Great Beginnings

Stephanie Ching
Chair, Hawai‘i TESOL

What a fantastic beginning for Hawai‘i TESOL! Our first meeting in September attracted a generous roomful of members who interacted with a panel of distinguished writers and publishers. It was an exciting learning experience enjoyed by all. And as for me, I actually went away with thoughts of "I think I can, I think I can--Yes, I CAN publish, too!" Kudos to Joe Robbie, Program Chair, for this excellent planning and enthusiastic effort. He has even more in store for Hawai‘i TESOL members (read his article in this issue), so come out for a lot of fun and become even more "professionally developed."

TESOL Roundtable

The TESOL Roundtable is not too far off and Chairperson Donna Prather has the arduous task of planning this conference. Her plans include looking into the possibility of inviting a national speaker and funding the related costs through a grant made available to TESOL affiliates from TESOL International. As we proceed with our conference planning we’ve added an incentive to encourage more participation and attendance to the conference from our outer-island members. Hawai‘i TESOL is offering a travel allowance in the form of round-trip airfare for three persons wishing to attend the conference. Selection will be made by the Executive Committee upon submission of application by interested members. Application requirements are (1) current membership in Hawai‘i TESOL, (2) residence on one of the outer-islands, and (3) submission of a written statement explaining how the individual addresses the goals of Hawai‘i TESOL in his/her professional environment. Send applications to Hawai‘i TESOL, P.O. Box 61068, Honolulu, HI 96839 by January 14, 1997. The stipend awardees will be notified after February 5, 1997.

Again, we’ve gotten off to a great start, and I look forward to a very exciting Hawai‘i TESOL year. Come out and support your organization! It’ll be FUN!

What’s “Happening”

Joseph Robbie
Program Chair

What’s happening, you ask? Quite a bit, I answer. Following the great success of our annual Roundtable Conference at Kansai Gaidai Hawaii College and the recent affiliation with the international TESOL organization, the coming months promise yet more in the way of professional development, networking and socializing for Hawaii’s ESL community.
But first, a report on our September 24th TESOL meeting at Tokai University.

Following a brief meeting of the Executive Committee, the focus was on the evening's main topic: "Publishing Your ESL Materials". As an audience of about 30 members gathered, an invited six-member panel of publishers and published authors took their places behind the conference table. After introducing themselves and their work, Sally La Luzerne-Oi, Candis Lee, Mark James, Rich Budnick, Benjamin Bess, and Jack O'Keefe fielded probing queries and insightful questioning from the moderator (me), and the assembled participants. All in all, it was an extremely informative two hours, and our excellent panel deserves heartfelt thanks, individually, for their contributions.

Next up, Hawai'i TESOL will sponsor a Pot Luck Dinner at Paki Hale, a wonderful location across from Kapiolani Park. This fun event will take place on Thursday, November 7, from 5:00-8:00. Watch for the upcoming flyer! This is intended to be a networking and socializing opportunity with the emphasis on having a good time and making new friends and contacts. Come on ESL'ers of Paradise - let's get together!!!

Coming up on January 21 will be our Political Action meeting at Tokai University. This is traditionally a serious and enlightening meeting, with the topic being how the ESL profession can be affected by current political issues.

Then, the highlight of the year, the Hawai'i TESOL Roundtable, will be hosted by Kansai Gaidai Hawaii College on Saturday, February 22. Donna Prather will be coordinating the event and it should be stupendous!

Finally, there has been some talk of starting a regular, informal, get-together of ESL students, teachers, staff, etc. on Friday evenings at a public location near UH for dinner, drinks and exchange of ideas, news, and friendship. This kind of thing may be rather new in the USA, but very popular in Europe. Let me know what you think.

Until next time, I wish you success with all your professional aspirations!

