

A Teachers' Forum

From the President

By Myrna Creasman

As we shake off the sand between our toes, announcing the end of summer, we feel the tingle of a rejuvenated body as we approach the new school year.

For teachers, there is actually no vacation. Sure, there was a break from the customary paperwork and housekeeping inherent in our profession. But even as we have the opportunity to get away from these, summer breaks provide us with inspiration for our teaching. When visiting relatives, going to the beach or the cool

breeze of mountains, or relishing an unhurried time at the bookstore ideas abound everywhere we go. Ideas we can use in the classroom to create schema. We're creating new schema for teaching the verb tenses, drills for writing a topic sentence, and tactile experiences for contrasting adjectives. All get a fresh approach after a summer break.

The renewed enthusiasm is evident as we eagerly meet the bright faces of our students on the first day of school. As we begin the



Myrna Creasman, President

school year, let's keep reaching for the treasure trove of ideas we found this summer. Have a great school year!

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From the Editor

By Virginia Ann Ludwig

Okay, Okay. I'm a slacker! If it weren't for Karen rushing to my rescue, there would be no edition of the newspaper this time. I almost sent out just a plain ole letter, but that seemed so boring after what she and Shakeba helped me do before. She wonderfully volunteered to help me once more. In December I'm on my own, I think.

Read Myrna's Welcome Back to the New School Year as though you live where I do, Merritt Island. That's not really very far from Cocoa Beach.

Sand in all the wrong places, between our toes, between the houses, on the patios, but NOT on the beach.

But! It's over! Yea! Cool weather is here. I feel as though I have "started" the semester four times now. We're back on the road, thank goodness.

Three wonderful instructors have shared a little part of their teaching corners with us this edition. Glenda, Marlene and Monica have shared some great stuff with us, make sure to check it out!

Our goal in CF TESOL is to include all of the genres of the ESOL profession in order to learn from each niche those teaching ideas we can all benefit from.

If you would like to share something with us, I'd love to hear from you. Send it to vludwig@mail.ucf.edu

I hope to see you all at our mini-conference this weekend at Seminole Community College, Oviedo. That's this Saturday, October 23 from 8:30 am to 12:30 pm. (See Page 2 for more information).

Check out our Website
www.centralfloridatesol.org

Areas of Interest:

- Adult Education
By Glenda Worley
- Workforce Education (VESOL)
To Come in Future Issues
- Grades Pre K-3
To Come in Future Issues
- Grades K-6
By Marlene Ryll
- Grades 7-12
To Come in Future Issues
- Intensive English Programs
By Monica Wiesmann-Hirchet
- English for Academic Purposes
To Come in Future Issues

Time to Read, Time to Lead

By Marlene Ryll

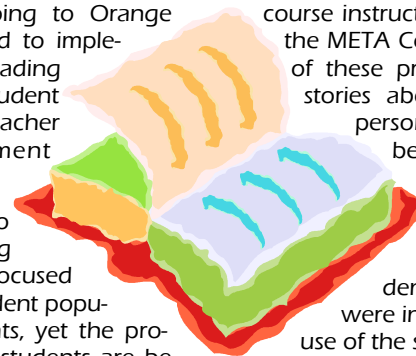
Systems thinking is what famous business guru Peter Senge talks about when he discusses quality improvement in organizations. The Florida FCAT tests this skill when it assesses "cause and effect" reasoning skills. It is this kind of thinking that teachers themselves need to implement if they want to improve their school's ratings. Teachers of Limited English Proficient (LEP) students, also known as English Language Learners (ELLs) have a tremendous opportunity to improve school ratings because their students face difficulties in learning to read English, and as a result, have become a primary target of efforts to show Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) through higher scores on standardized tests such as the FCAT. A school's ability to show AYP significantly impacts on the grading of the school, which in turn affects funding and management issues in schools and school districts.

The past 20 years paints a disheartening picture for education. There has been a continuing decrease in the IQ scores of Americans and the Department Of Education reports that 25% of all Americans are functionally illiterate. The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) indicates that the reading level of Hispanics in Florida, who comprise about 80% of all ELLs, is about half that of whites, with only 19% of them scoring at or above the "proficient" level of reading. Nationally, 85% of all Hispanics read at or below the "basic" level. And unfortunately, there has been no sig-

nificant improvement in reading skills since 1998. To address this situation, the META Consent Decree was instituted in 1990 to promote quality education for LEP students. Based on the recommendations of the National Reading Panel (NRP), President Bush instituted the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) in 2002, which promotes national standards and assessments. This year alone, Florida received \$52 million to fund reading efforts, with over \$3 million going to Orange County. Monies are used to implement "research based" reading instruction and pay for student programs as well as teacher professional development courses.

