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FEATURE ARTICLES: GRADUATE STUDENT SCHOLARSHIP

2005 CATESOL Graduate Student Research Award

Assessing English Learners' Language Proficiency: A Qualitative Investigation of Teachers' Interpretations of the California ELD Standards..... 7
Lorena Llosa

This study investigates teachers' use of the English Language Development (ELD) Classroom Assessment, an assessment of English proficiency used in a large urban school district in California. This classroom assessment, which consists of a checklist of the California ELD standards, is used to make high-stakes decisions about students' progress from one ELD level to the next and serves as one criterion for reclassification. Ten elementary school teachers were interviewed and asked to produce verbal protocols while scoring the ELD Classroom Assessment of two of their students. Through six examples from the data, this paper shows that teachers do not interpret the ELD standards consistently and as a result the scores they assign on the ELD Classroom Assessment to different students have different meanings. The paper concludes by discussing several factors that might affect how teachers interpret standards and the implications of these findings for the use of standards-based classroom assessments within a high-stakes accountability system.

2004 CATESOL Graduate Student Research Award

Preferences, Styles, Behavior: The Composing Processes of Four ESL Students..... 19
Karen Chen

The present study explored patterns and individual differences in the composing processes of a group of ESL students in an academic setting. Research questions included the following:

- Do students demonstrate significant individual differences in the composing process?
- Do some students at this level have a personal composing style? If so, when was it defined and how strong/rigid is it?
- How do students who have their own style manage their composing process in light of course-designated composing guidelines?

Participants were students in an ESL basic composition class. A preliminary whole-class survey was followed by interviews with a small sample of students who reported on their composing process from "zero" through the first draft. Responses showed similarities and differences in the composing process; however, differences were significant enough to be considered individualized. Thus, a one-size-fits-all approach may not serve students best in ESL composition. Implications for teaching are discussed.

Assumptions in Assessment:

The Role of the Teacher in Evaluating ESL Students..... 38

Paul McPherron

Recent “critical” research in applied linguistics has explored tensions in the classroom and made the point that nothing about language teaching is value-free, including assessment and evaluation of students (Morgan, 1998; Pennycook, 2001). Informed by this research, this article is an action research project looking into the assumptions in the author’s own assessing practices and what effects these may have on student “performance.” Specifically, the article examines differences in the backgrounds and expectations of teachers and students, teacher “appropriation” of student speaking and writing, and instances of student resistance and negotiation of accepted practices. The perspectives presented here complicate the notion of “assessment” in English as a Second Language (ESL) classrooms and lead to the development of new teaching methods that place less emphasis on overt classroom participation and incorporate multiple perspectives into the assessment and teaching of speaking and writing. The data for the study come from lessons taught during a graduate-level ESL course at a large public university in California.

Modal Verbs and International Graduate Students: A Lesson in Choices..... 55

Jason Schneider

In recent years, researchers in the TESOL field have emphasized the need to develop more sociopolitically aware approaches to English language teaching (ELT). As a result, some ESL teacher-researchers, such as Morgan (1998, 2002, 2004) and Benesch (2001), have begun demonstrating how Freirean (1970) critical pedagogy can be applied to ELT contexts. Nonetheless, despite this growing interest in the sociopolitics of language classrooms, some practical questions remain unexplored, including the potential for explicit grammar instruction in the context of critical approaches. In this paper, it is argued that explicit form focus can be successfully conjoined with critical attitudes about language and pedagogy. Specifically, through the exploration of a university-level ESL lesson, it is demonstrated how the presentation of a particular linguistic area (modals and modality) in the context of a complex, “real-life” situation can help students understand the interconnected nature of language, interpersonal power, and institutional ideology.

Native and Nonnative English-Speaking Teacher Distinctions:

From Dichotomy to Collaboration..... 67

Yumiko Boecher

The discussion on differences between native and nonnative English-speaking teachers constitutes a complex issue, involving linguistic, sociocultural, and pedagogical aspects of language teaching. The present paper seeks to uncover the myths of the native and nonnative dichotomy and make a realistic assessment of how teachers of two different backgrounds can contribute to quality teaching. It first attempts to define each category, revealing a rather blurry and artificial boundary between the native and nonnative groups. Second, the prevalence of the native speaker model in L2 education is recognized. Following that is an analysis of the pros and cons of English instruction by native and nonnative English-speaking teachers. The discussion concludes with a presentation of collaborative teaching as an innovative pedagogy that can maximize the benefits of the native and nonnative differences.