Mark these Hawai'i TESOL dates on your calendar

☐ Thurs., Nov. 7: Potluck at Paki Hale
☐ Jan. 21: Political Action Meeting at Tokai
☐ Feb. 22: Hawai'i TESOL Roundtable at Kansai Gaidai

Hawai'i TESOL got off to an ambitious start this year thanks to the efforts of Joe Robbie. The equally ambitious theme of our first evening affair (panel discussion) was "Publishing Your ESL Materials". Each member of the panel had significant experience and unique contributions and insights.

For those who missed this event, but are interested in this area of professional growth, there were several points made and several worthwhile references given.

In brief, important points included:

- Work with a colleague (the trend in our field is toward multiple authors, both in articles and materials development).
- Work on materials that meet a specific goal, challenge, or class that you are teaching and are knowledgeable about. Each of the panelists who had published textbooks mentioned that their materials first began as
an answer to their own needs in class. Don’t write for the world first; write for yourself.

• Do your homework before contacting a publisher. Look at their catalogs; get a feel for which ones tend to publish materials like yours. Know where your materials fit in to the larger picture (audience, marketshare, competition, etc.)

• Write or talk to representatives or editors at conferences. Establish a contact and an interest in your work before sending anything in. By the way, in our profession, editors are almost always interested in looking at new materials, and will almost always ask to see your stuff. (This ravenous appetite for new materials has its down side though. The “shelf life” of ESL texts is quite short; average: 5-6 years.)

• For textbooks, create and send in 1-2 chapters first (not the entire manuscript). Generally for textbooks, but particularly for journals, you should submit your work to only one place at a time. Disregarding this advice will surely get you blacklisted. (Editors do talk to each other -- and this is their number one pet peeve.)

• Don’t take editorial or reviewers’ comments and critiques personally. Generally, these people want to help you succeed. Use their insights professionally and you’ll end up with a product which is ultimately more marketable (we’re talking pocketbook here.)

• Be patient. The process both for articles and for textbooks can take 1-4 years depending on the “snootiness” of the journal, the size of your textbook, number of co-authors, and publisher’s schedule (yours is not the only thing they’re working on).

Below are several fairly current sources for information about publishing in our field:

*The Language Teacher* Vol. 12, No. 13


Mark James is Director of the BA TESOL Program at BYU-Hawaii and Editor of the *TESL Reporter*, an international, classroom-oriented journal for and by ESL/EFL teachers. You can also reach him via e-mail: jamesm@byuh.edu

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**Oral Journals**

**Rick Raker**
Tokai University

Are you looking for a way to expand your conversation class? If so, give oral journals a try. Oral journals are dialog journals kept by students and teachers on audio tapes. Oral journals have been in use for a while, so I’ll not take credit for the original idea here. As far as I can gather oral journals were first introduced as “Talking Journals” in an article in the “Tips for the Classroom” section of *TESOL Matters* sometime back in 1993. My experiences with oral journals however did not originate from that article, but from the necessity to develop a system where my students could
spend more time talking and I could spend more time listening and responding to them than the typical four to five hours a week our usual conversation classes allow.

Dialog journals have been a popular and effective way of improving students' written communication skills. In Peyton and Reeds' valuable book, *Dialog Journal Writing with Nonnative English Speakers: A Handbook for Teachers* (TESOL Publications, 1990), the benefits of journal writing are outlined. I have found that oral journals have many of the same benefits, except that speaking and listening are interchanged for writing and reading. Simply stated, these benefits include:

- increased opportunity for communication between students and teachers
- individualized language learning by focusing on specific speaking or listening points on the audio tape
- gained information from the students' entries which can assist in planning future conversation classes
- opportunities for students to use speaking and listening for genuine communication
- additional student opportunities for speaking and listening.

**Equipment**

Students need access to tape recorders in order to record and listen to their oral journals. Walkmans or any other type of portable tape players with recording capability are sufficient. At our college, once we had the idea routinely established in our conversation courses, we were able to request that the library have tape recorders available for check-out. This allowed all of our students to have equal access to tape recorders without requiring them to purchase equipment. The students are required to bring a blank 60-minute cassette to the first day of class.

