



In this Issue

On Line Resources for
ELT Professionals

ESP in the Arab World:
Thirty Years of
Impressions

IEARN : An Education
of Hope

What's Cooking in
Helsinki?

The Fulbright American
Studies Institute : a Top
Notch Program and
Experience

Jim Becker's Home Page

Calendar of Events



FUTURE EMIRATI LEADERS EXCEL IN ENGLISH IN DUBAI

Last February, third year Applied Business students welcomed RELO Bridget Gersten on a visit to Dubai Men's College. It was an eventful day for the students as Business Supervisor, Julia Saurazas, and Head of Business Department, Jonathan Wyld, presented two

of the five honors awards to students Ameer Abdulrazaq and Humaid Al Suwaidi. After the awards ceremony, students participated in a cross-cultural interview with Christine Coombe and RELO Bridget Gersten.

Continued on page 2

Editorial



It is often typical for new teachers and more experienced teachers of English to find themselves tied to the «lesson planning framework» often derived from the teacher's book. But, in many cases, experienced and motivated teachers will seek new and different techniques to teach the same material over and over again! With the course objectives in mind, both general and specific, and making use of an understanding of multiple intelligence (MI) theory, teachers should adjust their approach to suit (a) the level of learners at different stages of development and the individual differences within the class and (b) the number of students in a class, who vary in their interests and learning styles. To expand the textbook, it takes prior planning, an awareness of these learner styles, and an awareness of what the specific learning objectives are for the lesson. Above all, this will allow teachers to meet their objectives and create a relaxed, joyful atmosphere that will help them «learn how to learn».

To expand the textbook, the teacher also needs to be a

flexible and motivated individual, paying attention to why, when, and how to expand the material in the textbook. In asking «why?», the teacher should realize that this is to satisfy the needs of motivated learners. In asking «when?», teachers should look for the gaps that need to be filled. In asking «how?», there are various ways to approach this, namely engaging students by integrating what they know and what they want to know into the lesson and integrating skills through the «into, through, and beyond» phases of the lesson. For example, planning oral preparation activities, poster design activities, discussion sessions, and creative writing, all activities that reach the various «intelligences» that learners have or can develop further.

Soad Salman Al-Ansari

Supervisor General of English Language Teaching
Ministry of Education
State of Kuwait

ON LINE RESOURCES FOR ELT PROFESSIONALS

How many «free» online journals, magazines, and newsletters are there of interest to English teachers, for professional development, research, or classroom use? Are the majority of these specialized or not? Take a look here at some intriguing online journals and bookmark those that are most useful to you and your colleagues.

The English Teaching Forum: <http://exchanges.state.gov/forum/>

The Forum is a quarterly journal for teachers of English as a foreign or second language. It has been published at the English Language Programs Office in Washington, D.C. since 1963. Currently 60,000 copies of the magazine are distributed in over 100 countries. The journal features articles by well-known scholars, readers from around the world, and the Forum editors. Articles focus on the theory and practice of teaching English and include discussions of methods, techniques and ideas useful in the classroom. Thematic content varies, often focusing on various aspects of American culture, civic education, or a particular language skill or teaching approach.

Internet TESL Journal: <http://iteslj.org/>

A monthly journal for teachers of ESL, the ITESLJ includes articles, research papers, quizzes, lesson plans, classroom handouts, teaching ideas & links. This site is often rated as the best resource available for EFL/ESL teachers. Not to be missed!

TESL-EJ: Teaching English as a Second or Foreign Language Electronic Journal : <http://www-writing.berkeley.edu/TESL-EJ/>

TESL-EJ is a quarterly publication. It is fully refereed: each article undergoes a review by at least two knowledgeable scholars. Includes articles, reviews, media reviews, a Forum discussion, and an Internet column.

COLESLAW, Computerized Learning of ESL in the Arab World: <http://www.webcontexts.com/coleslaw/>

The objectives of this publication are to promote the use of CALL in the Arab world, provide a channel for CALL-related information, facilitate discussion and exchange of ideas between members, and encourage research into the contribution of CALL to ELT.

TEFL Web Journal: <http://www.teflweb-j.org>

A free, web-based forum for adult level teachers, teacher trainers and researchers worldwide. It aims to give English teaching professionals an opportunity to share their research and teaching practices with the international, academic teaching community. The TEFL Web Journal is a peer-reviewed quarterly publication that aims to help teachers improve their classroom teaching and develop professionally while generating discussion and an open exchange of information.

Language Learning & Technology Journal: <http://lt.msu.edu/>

Issued twice a year, this on-line journal features these columns: On the Net, Emerging Technologies, Announcements, and Reviews. Users are requested to register for this free subscription.

