



NYU Steinhardt

Metropolitan Center for Urban Education

New York State Spanish BETAC



RESEARCH AND PRACTICE

March 2008

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Technology and English Language Learners

by Dr. Irene C. Pompetti-Szul

During January and February of 2008, the New York State Spanish BETAC offered five technology workshops to ESL and bilingual teachers, teacher interns, and para-professionals. Two of the workshops featured language arts software products that interactively differentiate instruction based on students' responses and track student achievement as they interact with the programmed material. The other three workshops featured a collaborative, project-based use of technology through the CultureQuest project as well as a look at some of the 55,000 lesson plans and activities available to teachers on the "Thinkfinity.org" website.

Dr. Sheila Gersh, Director of the Center for School Development at City College/CUNY, explained how to conduct effective internet searches by enclosing terms in quotation marks, using the plus sign to add a word, and using Boolean search terms. She also directed participants to search engines designed especially for educators such as Dogpile, Yahoo!igans, Metacrawler, and Ixquick. One site, called Kidslick, even posts the reading levels for the available material.

Dr. Gersh's website, <http://www.schoollink.org/twin/> contains links to ESL sites, WebQuests, software tools, and technology tutorials. It also contains much more material on *CultureQuest*, a technology-rich project which enables teachers to plan inquiry- and project-based instructional units focused on a particular country of the world. Through e-Pal, students email students in the country under study. In addition, they conduct collaborative research on the history, geography, music, art, politics, economy, and customs of the country, and present this information to the class using Microsoft PowerPoint. In case a classroom only has one or two computers, Dr. Gersh advises searching "One Computer Classroom + management" for helpful hints in this situation.

Two of the workshops were held at Verizon's Technology Education Center on 125th Street in Manhattan. Participants in these two workshops were also given a first-hand illustration of the potential of using a *Smartboard* or interactive whiteboard. For example, when the *Smartboard* froze, Dr. Gersh demonstrated how easy it was to use the keyboard to remedy the problem.

Also at the two Verizon workshops, participants were introduced to Verizon's *Thinkfinity* website. This website features thousands of lesson plans in a variety of subject areas. If you go to www.thinkfinity.org and click on "Educator," and then write "Student Interactive Resources" in the search box, you will find many interactive activities for students. One that is particularly helpful is a note-taking tutorial called "Fact Fragment Frenzy." It walks students through the note-taking process using a short text and illustrating which words or ideas need to be transferred from the text to a notebook. To access this site directly, go to:

www.readwritethink.org/materials/factfrenzy/opening.html

RESEARCH AND PRACTICE (cont.)

Interactivity Seen as Key

by Mary Ann Zehr

[Mary Ann Zehr, assistant editor for *Education Week*, provides a helpful perspective on technology use with ELLs. Her article, **Interactivity Seen as Key**, published in *Digital Directions* is reprinted in part below. Be sure to note the **Eight ELL Technology Tips** at the end of the article.]

Teachers should focus on seeking out technology that encourages interactive learning by English language learners and not be preoccupied with whether the technology is designed particularly for such students, experts on the use of educational technology for students who are still mastering English say.

Most software programs designed for English language learners are little more than glorified worksheets and don't give students a chance to practice communicating in English, contends Jan Lacina, an assistant professor for curriculum and instruction for Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, or TESOL, at the University of Kansas. In a column she writes for the journal, *Childhood Education*, and in her TESOL courses, Lacina helps teachers become familiar with technology meant for all students that also works well to engage English-language learners.

At the middle school and high school levels, for instance, she recommends that teachers involve students in computer chat sessions, which tend to draw out English learners who are hesitant to speak. "If they are hooked up to a computer working on vocabulary one-on-one with the computer, they aren't talking or listening," she says. But with a chat session, the students are forced to use their language skills, she points out. Lacina also advocates the use of web quests, in which teachers ask students to complete a task or solve a problem through research on the Internet. She points teachers to an online site containing web quests already designed by teachers, called webquest.org.

In the book *Technology and Teaching English Language Learners*, published by Pearson Education Inc. in 2003, education technology experts Mary Ellen Butler-Pascoe and Karin M. Wiburg stress that teachers should use technology to help English language learners practice reading, writing, speaking, and listening, and to support content-based instruction. The book includes examples of websites that are created for all students—and also work well as sources for interactive activities with their peers who are learning English.