**Procedure**

I introduce the idea of oral journals by having a short discussion about written dialog journals. Most of my students have had some experience with this form of writing, and, if they have not, they probably have had pen-pals or kept a diary at one time in their lives. In small groups I have the students discuss the benefits of this type of communication and then report their findings to the class. After that, I introduce oral journals by playing a sample entry and response to the class. The sample entry is very simple in that it is a tape recording of one of my colleagues (acting as a student) talking about his/her family.

I usually select the first assignments. They can be very simple such as, introduce yourself, talk about your family, or tell about your hometown. I ask the students to listen to my instructions on the tape and then respond. I usually set a pattern at the beginning of asking the students to turn in their tape to me on Friday, so I have the weekend to answer everybody, and then I return the tapes on Monday. The students then have the whole week to make their entries and it affords classroom time to address specific problems or questions the students might have about the assigned topic.

As the students get used to the new medium of communication, more complex assignments or topics can be tried. With many of my students I have found that their entries are so interesting and diverse that we usually begin a personal dialog about topics other than what the entire class is being assigned.
assigned. At times I have found that each student has an individualized topic and discussion on-going with me and that there is no need assignments of topics to the entire class. Another idea that has worked in my classes is student-to-student oral journals. In this situation, students give their tapes to other students in the class and begin a dialog on any topic they wish to discuss. The instructor is given the tape as usual at the end of the week for comment and to check progress. The students can also have a series of roundtable discussions on a particular topic. In this case the instructor assigns a topic and creates the first entry. The tape is passed to each student over the period of a few weeks and each student listens to the others’ entries and then gives his/her own response. When everyone has had a chance to respond, the tape can be played for the entire class and listening and discussion activities can be developed from the tape. At the end of the term I give back each student’s tape with a short final message from me on his/her conversation and listening progress.

My observations

It is best to start off slow and without pressure. The students’ entries at the beginning are usually short and often written; you can hear the paper rustling in the background. But as time goes on, the students’ entries become longer and more expressive. I’ve had students play music to me, read me their favorite children’s story, or recite poetry for me. My advice is to keep it informal, and yet personal. Let the students know that their tapes are heard by only you, unless otherwise announced. Use the audio tapes as a venue to get to know your students and for them to get to know you better. It works! You’ll find that the relationships you build through the oral journals carry over into the classroom, making your conversation class more exciting and meaningful.

Happy Miller-Retwaiuf
Saipan

Hafa adai and Aloha! Greetings from Saipan. I have been asked to share some of my initial impressions of Saipan with you.

I have been working since the beginning of August as a Reading Resource Teacher at Koblerville Elementary School. I (mostly) pull-out students in grades 1-6 two or three times a week to provide remedial reading instruction. It is my first time to teach at the elementary level, and I have found it challenging and enjoyable.

I am very fortunate in that I was placed at a very good elementary school. Unlike the two public schools in which I taught in Hawaii, all the classrooms at my school here are air-conditioned and most have computers in the room. This is in addition to a computer lab.

My colleagues are very warm and friendly. The contracts of non-resident teachers (read Filipino) were not renewed this year. So there is an unusually large number of recruits from the U.S. The majority of staff members at my school have been there less than two years, and about half would be considered local and half mainland recruits. This is the first time that there have been so many mainland recruits in the elementary schools, so many people are predicting changes to the institutional culture of the elementary schools.
You might be interested in some of the current trends. Like Hawaii, there is concern over poor reading scores on mainland-normed standardized tests like the CAT. The pendulum is swinging back towards phonics as a solution. The Board of Education recently mandated that phonics be the primary reading methodology in grades K-3. Incongruently, portfolios are being encouraged as the primary assessment method. School community based management (SCBM) and decentralization are also current buzzwords. Like Hawaii, some of the moves made in the name of decentralization actually seem to be the physical relocation of people from a central office to a school, but they continue to do the same job.