The Language Teacher Online: <http://langue.hyper.chubu.ac.jp/jalt/pub/tlt/>

This site contains excerpts from *The Language Teacher*, a monthly publication of the Japan Association for Language Teaching (JALT).

ESL Magazine Online: <http://www.eslmag.com/>

Published six times per year, this site has the full text of Christine Meloni's Networthy column with a wide range of practical tips for using the Internet and its resources in the English classroom. Some feature and all «Networthy» articles are available here.

CALL-EJ On-line: <http://www.clec.ritsumei.ac.jp/english/callejonline/index.html>

Academic articles, with past issues accessible on line. Includes a call for E-papers and reviews. Published by the University of Queensland, Australia.

Teaching with Technology Today: <http://www.uwsa.edu/olitt/>

Produced by the University of Wisconsin, there are topics related to technology and education, but not specifically related to any content area such as TEFL.

The RELO Tunis Newsletter: <http://usembassy.state.gov/tunis/www/relo.html>

This site has current and past issues of the Tunis Regional English Language Office (RELO) Newsletter with articles, contests, reports, and announcements related to ELT in North Africa and the Gulf. Copies can be delivered electronically by email by contacting gers-tenbf@pd.state.gov or downloaded from the site.

TESOL Matters «Wandering the Web»: www.tesol.edu/pubs/magz/wanweb.html

This has an interesting column by Professor Christine Meloni of George Washington University with creative ways of using the Net in class.

Do you need more? Even more online journals can be found on Dave Sperling's ESL Cafe Web Guide: Online ESL Publications—http://www.eslcafe.com/search/Online_ESL_Publications/—and the Kitaos' On-Line Resources and Journals: ELT, Linguistics, and Communication <http://tlc2.doshisha.ac.jp/users/kkitaao/online/www/journal.htm>

Future Emirati Leaders Excel in English in Dubai Continued from page 1

The HCT is a rapidly expanding system of eleven colleges in six areas of the United Arab Emirates. There is a men's and women's college in Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Al Ain, Ras Al Khaimah, and Sharjah and a women's college in Fujairah. The number of students in each college varies from about 400 in the smaller cities to 1,600 in Dubai. The student population is segregated, but the faculty is not. Men and women teach at all the colleges in the system. The HCT employs about 350 English language instructors and has a total teaching staff of over 1,000. The colleges were established in 1988 to provide technical and professional education to UAE nationals. All students at HCT are Emirati nationals who have completed their secondary high-school education or General Leaving School Certificate (GLSC). Most students come to the HCT directly after high school, but there is a significant number of mature, working students who are sponsored by their employers.

The HCT provides post-secondary vocational programs in Business, Engineering, Communications, IT, Health Sciences and Education. Programs are offered at the Certificate, Diploma, Higher Diploma and Degree level. Because of the variety and number of programs offered at the Colleges, faculty are encouraged to work as a team with colleagues teaching in other disciplines and content areas. This teamwork is reflected

in the type of assignments, projects and assessments the students are given. The language of instruction is English. Total student enrollment system-wide is currently at about 10,000 and growing. Students study English from between 10-20 hours initially. The programs use commercially-produced materials and textbooks as well as in-house produced texts and resources. The curriculum is competency-based, and the emphasis in all classes is on students «doing» as opposed to just «listening».



Students at the Dubai Men's College take a break during their English class

Interview

ESP IN THE ARAB WORLD: THIRTY YEARS OF IMPRESSIONS

With **Andy Seymour, Director of the Insessional English Support Programme (IESP)**

School of Linguistics and Applied Language Studies
University of Reading



You have been involved in ESP in the Gulf and North Africa for several years now. Tell our readers a little bit about your work there.

It is now over 30 years since I began my involvement with ELT in the Arab World. I started as an unqualified teacher in Dubai in 1970 and fairly soon moved into ESP in various Gulf countries because of the demands of companies there. After returning to the UK to gain my qualifications I worked in the University of Kuwait's Faculty of Medicine from 1978 until 1983 and then was employed for 12 years as an ELT/ESP Adviser to the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour in the Sultanate of Oman (1983-1989) and then as ESP Adviser in Higher Education in Tunisia (1989-1995). Since returning to the University of Reading in the UK I have continued to visit Arab countries and regularly attend conferences such as TESOL Arabia and Maghreb ESP.

The ESP Project in Tunisia left quite a mark on ESP there today, including 2 ESP Resource Centers in Tunis and in Sfax. What were the objectives of this project? Please give our readers some background to the project.