The authors have a more positive view than Lacina does of some of the drill-and-practice software widely used to teach English-learners reading. They write that "even traditional programs that reinforce grammar, spelling, and vocabulary learning can provide useful assistance for language learning if used as part of a communicative approach."

Barbara Gottschalk, an English-as-a-second-language teacher in Michigan, says that drill-and-practice reading programs for all students designed by Computer Curriculum Corp. and its component designed for English-language learners, called Discover English, have been invaluable for her students. Computer Curriculum was acquired by Pearson Education in 1998, and Discover English became a module embedded in Pearson's *SuccessMaker* program. Gottschalk adds that the program has been beneficial because she and a colleague, who teach English-language learners at Angus Elementary School in Sterling Heights, have taken pains to learn the ins and outs of it. "A lot of times when people say a computer program doesn't work, it's not being implemented properly," Gottschalk says. "We run reports. We share those results with the students. That's motivating for them."

While some teachers of English-language learners use software programs to teach ESL or reading, such as software by Rosetta Stone Inc. or Pearson Education, other teachers put their efforts into applying new technologies in their classrooms that are on the market for the general public. Mercedes Pichard, an ESL teacher at Cypress Lake High School in Fort Myers, Fla., participated in a workshop sponsored by Intel Corp. in which she learned how to integrate the use of hand-held computers into her teaching. Intel gave her 36 hand-held computing devices to use in teaching. She says that having access to the latest technology in school motivated her students. “Kids adore technology of any kind—the newer the better,” she remarks. “English-language learners are no different.” But Pichard contends that the biggest obstacle to her using the small computing devices and also designing lessons using the 16 computers in the back of her classroom is that her school doesn’t have enough personnel to maintain technology and Internet access.

ELL Technology Tips

Technology-enhanced programs for English-language learners work most effectively when they:

- ❖ provide interaction, communicative activities, and real audiences
- ❖ utilize task-based and problem-solving activities
- ❖ provide “sheltering techniques”—ways to make lessons easier to understand—to support language and academic development
- ❖ are student-centered and promote student autonomy
- ❖ facilitate focused development of English-language skills
- ❖ support collaborative learning
- ❖ foster understanding and appreciation of the target and native cultures
- ❖ provide appropriate feedback and assessment.

SOURCE: Technology and Teaching English Language Learners, by Mary Ellen Butler-Pascoe and Karin M. Wiburg

Mary Ann Zebr, writes about immigration and English language learner issues. Digital Directions Vol. 01, Fall, 2007, Page 29
Published: September 12, 2007

NYS TESOL 2008 Student Essay Contest

NYS TESOL is sponsoring an essay contest. The deadline is May 31. Please encourage your students to enter.

Essay Topic: What aspects of American culture do you find to be different from your culture?

Submission Guidelines: Please respond in a typed essay of 250 or fewer words.

Submit all responses to A. Sheridan, PMB 455, 333 Mamaroneck Ave, White Plains, New York, 10605 by May 31, 2008. Include on each submission the student’s name, grade, address and phone number; school’s name, address and phone number; and teacher’s name and email. Only typed essays will be accepted.

Participants: The essay contest is open to any current or former English language learner in the following categories: Students in grades 4-8, 9-12, or university. (This includes students enrolled in intensive English programs, adult education, community colleges, and graduate programs.)

Winners will have their essays published in the fall NYS TESOL conference booklet and *Idiom*, the NYS TESOL newsletter, and will also receive a gift certificate to a book store. Prizes will be awarded in each of the above-mentioned categories.

For more information about the essay contest and annual conference, visit the NYS TESOL homepage at www.nystesol.org

HOME-SCHOOL CONNECTIONS

English Classes Help Parents Be Parents

by Ben Fischer (*Cincinnati Enquirer*, Jan 2008)

Parents intent on keeping up with their children's education have a lot to digest: The school system bureaucracy, complex test-score data, standardized tests, and the basics of good homework habits. Try learning all of that without knowing the English language! It's a stumbling block encountered daily at Withrow International High School in Hyde Park, where nearly a quarter of the student body was born outside the United States.