The problem is not easy to fix. The National Reading Panel's research never focused on the limited English student population or on older students, yet the programs developed for K-6 students are being used in middle and high schools. These same non-English proficient students are simultaneously often not provided with available content area textbooks specifically written with their needs in mind (ESOL texts). Research indicates that forcing LEP students to read before they can speak English well actually does them more harm than good. Students who can't pronounce English words well or who haven't yet learned enough English vocabulary, but read well in their native language are testing into remedial, phon-

ics-based reading programs specifically developed for struggling elementary readers. Phonics, a cornerstone of "research based programs", has not been proven to translate into improved spelling or reading comprehension. The end purpose, however, of all reading instruction is to improve reading comprehension. Since improving reading has become a focus in every class, some schools use intensive 'direct instruction' programs that reduce core content course instruction time in violation of the META Consent Decree. In some of these programs, students read stories about mustard jars with personalities who catch robbers for the police, stories written with the elementary population in mind; stories some of these high school students read when they were in 2nd and 3rd grade. The use of the same program materials occurs in part because there is no systematic, comparative management of products purchased for different county schools. Data is compiled to justify grant money expenditures, but seemingly little is being done to monitor individual student and program outcomes. Research on struggling secondary readers shows that what improves their abilities most is their motivation to read, which is best achieved by having quality teachers provide a variety of stimulating, reader oriented materials. Pressure is mounting on teachers to



Upcoming Mini-Conference

By Kayta Goussakova

The 3rd Annual Central Florida TESOL Mini-Conference will take place on Saturday, October 23, 2004, from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. on the Oviedo campus of the Seminole Community College.

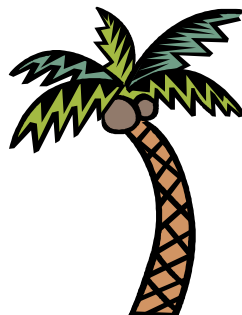
Presentations will address a variety of practical and innovative topics from which all ESOL professionals can benefit.

Door prizes include books provided by the publishers and tickets to an amusement park (courtesy of CMMS/UCF).

Come and spend the morning with your colleagues, get some new teaching ideas, and enjoy the refreshments!

Directions are available at: www.sccfl.edu/oviedo/oviedodirections.htm

Registration is free. To register email Katya Goussakova at egoussak@mail.ucf.edu



LINGUISTIC FYI

Collocations and phrasal verbs related to Hurricanes:

Hunker down
Ride the storm out
well-define eye-wall
mandatory evacuation
get the heck out of dodge
boarded up
debris fields
hurricane relief stations
pet-friendly shelters
special-needs shelters

Challenges facing Intensive English Programs (IEP)

By Monica Wiesmann-Hirchet

One of the workshops offered by NAFSA at the national conference (2004) in Baltimore was *IEP Program Management – Adapting to Current Challenges*. Stating that IEPs are facing *challenges* is putting it mildly. IEPs – once the money makers preparing internationals for academic studies – are now in danger of extinction!

The *challenge*, as you have probably guessed, is overcoming the loss of students! While Australia, New Zealand, & the United Kingdom enjoy an increasing wave of foreign students, programs in the United States are struggling to survive; some have already become extinct.

No one will deny the importance of keeping our borders safe. However, the plunging number of students entering the U.S

clearly indicates that our current policies do not portray us as an international-friendly nation. Is that the price to pay for national security? Certainly not! The inattention to international education is too high a price. Furthermore, visas issued to academic students and their families (F-1 and F-2 respectively) represent only 2.5% of the nonimmigrant population. We should focus on increasing that number.

What can we do? Become actively involved! Raise awareness - participate in online discussions, contact our representatives, respond to organization's requests for letters of support, and often disseminate the importance of international education for global understanding. Meanwhile, redesign, reevaluate, and reinvent

the IEP in order to stay afloat. Diversify course offerings; extend services to local community by providing diversity training & ESOL; have a more visible Web presence; participate in recruitment fairs. In a nutshell – be creative, brilliant, and multitasking – just like any other day in the life of an international educator.