The Tunisia ESP Project was set up in 1983 and I became the 3rd Adviser in 1989 following on from Chris Kennedy and Eddie Richards. The objective was to improve ESP teaching in Higher Education in Tunisia through the establishment and maintenance of Resource Centres, the organisation of regular ESP seminars around Tunisia, the production of the Tunisia ESP Newsletter, and the possibility for ESP teachers to attend summer schools and to further their academic studies in ESP. During my 6 years I expanded the project outside of Tunis to cover the whole country and several ESP practitioners from around the country attended courses in the UK and some went on to specialise in ESP for their postgraduate studies. I also tried to set up a Maghrebi ESP information exchange and established the Maghreb ESP Conferences, starting in Oran, Algeria in 1992 and moving on to Sfax, Tunisia in 1995. Since my departure, Tunisian ESP practitioners organised the highly impressive 3rd conference in Carthage in 1997 and the Moroccans organised the 4th in Agadir in 2000.

In Adrian Holliday's book Appropriate Methodology and Social Context, you make reference to the sustainability of projects like the one you were involved in Tunisia. Have your insights about this changed over the years, namely the sustainability of projects once foreign aid is removed?

Throughout my time in Tunisia I was concerned with the issue of sustainability, conscious of the fact that I as a foreigner was able to do things that it would be more difficult for a national to do without attracting criticism from some quarters. We tried to establish the Resource Centres in such a way that they would be run by Tunisians for Tunisians and from about 1992 there were Tunisians actively involved in running them and long before I left it had been established that Tunisians were in charge. However, we had not fully succeeded in persuading the authorities in the UK to organise matters in a more Tunisian way nor had we persuaded the Tunisian authorities to recognise the Project as an integral part of the Tunisian Higher Education system. Projects that are heavily dependent on foreign aid do suffer from these tensions and like many other foreign advisers around the world I sometimes felt myself caught between the two. However, I was very encouraged on return visits to Tunisia in 1996 and 1997 to revisit the Tunis Resource Centre and to see it so busy and with several Tunisians working in it.

In your estimation, how has ESP developed in Arab countries in the last 10 years? What directions do you see for the future?

It is difficult and dangerous to generalize but I have seen some interesting ESP developments in various Arab countries when I have attended conferences such as TESOL Arabia and Maghreb ESP. I would like to see some kind of Arab world ESP newsletter or other publication as there is a tendency for practitioners in one country or town not to realise what is going on in another similar situation.

ELT and ESP literature often refers to the importance of context in curriculum, professional development, and training. What is your view on the communicative approach in ELT in countries where English is a second or foreign language? Are there any programs in the Arab world you're familiar with that have found a balance between the communicative approach and local contexts or traditions?

I have serious reservations about importing the communicative approach into contexts where such approaches do not form part of the education system. Local contexts and traditions must be taken into consideration. There are probably many individual teachers who try to do this but I have yet to find an official program that strikes the necessary balance. Too often such programmes import the approach lock, stock and barrel.

The RELO Tunis Newsletter is distributed in hard copy and electronically to EFL professionals in North Africa and the Arabian Gulf. Is there anything you would like to tell our readers about your experience in this part of the world?

Only that I have greatly enjoyed working in Arab countries and try to return as often as possible. In 2002 I hope to be at the TESOL Arabia conference in Abu Dhabi in March and I hope there will be a conference to attend in the Maghreb.

Do you have any ESP references or other resources to recommend to our readers, on the web in particular? Are any of your publications available on line or in another format?

I've been dipping once again into Teacher Education in LSP edited by Ron Howard and Gillian Brown (Multilingual Matters Ltd UK 1997). I am increasingly interested in LSP and how we can learn from what is going on in the teaching of languages other than English.

Until just recently, you were the IATEFL ESP SIG Newsletter Editor. Please tell our readers about what this SIG has to offer and any other professional resources for ESP teachers.

From 1998, I was the Coordinator of the IATEFL ESP SIG. In February 2002, I handed over this responsibility to Doug Bell, the ESP SIG Newsletter Editor. The aim is to encourage professional development and the exchange of ideas among ESP practitioners of all kinds throughout the ESP world. There are about 400 members. The Newsletter is published 2-3 times per year. There are events in different countries and every two years a major symposium, the next of which will be in Istanbul in September 2002. The ESP SIG website, which has useful ESP information and links with other ESP websites, can be accessed via the main IATEFL website: www.iatefl.org

Thank you, Andy, for kindly sharing your experience and views with our readers.

Readers may contact Andy Seymour at:
a.e.seymour@reading.ac.uk or visit his web page at:
<http://www.rdg.ac.uk/AcaDepts/cl/slals/seymour.htm>

IEARN : AN EDUCATION OF HOPE

By Mourad Benali, Omar Ibn Abdelaziz High School, Oujda, Morocco
IEARN Coordinator



The world is undergoing a revolution in information and communication technologies (ICT) that has momentous implications for all countries of the world. ICT has been extremely beneficial to the nations who have used it with determination and enthusiasm as part of their national strategies to accelerate development.