With that in mind, the high school has launched several initiatives this winter to help non-English-speaking parents. "We realize in order for our kids to be a success, our parents have to understand what is going on here in the school," said Principal Charlene Cleveland. With the help of a two-year, \$300,000 dropout-prevention grant from the Ohio Department of Education, Withrow International teachers offer two free classes: a standard English-as-a-second-language course, and one called "family and homework" to teach foreign parents how to monitor children's assignments. The English class meets at 5 p.m. Tuesdays and Thursdays, and the homework class meets at 5 p.m. Thursdays.

Also, part of the school's parent resource center helps connect recent immigrants to various social services. The goal is to "help them be part of the team," said Cleveland. On Thursday evening, Delores Wainscott, originally from Peru, came for the families and homework class. She says her ninth-grade son, Eduardo, keeps her in the loop about school, but she needs to learn the language herself. "I have to learn this language," Wainscott said. "It's important for me." Fully immersed in the language daily, her son is ahead of her in learning English. But she's keeping up, she said.

Maria Hidalgo, a teacher who coordinates the foreign-language outreach, said parents are especially concerned with how to get their children into college, and how to pay for it. With that in mind, another part of the grant pays for credit recovery courses for students who must spend much of their first year at the school just catching up on English so they can graduate on time, Cleveland said. For more information about the parent outreach programs, call Withrow International at 513-363-9000.

Teaching Opportunity in Spain in 2008-2009

Description of the program: The Government of Spain announces the teaching opportunities program for USA and Canadian college students and teachers. Grantees will share their language and culture in elementary, secondary, and foreign language schools throughout Spain under the supervision and guidance of the classroom teacher. As teaching assistants, grantees will have a 12 hour weekly schedule. Assistants and classroom teachers may agree upon further activities and responsibilities. Teaching Assistants will also have the opportunity to learn about Spanish language and culture and use their experience upon their return to the United States or Canada, thus helping to develop cultural understanding between the citizens of Spain and those of the United States and Canada.

- ◆ Monthly allowance of € 700 after taxes (US \$1,025/Canada \$1,037; as of January 9, 2008)
- ◆ Teacher orientation course at the beginning of the school year
- ◆ Medical insurance
- ◆ Official Certificate, issued by the Regional Education Authorities

Requirements: Candidates should hold a U.S. or Canadian Passport, have an intermediate/advanced level of Spanish, be a Junior or Senior College student, or have completed a BA, BS, MA or MS.

APPLY TODAY at norteamericanos@mec.es. **DEADLINE** is **MAY 15, 2008**

CULTURAL NOTES

Drawn to [Makebeliefscomix.com](http://www.makebeliefscomix.com)

by Poonam Basu

[Makebeliefscomix.com](http://www.makebeliefscomix.com) is a website developed by Bill Zimmerman, author of *Make Beliefs: A Gift for Your Imagination*, a comic activity book that uses drawings by Tom Bloom and asks questions to which children can respond with their own drawings and writings. The website allows users to choose already drawn characters and write dialogue for their own comic strips. Users can choose from a variety of characters with different emotion options for each one, and five different color backgrounds. The website is straightforward and easy to navigate. Though the main page is available only in English, the dialogue can be written in English or Spanish. If a user is stumped for a story idea, there is also a link to basic story ideas to prompt dialogue. Teachers can also provide their own story prompts to match their lesson plans. Once a comic strip is complete, it can be printed and/or emailed. Students, children, and adults alike, can practice using new vocabulary and new phrases, polish storytelling skills, exercise their creativity, and simply have fun! As the website says, “our best educators and parents understand that playing is learning.” [Makebeliefscomix.com](http://www.makebeliefscomix.com) is an excellent resource that allows English language learners to interact with a new language in a unique and enjoyable way. Access the site at <http://www.makebeliefscomix.com/>

BOOK REVIEW

by Poonam Basu

Caribbean Connections: The Dominican Republic

Edited By: Anne Gallin, Ruth Glassner, and Jocelyn Santana, with Patricia R. Pessar