ARTICLES

Self-Efficacy Beliefs and Self-Regulated Learning Strategies in Learning English as a Second Language: Four Case Studies.....76

Chuang Wang and Stephen J. Pape

These case studies provide a description of 4 fifth-graders' self-efficacy beliefs and use of self-regulated learning strategies related to studying English as a second language. Structured interviews with the children and their parents were conducted to investigate the family context of learning English and to elicit children's self-reported self-efficacy beliefs and self-regulated learning (SRL) strategies. In addition, students' responses to two questionnaires were used to examine the participants' self-efficacy beliefs and self-regulated learning behaviors. Thick descriptions through "emic" analysis of the interviews and crosschecking indicated a relationship between self-efficacy, self-regulated learning strategies, and participants' English language proficiency. Implications for teachers are discussed. ESL teachers should incorporate explicit SRL strategy instruction to facilitate the development of strategies suitable to students' characteristics and the language- learning context. Students' self-efficacy beliefs can be enhanced through successful past experience and positive feedback with scaffolding provided by teachers and parents.

Teaching Multilingual Composition Through Literature: An Integrated Process Approach.....91

Alison Preston

Drawing on studies in first and second language composition, an argument can be made for integrating writing, reading, and critical thinking skills to promote writing competence and better ensure academic literacy for first-year multilingual student writers. This essay first presents the rationale for incorporating literature into an integrated process approach. Such an approach emphasizes the reader's response to a text combined with critical-thinking strategies and meaningful prompts for composition. Next, examples of reading and writing exercises are presented to demonstrate a possible integration of skills. Sample exercises illustrate the progression from initial exploration, through informal writing tasks, to guidelines for structured formal assignments. Encouraging students to do frequent daily writing for a variety of purposes while gaining facility with strategies for writing from texts in ways that are both personally meaningful and academically significant are important goals to help students make gains in their overall critical literacy.

Multicultural Children's Literature as a Practice to Encourage Interest in Books and Reading With English Language Learners: A Participatory Study..... 107
Kimberly A. Persiani

This article examines the multiple in-class uses of multicultural children's literature to develop interest in books and reading with English Language Learners (ELLs). Specifically, it focuses on using books to spotlight oral language development and using various types of stories to create an atmosphere for successful learning through authentic material. The article presents the design and results of an 8-week study with a group of third-graders in a San Francisco inner-city school setting, during which a series of multicultural children's books were introduced, followed by dialogue reflection on the stories, which highlighted several key factors. First, the participatory research technique is identified as a significant factor in getting these children to engage in reading for critical reflection on their own lives, thus increasing students' motivation to practice their oral language development and interest in books and reading. Additionally, the children's perceptions suggest that they had not been secluded from the realities of their own worlds. They had, from such a young perspective, a clear understanding of how the dynamics of everyday life function, often generating solutions for given situations that revealed an unexpected maturity in their thinking and experience. Using multicultural children's literature as the initial focus for dialogue helped the children move toward critical reflections on their own academic lives, viewing themselves as decision makers in their learning and empowering them with the courage to question the current mandated curriculum for English Language Learners.

CATESOL EXCHANGES

Parent and Child Activities in a Community-Based English Tutoring Program... 120
Sabrina Peck and Lia Lerner

A Community-Based English Tutoring (CBET) program at Burbank Adult School taught English as a Second Language (ESL) and tutoring skills to adults, as CBET programs are designed to do, but in a unique variation, children were included in the classes. The teachers faced major challenges in designing activities in which parents and children learned together, because of the varying developmental levels of the children and the greater proficiency of some children related to some adults. This paper describes successful activities and practices from the program.

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Andrea Toth

The most common type of pronunciation exercises found in current ESL textbooks are those that focus on the voicing variation of past tense endings, /t/ and /d/, and the voicing variation of plural nouns and third-person singular verb endings, /s/ and /z/. While these voicing variations are a reality in English, knowing about them and practicing them do not help ESL students improve their pronunciation. The following article provides both linguistic and pedagogical arguments for excluding such exercises from ESL curricula because such exercises have a tendency to confound students, who often are already overwhelmed with the quantity of information they must master in the target language, and instructors who may have minimal training in the phonology of English and in the teaching of pronunciation.