I firmly believe that, at the national level, government agencies, the private sector and all segments of a civil society must unite to address this challenge. As an educator, I also think that the positive and most direct impact of ICT in education is the resulting local and global community that is built around the world in order to make a difference and bridge the serious digital divide. ICT in education enables us to offer our learners and teachers a global network with available resources, curricular needs, and collaborative projects.

I am writing to share with you my modest experience in ICT in education. I have been a Moroccan high school teacher since 1991. My experience in the classroom has demonstrated to me that learning is improved when it is gained through interactions with others and cooperative work.

During an Internet surfing session to look for an educational institution which promotes ICT in education, I found the *International Education and Resource Network (iEARN)* website. After a quick tour of the site, I discovered that, finally, I had found what I had been looking for for a long time. iEARN is a non profit organisation made up of about 5,000 schools in over 95 countries. It is a community of educators and learners around the world making a difference via the use of telecommunications. It has been linking schools worldwide since 1988, enabling students and teachers to undertake collaborative projects online. iEARN educators facilitate over 100 educational projects (creative arts and writing, environment, science, math, social studies and more), utilizing 25 languages.

iEARN offers to the global community :

- * full access to all ongoing curriculum-based projects
- * A searchable online database of people and projects
- * A directory of schools around the world
- * An annual international teachers meeting and youth summit
- * Printed and online guides on how to implement project-based learning in the classroom
- * Online professional development

When I joined iEARN in 1999, I received materials and full support to start communicating with others around the world.

At my school, our first participation was in the *Laws of Life* essay project. My students wrote some essays about their own laws of life and submitted these to the online project forum, *iearn-values*. We then received many reactions to our essays and, with this, a real discussion emerged, resulting in student participation from around the world.

In July 1999, I was very lucky and had the opportunity to attend the iEARN annual meeting in Puerto Rico. This event enabled me to make new friendships, to meet my colleagues physically—not just on-line during the project collaboration—and to learn how to integrate on-line collaborative projects into the curriculum.

In my second year with iEARN, I was selected to coordinate the Laws of Life essay project work for Arabic language-speaking communities. We created on the iEARN global network an on-line Arabic language discussion forum, *iearn-arabic*. My task was to meet and assist iEARN coordinators and participants in Arabic-speaking countries. At the end of the school year, we printed essay booklets containing students' on-line interactive work, and we distributed them to the participants, the media, and the Country Coordinators. During the Laws of Life workshop at the iEARN annual conference in Beijing, China, in 2000, we presented our work, including a reading of selected essays by participating students.

Dear friends, iEARN has literally opened to me a new dimension of learning by providing an environment characterized by interactivity, mutual respect, and creative problem-solving around real issues. The creation of learning environments in which teachers and students form «learning communities» enables them to support one another while using a variety of tools. Teachers not only achieve learning objectives in the academic sense, but the projects are also designed to make a difference in their lives and in their communities. In iEARN these goals are achieved via dozens of collaborative projects happening across the network, and unlimited possibilities for creating new ones. Members may choose to join existing projects, or propose new projects ideas of their own in the on-line teacher or student lounge. Highlighted here are just a few project examples:

Faces of War: This project enables students to interview members of their families and communities about war time experience and feelings, which are then shared globally through collaborative on-line discussion, with students currently in conflict situations.

Planetary Notions: Planetary Notions (PN) is an environmental project that gives students around the world an opportunity to publish articles in an annual magazine so that they can share their views about the world's environmental health and how better to protect it. In addition to articles, Planetary Notions facilitates discussion about these issues through a forum it has set up called *iearn-environ*. The forum gathers articles on environmental subjects and promotes discussions of environmental issues.

Food for Everyone: In 1999, iEARN partnered with the National Council for Agricultural Education to provide iEARN schools the opportunity to join a pilot program to examine hunger and agricultural issues. In Year Two, the program will expand to 50 schools in 20 countries. The program uses a CD-ROM curriculum called Food For Everyone: A Teaching Resource on World Hunger and Agriculture. Developed by the Council and Bread for the World Institute, the CD-ROM includes teacher notes, printable lesson plans and publications, country briefs, a glossary, a video, an appendix, and references. The curriculum is appropriate for agriculture and social science classes.

iEARN CIVICS: *Community Voices Collaborative Solutions* is a project for English language educators. The iEARN CIVICS pro-