LINGUISTIC FYI

Halloween collocations and phrasal verbs:

Haunted House · Bobbing for apples · trick-or-treat · the witching hour
Ghouls and goblins · scared to death · things that go bump in the night
Halloween costume

Culture meets the Classroom in Adult ESL

By Glenda Worley

Winter Park Tech has about 250 students 16 years old or above. They are here to learn English and find their places in the workforce. Some come during the day; other attend at night. Many make good friends and learn much beyond the English language.

At the end of the school year, our classes had a picnic at Mead Garden. Besides enjoying a delicious lunch, we met students' families and friends. It also provided a time for us to reminisce about the past school year.

Our cultural activities began in October with our Halloween party. We had a pumpkin carving contest, good food, and

prizes. In November, we celebrated Thanksgiving with a typical American Thanksgiving dinner. Students brought family and friends to the gathering. Just before the winter holidays, classes had individual parties. In March, our department invited our school and community to our International Festival. There was food, exhibits, and entertainment. Each was a great learning opportunity and a lot of fun.

One of the most helpful classroom activities we had last year was the one that used telephone-training equipment. With this, students practiced asking for directions, making appointments, etc. This was a great confidence builder.

Several students began using their English by volunteering. Two represented our department on the Student Advisory Committee. One helped in the court reporting class. Others tutored beginning students at our school. Another began English and Spanish classes in her community. Some helped with registration. Each profited from using English in a real setting.

The month of June was spent in half day of school and preparation for fall classes. We expect to continue last year's successful activities and find other that will help our students learn English and prepare for their first or a better job.

Central Florida TESOL Newsletter—A Teachers' Forum

A publication of Central Florida TESOL



If you have questions, suggestions or feedback about the newsletter or would like to submit an article for future issues please contact the editor at: cftesol2004@yahoo.com

To learn more about us visit:
www.centralfloridatesol.org

Central Florida TESOL is a chapter of the Sunshine State TESOL. Central Florida TESOL is an organization committed to the promotion of the scholarship of teaching and learning English as a second language in Central Florida and beyond. What are the advantages of membership in Central Florida TESOL? Here are just a few:

- ◆ professional opportunity
- ◆ career advancement
- ◆ biannual newsletter
- ◆ social and professional networking opportunities
- ◆ access to current professional and public issues in TESOL
- ◆ advocacy

If you would like to become a member of Central Florida TESOL, visit the membership page of the website at <http://www.centralfloridatesol.org/membership> to download a membership application.

Time to Read, Time to Lead (continued)

By Marlene Ryll

produce results since school evaluations and funding are connected to FCAT scores. In 2004, while our elementary schools fared very well, almost 50% of the Orange County high schools were rated a D or F. This however, is not very different from national trends.

Solutions are never easy, but one important factor is determining who should make decisions about how to help these students. The International Reading Association believes that "...professionals who are closest to the children must be the ones to make the decisions about what reading methods to use, and they must have the flexibility to modify those methods when they determine that particular children are not learning." It is time for teachers to stand up for their students. Exemplary teachers know to provide a variety of materials tailored to individual

student needs and interests, and which of their students can benefit from different reading instruction programs. These professionals are the most qualified to make decisions about how to teach their students. The purpose of NCLB is to guarantee that future generations become learners. We must not forget this goal in our compliance efforts. Money does not translate into better learners, good teaching does. Students learn because they have good teachers, not politically correct methods. We need to develop more teacher leaders who understand systems thinking, brain research, linguistics, and the art of learning. When teachers begin speaking out and being heard, we will have begun the process of developing the learning organizations Peter Senge talks about. The industrial age is over and there is no "one size fits all" curriculum or methodology. Although we may have standardized test-

ing, standardized instruction will only guarantee failure for everyone. Now is the time for good teachers to speak up and take action. I can't guarantee that all my students will improve their test scores enough to avert "restructuring", but I can guarantee that neither I, nor my students, nor my school, will go down without having made every effort to ensure our mutual success. I wonder who once said, "If not me, then who? If not now, then when?" If it's time to read, it's time to lead.

