groups. For guidelines write to the Executive Office: exec@reading.org. Completed applications must be received by August 15, 2003.

Subscribe to *Thinking Classroom/Peremena* & Enjoy All the Benefits of IRA Membership!

Become a part of a worldwide organization that disseminates research and information about reading and actively supports professional development for educators, curriculum reforms, and classroom innovation. Now is the time to join. Use one of the forms provided below. The first form should be used by those living in countries with developed economies and the second by those living in countries with developing economies.

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INTERNATIONAL Reading Association
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