Participants at the Puerto Rican iEARN Conference

ject trains educators to use iEARN projects as a model for civic education and content-based English as a Second/Foreign Language (ESL/EFL) using iEARN professional development resources and methodologies. iEARN CIVICS integrates educators in the Near East, North Africa, and South Asia into iEARN projects. In June 2002, iEARN is hoping to expand the Community Voices, Collaborative Solutions (CIVICS) program into Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia. The CIVICS program provides practical, online ESL/EFL tools to English language educators to enhance their civic education and social science curricula, as well as to integrate educators from the Near East and North Africa into iEARN projects. The program's fourth year will involve the selection of pilot schools in Morocco, the formation of national curriculum development workshops, and the selection of two educators who will travel to the United States for a master trainer seminar.

Dear Friends, after this quick iEARN introduction, I would like to invite you to join us from here forward. However, I know that some of you will say:

We don't have computer lab.

We don't have Internet access .

Our school curriculum is not adapted for collaborative projects

I agree with you. There are always obstacles to overcome. But

there are many throughout the global network ready to assist you in this effort. I think that starting by taking small steps is better than doing nothing. The important step is starting. To join us, please contact your country coordinator who will help you with materials, forum access, and guide you to begin participating in the project.

A list of country coordinators is available at this address:

<http://www.iearn.org/globe/countrycoordinators.html>

In case your country is not covered by iEARN, please click on the option "join iEARN" on the iEARN home page and fill the form.

In the end—sorry! no end at this point, since I'll meet you soon in the iEARN global network—I hope that many national ICT in education initiatives will be launched without further delay to catch the «iEARN Express». iEARN is really offering an education of hope.

Readers may contact Mr. Mourad Ben Ali at benalimourad@hotmail.com. They can learn more about iEARN by visiting these URLs:

iEARN Morocco : <http://www.iearn.org/morocco>

iEARN: <http://www.iearn.org>

iEARN support: support@us.iearn.org

FEATURE ARTICLE

WRITING

WHAT'S COOKING IN HELSINKI?



Ruth Vilmi,
IWE founder

Thinking of ways to expand writing skills in the EFL classroom or running online courses? One highly acclaimed initiative is the *International Writing Exchange (IWE)*, developed by Ruth Vilmi at the Helsinki University of Technology. Ruth—named one of the Six Internet Pioneers by ESL Magazine in 2000—has kindly given readers of the RELO Newsletter some information about how to connect learners (and teachers) of English of various ages and interest with each other and the world around them.

«I'm an English lecturer at Helsinki University of Technology (HUT) and I started developing my Website in 1994 so that my students at HUT could exchange ideas with students in other countries, rather than just send an essay or two to their teacher. Many of my students at the time were studying Forest Products Technology, so I found partner classes for them in Canada, the United States and Japan, matching each student with two international students. After that chaotic experience I worked hard to develop easier methods for collaborating globally. You can read about these activities, such as the International Robot Activity, International Environmental Activity, Culture Pages, the International Writing Exchange (IWE) and more from my publications: <http://www.ruthvilmi.net/hut/Publication/>

As the IWE became the most popular activity I decided to

concentrate on that over recent years, and developed a similar course called Discuss ICT (ICT) for students from every continent. There was no funding for development at HUT, so I started my own company (Ruth Vilmi Online Ltd), which is developing a platform for my online work. In both these courses, which run continuously throughout the year, students write to each other in rounds lasting six weeks. They are given structured writing tasks with strict deadlines. Tasks including writing a personal introduction, finding a few international students to chat with, writing an article on one of a selection of articles, giving a lot of feedback to global peers, chatting about the set topics, and writing an evaluation. In the IWE, students discuss general and controversial topics, whereas the topics in the ICT are computer-related. For details about the current courses, read the handouts at:

www.ruthvilmi.net/hut/Current/iwe.html and

<http://www.ruthvilmi.net/hut/Current/ict.html>

The courses were originally planned for my own students, the 18 to 26 age group, but the ICT was started two years ago and is for students of over 16 years of age. Now, there is an IWE course for teenagers too.) Classes of students with a teacher are welcome, and so are individuals without a teacher. The registration forms are linked to my home page at www.ruthvilmi.net.

continued on page 8





THE FULBRIGHT AMERICAN STUDIES INSTITUTE : A TOP NOTCH PROGRAM AND EXPERIENCE

By Mr. Abdennour Khemiri, Ministry of Education, Beja, Tunisia

The 2001 Fulbright Summer Institute in American Studies for Secondary School Teachers was sponsored by the Fulbright Commission and the U.S. Department of State. The Institute ran from June 29-Aug 11, 2001; it was organized by the Institute for Training and Development (ITD) in Amherst, Massachusetts. The overall goal of the program was to enable participants to experience and understand American culture in its different facets and to benefit from a study tour from Massachusetts to Utah. The 30 participants came from 22 countries. Indeed, the six-week program allowed the international group to encounter, first hand, major issues in both their historical and contemporary manifestations, through classroom sessions, field trips, intensive research into specific aspects in American Studies, and direct experience with American society and culture.