Published by Teaching for Change, 2005, 250 Pages, \$20.00

Caribbean Connections: The Dominican Republic is an excellent resource for students studying Dominican and Dominican American literature. Specifically designed for educators, *Caribbean Connections: The Dominican Republic* skillfully weaves twenty six lesson plans into a diverse collection of fiction, poetry, academic articles, essays, oral history narratives, and interviews. The book is divided into five parts which investigate the geography, history, and economy of the Dominican Republic; delve into the migration experience and the lives of Dominicans in the diaspora; examine the role of language, race, and gender in shaping Dominican-American identities; explore Haitian-Dominican relations; and finally, look at Dominican music and baseball as the root of Dominican presence on the world stage. The fiction, poetry, oral histories, and interviews bring alive the concepts and ideas discussed in the essays and articles. The lesson plans are designed to be used with one or more of the readings and are aligned with national standards for language arts, foreign languages, and social studies.

In her foreword, author Julia Alvarez eloquently describes how the book unearths the heart and soul of the Dominican and Dominican American experience. According to Alvarez, you “will discover what it means to be a Dominican immigrant, bringing to the United States of America a rich and complicated history, a set of assumptions, expectations, dreams, and fears. You will discover what it means to be a Dominican in *Nueva York* as opposed to Rhode Island or South Florida, what it means to carry another world inside you until it feels so heavy you have to go back on one of those cheap flights or call home because otherwise your heart will split from *tristeza y desesperación*.”

For more about Dominicans in New York, attend the “*Voces Dominicanas Conference*”, April 11, 2008, at the Faculty House, Columbia University. Register at voces.dominicanas@gmail.com (note the dot between voces and dominicanas!).

**Educational Theater of New York - Wings Theater: 154 Christopher Street, NY, NY
April 7 – April 12**

Hemingway's "The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber" is widely regarded as one of Hemingway's finest pieces of short fiction. Set in Africa, Francis Macomber and his wife Margot, both 35 years old, travel on a safari in search of adventure. There they confront lions, buffalo, and their own hidden desires. The story has been adapted for English language learners. To make reservations or for information call: 1-646-733-7685.

Tickets: \$10. www.etnyarts.org

NYS SPANISH BETAC ACTIVITIES

Post-Secondary Options for Immigrant Students

by Marguerite Lukes and Irene C. Pompetti-Szul, Ph.D.

The Spanish BETAC has received an increasing number of queries regarding information about college for students whose immigrant status is unresolved. To address the need for up-to-date, accurate information and guidance, the NYS Spanish, Haitian, and Asian BETACs partnered with the New York State Youth Leadership Council (<http://www.nysylc.org>) to host a workshop entitled, "Post-Secondary Options for Immigrant Students." The session was introduced by Metro Center's Executive Director, Dr. Pedro Noguera, who underscored the vital role of high school counselors as either gatekeepers or bridge-builders for immigrant students exploring their options after high school.

The co-founders of the NYS Youth Leadership Council, Walter Barrientos and Cristina Jiménez, outlined a number of ways to assist immigrant students in furthering their education after high school. Participants learned that undocumented students in New York State are eligible to attend public colleges and universities, to receive in-state tuition, and are eligible for a variety of scholarships and payment plans. They also learned about the importance of filing affidavits and residency forms and the downside of immigrant students being classified as "international students." Presenters and participants stressed that students whose parents have not attended college in the U.S. find the process of selecting, visiting, and applying to college, in addition to the tests students must take and the financial aid possibilities and guidelines, to be a maze that is quite complex to navigate. Incorrect information abounds, and students must be persistent. Counselors and teachers are key players in opening the doors to a new generation of potential college graduates.

For information on scholarships for all immigrant students regardless of status, go to: <http://maldef.org/pdf/Scholarships.pdf>

High School Model United Nations Conference

By Dr. Gail M. Slater

Dr. Gail M. Slater will be presenting "Tangible Change: Assessment of Teaching and Learning" at the Thirty-fourth Annual National High School Model United Nations (NHSMUN) Conference held in New York City in March 2008. The theme of this year's conference, "Tangible Change", aims at educating students and teachers about personally effecting change beyond the bounds of the conference.

