

Introduction

From the Co-Editors

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This issue of the *HPU TESL Working Paper Series* represents the best works by our MATESL Program's students in the spring and fall semesters of 2005. The collection of working papers included here are part of the process and outcome of our students' professional development as future teachers and researchers. They reflect the dynamic components of our MATESL program, with topics ranging from teaching methodology and teaching practice to sociolinguistics and assessment. Covering the genres of literature reviews, empirical studies, and lesson plans, they demonstrate our students' engagement and participation in the diverse aspects of the TESOL profession to become members of this community of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991).

The first paper, by Steven Carruthers, approaches an "old" method of teaching with a new question: Can Total Physical Response (TPR) be suitable for adult language learners? Through a balanced synthesis of descriptions about the method and the research done on its effectiveness, Carruthers arrived at a convincing affirmative answer. This paper is a good reminder that sometimes quick-and-easy labels (e.g., TPR is only for children; content-based instruction is only for adults) may conceal important values in certain approaches, and teachers need to be open-minded and critical in the evaluation and application of teaching methods.

In the paper by Grant Agawa, the interest in teaching is expressed in a focus on the learner. Agawa asked, "What does it take to build reader-based prose, and how are students introduced to this type of prose?" After examining methods to construct reader-based text, he then carried out an exploratory analysis to find out how one of these methods is presented in ESL

textbooks – the input that our learners receive. Though designed as an exploratory study, this paper provides some excellent insights about the way textbooks are written with respect to patterns of topic development as a way to achieve readability.

Continuing the thread of teaching methods, Monica Lau examined assessment techniques with portfolios. This form of alternative assessment is gaining popularity in education, and Lau provides a succinct and comprehensive review of its advantages and disadvantages. Particularly useful is her discussion of e-portfolios, which are different from traditional portfolios not only in the medium of presentation, but also the affordances (van Lier, 2000, 2003) that this medium provides, which can change the way students and teachers perform assessment.

Coming from a different component of TESOL, the next two papers, one by Ines Poblet and one by Florian Rouch, deal with two sociolinguistic topics. In her paper, Poblet traced the multiple translations of one of the oldest texts, the Bible. While Poblet went back in time with the English language, Rouch traveled in space and describes the formulation and characteristics of a variety of English, New Zealand English. These sociolinguistic papers demonstrate that a competent teacher of English as a second language needs to be knowledgeable of the history and variations of the language. This knowledge will not only help the teachers to explain the way the language works in more effective manner but also to appreciate the different varieties of English that students need to be aware of.

The two series of lesson plans prepared by Julia Cannistra and Michelle Dujka exemplify the creativity that teachers can bring to their lessons. The creativity of

Cannistra's lesson plans lies in her effective use of multimedia to present new content and language which are closely related to the students' lives. In Dujka's lessons, this creative spirit is seen in her eclectic use of various forms of printed media – materials that can be found practically everywhere in an ESL setting and are not forbiddingly rare in an EFL setting either. The beauty of these lesson plans is that they can be easily adapted to any teaching context.

Finally, we conclude this issue with a paper by Sherene Ariffin, for the reason that its topic connects to all of the preceding papers, and thus it is a nice reflection for the whole collection. In her paper, Ariffin asked, "What culture should we teach?" This is a question that should be considered in the selection of teaching methods, in examining learner's (inter)language, in discussing different varieties of English, and in lesson planning. Vassu presented a concise review of different viewpoints on the question, and arrived at a balanced approach to the teaching of culture in EFL.

As diverse as they are, these papers share one common aspect, and that is the

authors' desire to make sense of new concepts and try new ideas in second language teaching. We invite you the reader to enjoy these concepts and ideas, and take them with you on your own professional development journey.

References

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