The faculty who lectured and coordinated the training included university professors and professionals from a wide variety of fields. The presentations were often accompanied by discussions, debates and, in some cases, workshops, dealt with numerous topics in American studies, such as a historical overview of the development of American culture through literature, the Declaration of Independence and American Revolutionary thought, early attitudes toward nature and the environment and economic development in New England, Native American culture, art, and contemporary American youth issues.

Another feature of the program was the use of different pedagogies and pedagogical resources. This was very impressive and it made attendance motivating and enjoyable. The program was very rich and interactive: it included lectures, presentations, discussions, debates, exchange of personal experiences, workshops, site visits, guided tours, reading historical documents and period literature, visual/multimedia displays, and Internet resources. I'll never forget Professor Jeffrey Sedgwick's management of the workshops and role plays on reparations, Professor David Stanley's clarifications on the image of the West in American culture, the video viewing of aspects of racial segregation, the slide presentations on American art and how the whole audience was moved by the way three women in Salt Lake City—who are now teachers—talked about their experiences as immigrants. These are just a sampling of dozens of cultural events we enjoyed.

Each participant had to study a particular aspect or topic within the major themes of the course and produce a concrete curriculum unit or plan through research and development activities with the advice of mentors and resource people, exploring Internet web sites and profiting from orientations to public libraries and bookstores. More important than the product itself was being involved in the process of research. I worked on learners' response to cultural issues. The cultural aspect I chose was the phenomenon of illegal aliens in the United States. After finalizing our projects, each participant gave a ten-minute presentation of his or her work and answered questions. Then, we were given copies of all the projects in a project book document. We had a chance to talk to teachers and survey the Massachusetts English Language Arts Curriculum Framework. This helped us clearly see the coherent articulation from grade to grade, how the framework is based on sound research and effective practice, how easy it is for teachers to read and follow such a document, and how it aims to assist students to achieve high standards of excellence.

How will I apply what I learned in my country? In Tunisia, the inspector is involved

in a wide range of activities, including textbook writing and evaluation and curriculum design. The course, the documents I was given, the authentic materials I collected, the books I purchased, and the experience as a whole will enable me -together with my colleagues—to integrate more aspects of American culture in our textbooks. Giving learners access to universal culture through Anglophone contexts and helping them develop socio-cultural awareness in the use of English are among the goals of our Official Programmes in Tunisia, and though our textbooks try to faithfully implement the official programmes and recommendations, actual classroom practice remains below our expectations. Learners are often engaged in «study» activities which, despite their variety, are far from involving them in critical thinking and responding to the cultural subject matter embedded in the input, by exploring solutions, values, and beliefs as well as reflecting on experience.

Teachers are sometimes uncertain about what aspects of culture should be taught in the English classroom. They also complain about the time constraints, the overloaded curriculum and dense textbooks. Many teachers do not even know enough about the targeted culture. For these reasons, we should provide them with relevant cultural background information in the Teachers Guides to help them develop a clear view of the topic and the «hidden curriculum» in general.

Also, I am determined to maintain the professional and personal ties I developed as a result of the Institute for further cooperation and friendship.

In the end, I'd like to express my feelings of gratitude and thankfulness to the ITD staff for the administrative orientation, the carefully-planned and implemented schedules and courses, the logistics they provided, the great hospitality they showed and, above all, the outstanding and thoughtful responsiveness to all the participants' needs. Also, special thanks to the American Cultural Center in Tunis for this rewarding professional opportunity.

To those who will be lucky to attend courses like this in the future, I would say: take maximum advantage of your stay in the United States. The program pace is fast and requires much effort. But don't worry: Just enjoy it.