Each year NHSMUN simulates international diplomacy in an academic conference with over 2,000 students and educators. The mandate of the Model United Nations is to educate high school delegates from around the globe about real-world solutions to some of the critical issues that threaten the political stability of our world. For more information, visit <http://www.imuna.org/nhsmun.asp>

NEW YORK STATE NEWS

NYSESLAT 2008

By Gail M. Slater, Ph.D. and Rosamaria León, Ph.D.

As we begin to prepare for the New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test (NYSESLAT), please bear in mind that there have been some changes to the test as per the memo dated February 2007 from the State Education Department: <http://www.emsc.nysed.gov/osa/nyseslat/nyseslat06-07.pdf>.

The “Repeat/Read Aloud” task, which measured pronunciation and fluency, has been phased out of the 2008 NYSESLAT. The speaking portion of the exam now includes the following: Sentence Completion, Storytelling, Picture Description, and Social Interaction. The other sections of the test remain the same as the 2007 version.

The dates for the administration of the NYSESLAT this year are as follows:

- Speaking 4/14 – 5/16/08
- Listening, Reading, and Writing 5/5 – 5/16/08.

The training materials are the same as 2007 and are available at:

<http://www.emsc.nysed.gov/osa/nyseslat/training07.htm>.

Test samplers will also remain the same as 2007 and are available at:

<http://www.emsc.nysed.gov/osa/nyseslat/sampler07.htm>.

If you have questions about NYSESLAT, please call Harcourt’s Customer Support Center between 9 a.m. and 6 p.m. at 1-800-763-2306 or send email to customersupportcenter@harcourt.com

The 2008 New York State Spanish Spelling Bee Final Competition

Registration of districts participating in the *2008 New York State Spanish Spelling Bee Final Competition* has now been completed and it is time to plan the school- and district- wide Spanish Spelling Bees to determine who will participate in the statewide final competition on May 30, 2008 in New York City.

Remember that each district can send only two students to the final competition: one student should represent grades 4/5 and another for grades 6/7. All decisions at the final competition will be made based on the revised *New York State Spanish Spelling Bee Official Guidelines and Rules* and the *Clarification Guide of the Names of Special Letters and Sounds*. Thus, we encourage you, along with your spellers, parents, teachers, and local spelling bee officials to become familiar with and use them at all local spelling bees.

(See <http://www.emsc.nysed.gov/biling/resources.shtml> or

<http://steinhardt.nyu.edu/metrocenter/SPANISHBETAC/Resources/Publications.html>)

Below is a list of important due dates. Please take note of them to ensure that your school and district will continue to be eligible to participate in the final competition:

- **March 17, 2008:** Last day to submit date of school-wide Spanish Spelling Bee to District Coordinator and NYS Spanish BETAC.
- **March 31, 2008:** Last day to conduct school-wide Spanish Spelling Bees.
- **April 14, 2008:** Last day to submit district-wide Spanish Spelling Bee to NYS Spanish BETAC.
- **April 30, 2008:** Last day to conduct district-wide Spanish Spelling Bee.
- **May 2, 2008:** Last day to submit the names of the two district winners (one student representing Grades 4/5; one student representing grades 6/7) to NYS Spanish BETAC
- **May 5, 2008:** Students and their parents/guardians need to submit the following signed forms to the District Coordinator, who will then submit the forms to the NYS Spanish BETAC:
 - Student Participation Form
 - Appearance Consent and Release Form

For more information about the NYS Spanish Spelling Bee, contact gail.slater@nyu.edu.

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PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ANNOUNCEMENTS

WORKSHOPS

March 13, 2007: Teaching the Academic Language of U.S. History Courses to ELLs. Time: 12:30 p.m. – 3:30 p.m. Free admission; registration required
To register, send an e-mail to: nyssbetac@gmail.com.
In the subject line, write “Mar. 13 Social Studies Workshop”

April 3, 2008: Science Pedagogy for Teaching English language Learners: Best Practices, Graphic Organizers, Interactive Websites. Time: 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. Free admission; registration required. To register, send an e-mail to: nyssbetac@gmail.com. In the subject line, write “Apr. 3 Science Workshop.”