Information tends to get disseminated at the last minute, so from day to day, life is unpredictable. So far, it has been an interesting and rewarding experience.

Editor’s Note: Happy would like to keep in touch with people here in Hawai‘i. You can e-mail her at:

happy.miller-retwaiut@saipan.com

Happy, a grad from UH-Manoa in ESL, served as president for the ESL Caucus - what Hawai‘i TESOL used to be - from 1994-1996.

Book Review


Kalehua Kamakawiwoole
Hawaii Pacific University

Reading Fo’ Real is presently used at Hawaii Pacific University in the English Foundations Program. It is used by upper level reading students who are preparing to take non-ESL college courses.

If you are looking for a challenging, diverse reading text for upper level ESL students, this is a great textbook. Reading Fo’ Real is a collection of academic reading articles and short stories, compiled by the authors and other teachers at Hawaii Pacific University. It also includes a tear-out workbook section for vocabulary review.

The text is divided into four sections: college reading skills, short stories, nonfiction study units, and vocabulary building/supplementary exercises. Each article or short story is set up in a helpful, learner-friendly way. The section on college reading skills introduces second language learners to study styles and expectations of teachers in the United States. Each article consists of six sections. There are pre-reading questions, comprehension questions, and discussion questions. There is also a “useful vocabulary” section that the teacher may use to test students on words from the article. These words were chosen as words that would probably be the most useful to the student in future reading assignments. A glossary is also included for words that are not common or may not be found in a dictionary. This section of the text is an excellent overview of college life in the United States.

The short story section of the text includes stories that range from one
paragraph to ten pages in length. The content of the stories is challenging. Although it is a good view of contemporary life and the trials and tribulations that people face anywhere in the world today, some students and teachers may find the stories dark and depressing. Topics include: teen suicide, intercultural relationships, discrimination and prejudice, and many others. In spite of the somewhat dark characteristic of some of these stories, they spark good class discussions and give students a chance to share their opinions on the topics. Each story includes general questions which test the students' knowledge of literary terms (e.g. conflict, theme, setting, etc.), comprehensive comprehension and discussion questions, useful vocabulary, a glossary, and a summary section for reflection and review.

The third section, nonfiction study units, includes articles on topics such as: personal experience, social issues, ecology, and business. These articles are great for preparing students for topics they may encounter in non-ESL classes. Each article includes questions for review, and vocabulary.

The final section (number four) is a collection of various types of vocabulary building and review exercises. This section is very helpful for students to review vocabulary for quizzes and tests as well as the contents of the reading. It includes fill-in-the-blank exercises, crossword puzzles, and a section for student expression through illustrations.

Reading Fo’ Real is an excellent textbook that covers a variety of reading tasks. A student that is required to use this text should become well prepared for college level classes outside of an ESL program. There is such a wide variety of interesting articles, stories, helpful vocabulary and thought provoking exercises, that no student will be bored with the contents of this text.

Editor's note: Reading Fo’ Real was one of the texts featured at the panel discussion on Publishing Your ESL Materials.

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Get in on The Word

Now, after reading so much about publishing and how successful you can be, are you wondering where to begin? How about right here in The Word? You can start small, get high exposure, and best of all, it’s free! Here’s just a partial list of the types of articles you can submit:

- Teaching tips
- Book reviews
- News about yourself or a colleague for the new section “Mauka and Makai”
- Reports on conferences attended
- Issues surrounding foreign or second language learning and teaching
- Anecdotes from the classroom

I hope to hear from you soon for the next issue of The Word!

For the January 1997 issue of The Word

- Please submit articles by December 31, 1996. Articles can be mailed, faxed, or e-mailed to me:
  Barbara J. Cabebe, Editor
  Hawaii Pacific University - EFP
  544-1113 - office; 946-9524 - home
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