Mr. Abdennour Khemiri is a Ministry of Education English language supervisor/inspector from Beja, Tunisia. Readers may contact him by email at abdennour58@yahoo.co.uk

[Editor's note: Readers may learn more about the Fulbright program and other exchange and institutional linkage programs for faculty, researchers, teachers, and students at <http://exchanges.state.gov/education/>]



Fulbright Summer Institute Educators at a Fourth of July parade

JIM BECKER'S HOME PAGE

By Jim Becker, Professor Emeritus, University of Northern Iowa



What do teachers of English and other foreign languages have in common? Check out Jim Becker's FL web site, chock full of links to resources for teaching foreign languages. His site includes dictionaries in many languages, the «100 most popular web sites», a foreign language site of the month page, «Jim's Star Sites», links to hundreds of newspapers, and resources in English, Chinese, Russian, Spanish, Japanese—and much more! This site has numerous links related to professional development, too. The URL is: <http://www.uni.edu/becker/>

Here is a special message to RELO Newsletter readers from Dr. Jim Becker, Professor Emeritus at the University of Northern Iowa and creator of a fabulous web site for foreign language teachers:

«I have always been interested in computer assisted learning. I started with the earliest Apple computers and gradually built my way up to the latest with the G4. I have enjoyed every one of the enhancements. I remember well the early printers. I was so fascinated with the ability of the printer to put out word processing; then grades; then graphics; then e-mail; and who knows what is next.

I spent three summers at the University of Hawaii at Manoa and Michigan State University learning to be a better programmer. I really have learned lots from others who have much more talent than I do as you can easily see what they have done by simply bringing up their programming in HTML and JAVA and what I have done.

I love graphics and it shows. I enjoyed taking my French and Spanish students to the lab often. The problem was trying to tie in what I was doing in the text with what existed on the Web. Gradually I was able to incorporate computer assisted instruction that DC Heath and others were putting out with their text materials. More came later on almost every subject. I ended up being the software review editor for the Northeast Conference

Newsletter for several years. In that capacity I was able to obtain all kinds of neat materials and later CD ROM programs in every language. It was fun to see the many improvements as the years went past. Today there are many wonderful programs in CD ROM format that accompany the textbooks. TESOL/ESL also has some fine materials.

I have a close friend who got his MA in TESOL here at the University of Northern Iowa and who went back home to Argentina to start up a school where he taught EFL. He was very successful, but had little access to computer materials. The problem for me continues to be the difference in platforms... IBM and MAC. CD ROMs present few problems as they run on both, but the actual programs are quite different.

After I retired I took on the web master editorship for our state association. I served as President for two years and was also on the national executive council for ACTFL (The American Council on the Teaching Foreign Languages) for three years. I met many wonderful and very capable people during my tenure there. It is always nice to hear from friends in exotic places. Myself, I am now a Tour Group Leader for Elderhostel. If you do not know about this organization, check out: www.elderhostel.org as it a great experience for people over the age of 55 who would like to have an educational experience either nationally or internationally. There are hundreds and hundreds of programs now all over the world. Mine are primarily in France and England. I have now been a group leader on eight programs and will be in France this fall for two more: Food and Wine of Provence (my fifth one) and Food and Wine of Burgundy (my second one). Each is a different and great experience.» Thank you, Jim, for telling us about your site.

[Editor's note: Readers may contact Jim Becker at: jbecker@cju.net. Jim welcomes your additions to his page; send him your favorite URLs!]

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Be sure to check out Vance Steven's site, « Conference Metasites & Web Sites of Current and Future Conferences » for a comprehensive source of web pages referring to conferences around the globe (http://www.geocities.com/vance_stevens/conferen.htm) and Roy Cochrun's « Conference Schedules for Linguists, Translators, Interpreters and Teachers of Languages » (<http://www.royfc.com/confer.html>).

April

* 6-9. American Association of Applied Linguistics (AAAL). Annual conference, Salt Lake City, Utah. Contact AAAL, PO Box 21686, Eagan, Minnesota 55121-0686. Tel. 612-953-0805. Fax 612-431-8404. E-mail : aaaloffice@aaal.org. Web site : <http://www.aaal.org>

* 7-9. Technological Education in National Development, 2002 *Bridging the Divide: Strategies for Change*. Dubai, United Arab Emirates. Further details: <http://crm.hct.ac.ae/tend2002>

* 8-12. MATE XXII Annual Conference. **Enhancing Language Education Quality through Evaluation and IT**. Mdiq (near Tangier). Contact: abdellatif_zaki@hotmail.com. Web site : www.mate.org.ma

* 9-13. Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, Inc. (TESOL). Annual conference (including pre- and postconvention institutes, and publisher and software exhibition), Salt Lake City, Utah. Contact TESOL, 700 South Washington St., Ste. 200, Alexandria, Virginia 22314. Tel. 703-836-0774. Fax 703-836-7864. E-mail conventions@tesol.org. Web site <http://www.tesol.org/conv/index-com.html>

* 16-18. Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures, University of Bahrain. First International Conference, "Language, Literature, and Translation in the Third Millennium", Bahrain. Contact First International Conference, Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures, College of Arts, University of Bahrain, PO Box 32038, Bahrain. E-mail uobconference2002@arts.uob.bh. Web site <http://www.uob.edu.bh/conference/index.htm>