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Bette Brickman

This article describes the development of an advanced ESL composition course, a bridge course to Freshman Composition, which is delivered almost totally on-line via the WebCT course management system. The course, Composition for International Students, is offered at an urban community college that enrolls approximately 33,000 students in the Southwest United States. In addition, the efficacy of the on-line course is compared with the face-to-face method of instruction through the seven semesters the course has been offered.

Metaphors We Teach By: Transforming Stereotypes of ESL Writers..... 139

Todd Heyden

In a time of political correctness universities strive to appear inclusive and accepting, but the metaphors some professors use to characterize ESL writers suggest that less tolerant attitudes lie below the surface. I recently heard a university professor say, "Do what you can to clean up the ESLs [students] so that when they get up to me they can write a decent essay." It is no coincidence that she speaks of a time when these students get "up" to her course level. This kind of unconscious use of an exclusionary metaphor is typical in some universities where content faculty perceive of ESL students' writing issues as being outside the realm of their responsibility. Some metaphors I have heard characterize ESL writers as aberrant "outsiders" who do not belong to the academic mainstream, or as sick "patients" who are unfit for college writing. This article examines both the causes and effects of such negative metaphors, and it suggests ways that content faculty might collaborate with ESL specialists to better support second language writers. This article also proposes a more positive metaphor, one that characterizes an ESL writer's development in terms of "growth."

How to Conduct a Critical Discourse Analysis of a Text: A Guide for Teachers.... 145

Rod E. Case

In spite of the increasing emphasis on the role that racial, social class, and gender issues play in second language acquisition and ESL instructional research, little has been written on how to identify or analyze such issues in current ESL texts. This article answers that call in the literature. Drawing on examples from two popular ESL texts, this article presents a method organized around the concept of critical language awareness (CLA) for conducting a critical discourse analysis of ESL texts. Implications for practice reveal how completing a critical discourse analysis of a text can offer teachers valuable information on how to deepen instruction on issues around race, class, and gender.

Transformative Learning:

The English as a Second Language Teacher's Experience..... 156

Jessica McClinton

The central focus of this article is to emphasize the importance of transformational learning for teachers of English as a Second Language (ESL). Mezirow's (1990, 1991) theory, in which adults experience a change in perspective that disrupts their previous knowledge or beliefs, is enhanced with student and teacher stories, as well as pertinent literature on the subjects of culture shock, knowledge, communication, and critical reflection, to provide a foundation for ongoing learning and transformation in ESL teachers.

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Cheryl Boyd Zimmerman and Norbert Schmitt

While most teachers of ESOL recognize the importance of vocabulary, many are unfamiliar with vocabulary research and unsure about how to best address word-learning needs. This article presupposes that word learning is a complex task requiring more than formulaic methods. To prepare teachers to address the dynamic and often unwieldy nature of word learning, we propose several central questions designed to help teachers reflect on fundamental issues such as word selection (e.g., *Which words should be targeted?*), word knowledge (e.g., *What does it mean to know a word?*), and word teaching (e.g., *What should be included in the definition, instruction, and practice that I provide?*). Each question is followed by initial answers based on vocabulary research that teachers are encouraged to apply to their own situations. The goal is to enable teachers to apply research findings to the development of their own principled and effective approaches to vocabulary instruction.

**Demystifying the Tenure-Track Job Search:
Stories of Four NNES Professionals.....171**

Aya Matsuda, Seran Dogancay-Aktuna, Zohreh Eslami-Rasekh, and Katya Nemtchinova
Although various career options are available for graduates of teaching English to speakers of other languages (TESOL)/applied linguistics programs, the process of searching for and securing a job is often unclear. This poses a problem particularly for nonnative English speakers (NNESs), who may believe they are at a disadvantage in the job market because of their background even before they begin the search. In this article, nonnative English-speaking (NNES) authors share their personal accounts to demystify the job-search process for tenure-track positions at U.S. universities and suggest ways to make the job-search process successful. While most of the discussion specifically addresses issues that are unique to NNES job seekers, many of the lessons and suggestions gleaned from the case studies are applicable to all job seekers. The appendix provides a list of on-line and off-line job-search resources.

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