March 10, April 9, April 14, and May 6-7 - NYC DOE OELL
Dual Language Planning Institute: A five-day institute.
Time: 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. To register: ProTraxx <http://pd.nycoit.org>; or
send an email to: OIgneri@schools.nyc.gov

NYC DOE OELL CONFERENCE

March 27, 2008



Dual Language Conference: “Dual Language: Your Passport to Global Citizenship” Time: 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. To register: ProTraxx
<http://pd.nycoit.org>; or send an email to: MSantos7@schools.nyc.gov

2008 Children’s and Young Adult Spanish Literature Symposium May 9, 2008



XVII Children’s and Young Adult Spanish Literature Symposium at the Cervantes Institute. Featuring authors:

Jordi Sierra i Fabra and Emma Romeu Ríaño

Time: 8:30 a.m. – 3 p.m. Free admission; registration required
NYCDOE Educators register: ProTraxx <http://pd.nycoit.org>; or send an
email to OIgneri@schools.nyc.gov .
All others please register through: 17simposiocervantes@gmail.com

NEW YORK STATE SPANISH SPELLING BEE FINAL COMPETITION Scholastic Auditorium, NYC – MAY 30, 3008

STATE AND NATIONAL CONFERENCES

NYSABE: March 14 – 16; Melville, NY www.nysabe.org

AERA: March 24 – 28; NY, NY www.aera.org

TESOL: April 2 – 5; NY, NY www.tesol.org

NYS TESOL SIG: Adult Education Spring Conference "Addressing the Needs of New York’s Diverse Adult
ESL Population” Westchester, NY April 26 <http://www.nystesol.org/sig/AdultEducation.php>

NYS TESOL: November 2-3; Crowne Plaza, White Plains, NY www.nystesol.org

ACTFL 2008: November 21-23; Orlando, FL www.actfl.org

**NEW YORK STATE SPANISH BETAC AT NYU Steinhardt METRO CENTER
SPRING 2008 SPANISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE INSTITUTE**

Each event includes:

- Presentations by authors and copies of their featured books
- Writing teaching strategies
- Certificate of participation for 5.5 of professional development hours
- Breakfast and lunch provided.
- Maximum to 75 participants; pre-registration is required – one name per registration only.

Voces Dominicanas

**Friday, April 11, 2008
8:00 am – 3:30 pm**

**Columbia University - Faculty House
Free admission; registration required.
voces.dominicanas@gmail.com**

(Please note the dot between “voces” and “dominicanas”.)

Our writers-presenters are:

Dínorah Coronado
Julio Malone
Zenaida Mendez
Jocelyn Santana

Opening Remarks by:

*Ambassador Eduardo Selman
NYC Commissioner Guillermo Linares
Pedro J. Ruiz, Coordinator, NYSED OBE
Thomas Trabat, Director, ILAS Columbia Univ.
Mary Ely Peña-Gratereaux, Publisher & Writer*

Voces de los Andes

**Friday, May 16, 2008
New York University**

**King Juan Carlos Center Auditorium
Free admission; registration required
vocesdelosandes@gmail.com
Walter Ventosilla
Eduardo Medrano
TBA**

Voces de México

Day #1-Thursday, June 5, 2008

**New York University
King Juan Carlos Center Auditorium
Free admission; registration required
vocesdemexico@gmail.com**

Code: June 5

Ricardo Chávez Castañeda
Robert Smith
Carola Suarez Orozco
Rigoberto Gonzalez

Voces de México

Day #2 -Friday, June 6, 2008

**New York University
King Juan Carlos Center Auditorium
Presenting a creative writing workshop
conducted by writer
Ricardo Chávez Castañeda
Free admission; registration required
vocesdemexico@gmail.com
Code: June 6**

**SPACE IS LIMITED
REGISTER TODAY!**

SPRING 2008 SPANISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE INSTITUTE SPONSORS

- New York State Education Department Office of Bilingual Education and Foreign Language Studies ●
- New York City Department of Education ● New York State Spanish BETAC at Metro Center of New York University ●
- Association of Latin American Students at Columbia University ● Institute of Latin American Studies Columbia University ● Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies at New York University ● Grupo Everest ● Santillana USA ●