May 2002

* 3-4. Isik University. 3rd International ELT Conference, «Reassessing Assessment.» Istanbul, Turkey. Contact Burcak D. Gurkya, Vice Chair, Isik University, EFL Department, Buyukdere Cad. 80670, Maslak, Istanbul, Turkey. Tel. 212-286-2961. Fax 212-286-2971. Web site <http://www.elte2002.isikun.edu.tr>

* 25. Saudi Arabia Teachers of English (SATE) Annual Conference. « Global English : Current Trends in Teaching and Learning ». SAIS-American School, Jeddah. Sayed Hamid or Syed H. Hashimi sts108@hotmail.com; syedhash@hotmail.com

* 28-30. Damascus University. « English as a Foreign Language: Towards Better Inter-Cultural Communication ». Contact: Atiyah Swaydan, Email : esp-damasuniv@mail.sy

June 2002

* 21-23. TESOL. 2002 Academy, Orlando, Florida. Contact TESOL Education Programs, 700 South Washington Street, Suite 200, Alexandria, Virginia 22314 USA. Tel. 703-836-0774. Fax 703-836-6447. E-mail : academy@tesol.org. Web site : <http://www.tesol.org/edprg/index.html#academy>

* 24-29. Association for the Advancement of Computing in Education (AACE). World Conference on Educational Multimedia, Hypermedia & Telecommunications Conference, «ED-MEDIA.» Denver, Colorado. Proposal Deadline October 29, 2001. Web site : <http://www.aace.org/conf/edmedia>

July 2002

* 1-26. Penn State Center for Language Acquisition. Summer Institute for Applied Linguistics, State College, Pennsylvania. Contact James P. Lantolf, Director, Center for Language Acquisition, The Pennsylvania State University, 304 Sparks Building, University Park, Pennsylvania 16802. E-mail conferenceinfo1@outreach.psu.edu. Web site <http://app.outreach.psu.edu/AppliedLinguistics/>

* 12-14. TESOL. 2002 Academy, Denver, Colorado. Contact TESOL Education Programs, 700 South Washington Street, Suite 200, Alexandria, Virginia 22314 USA. Tel. 703-836-0774. Fax 703-836-6447. E-mail : academy@tesol.org. Web site : <http://www.tesol.org/edprg/index.html#academy>

August 2002

* 18-20. University of Antwerp. Tenth International CALL Conference, «CALL Professionals and the Future of CALL Research.» Antwerp, Belgium. Contact Mathea Simons, DIDASCALIA, UIA, University of Antwerp, Universiteitsplein 1, B-2610 Wilrijk, Belgium. Tel. (0)3-820 29 69. Fax (0)3-820 29 86. Web site <http://www.didascalialia>

What's Cooking in Helsinki? Continued from p. 5

Many readers might also be interested in my Language Help Pages:

<http://www.ruthvilmi.net/hut/LangHelp/>

and in particular the Science and Technology Help Page

<http://www.ruthvilmi.net/hut/EST/>

On the top of that page there is a link to my Voice Forums, where you can record and listen to voice messages.

There is a forum for students and teachers to discuss ICT at

http://www.ruthvilmi.net/hut/ict_voiceboard.html

and one for general topics related to distance learning at:

<http://www.ruthvilmi.net/hut/voiceboard>

Others might like to participate in the Culture Forum:

<http://www.writeit.to/forums/postlist.phpCat=&Board=culture1>

and the Grammar Help Forum:

<http://www.writeit.to/forums/postlist.phpCat=&Board=LANGgram>

Or they might want to try my Exercise Engine software and do some interactive exercises:

<http://www.ruthvilmi.net/hut/XE/Demo/>

All the above are free of charge but I do proofread work by email to keep the site running,

<http://www.writeit.to/services.php?main=checking/overview>

In addition, I will customize and run your dream online courses for a reasonable fee! I look forward to seeing and listening to readers of the RELO Newsletter on my site.»

[Thank you, Ruth Vilmi, for taking the time to let our readers know about your extremely interesting and useful projects]

CONTACT INFORMATION

HOW TO CONTACT THE RELO OFFICE

RELO Officer, Bridget F. Gersten, Ph.D. at: gerstenbf@pd.state.gov

American Cultural Center / Centre Culturel Américain

14, rue Yahia Ibn Omar, Mutuelleville, 1004 Tunis, Tunisia

Tel. : (216) 71 789.071 or 71 789.800 - Fax : 71 789.313

To receive a copy of this newsletter by e-mail, contact the RELO office or visit the RELO web page at :

www.usembassy.state.gov/tunis/wwwhrelo.html for past issues of all RELO Newsletters