TESOL 2013, Dallas, Texas
by Beth Ann Boyle

This year in March, two TESOL Italy representatives were sent to Dallas, Texas to attend the TESOL International Association’s International Convention and English Language Expo. The TESOL International Convention in Dallas is an extraordinary four-day event, unbelievably large and designed for a diverse audience of over 7000 educators coming from the 100+ affiliates from all over the world. The convention theme, Harmonizing Language, Heritage, and Cultures, supports the idea that diverse languages, cultures, and peoples not only can simultaneously coexist but that they represent the wealth of our world which is an integral part of our classrooms. The keynote speakers spoke on issues regarding the harmonization of diversity. For example John Hunter, a primary school teacher, gave a very inspirational talk demonstrating how fourth grade students can creatively win the “World Peace Game”.

Other keynote sessions covered topics such as human bias and prejudice, intercultural communication, and the roles that learner identity, language ownership, and meaning-making play in successful language learning. The sessions complemented each other in that their purpose was to increase participant awareness of the multifaceted issues involved in educating today’s learners well.

Besides the keynote speakers, there were many other special sessions including 21 invited speaker sessions, 24 breakfast sessions, 7 Best of the Affiliates Sessions, 7 Colloquia. There were over 100 exhibitors in the exhibition hall with an TESOL speakers population accounted for the largest percentage increase of 511 percent (1.0 million speakers) over the same timeframe.

The implementation of the Common Core State Standards at (www.corestandards.org) requires that K–12 districts and schools establish common goals and shared ownership of curriculum and instruction to successfully reach all learners, including ELLs. A single English as a second language (ESL) teacher or English language development (ELD) specialist, or an isolated, fragmented ESL/ELD program cannot adequately address the needs of ELLs. Instead, a more collaborative, inclusive approach to working with these students is essential.” The editors mention the importance of content and language integration as language instruction is critically intertwined with content attainment. Therefore, opportunities to develop teacher collaboration...
FROM THE EDITOR
by Daniela Cuccurullo

Co-operation and collaboration: learning from others.

Working with others is an important part of the teaching and learning processes, particularly in the classroom and within networks and communities of practice. In recent years, the importance of collaboration has gained increasing recognition, and workplaces have changed, requiring more team work and collaborative practice.

TESOL Italy, as a professional association, is engaged in the task of fostering active participation, promoting participative planning, and sharing collaborative practices in support of ELT: and this is something that the new issue highlights.

The different contributions help pool ideas in this direction in a variety of ways: reports from the TESOL International Convention in Dallas (Boyle, Rockensaus and Vellucci) give us the chance to learn what was learned, and news from the TESOL Italy local groups (Formia and L’Aquila) helps us virtually benefit from the workshop albeit virtually. The various suggestions from Iraldo and Morbiducci are ‘food for thought’ to share with others for reflection, review and discussion.

The focus is on how to share processes, ideas, experience, expertise and knowledge building, so that the outcome will be shared development and understanding.

Enjoy your reading.
Tesol International Convention

20-23 March 2013 Dallas, Texas

by Lina Vellucci

Educators at all levels and from all over the world attend the TESOL Convention to find a productive exchange of ideas and information and to experience what a dynamic professional community offers.

I’d just like to give here a brief account of some of the highlights for affiliate leaders at the TESOL Int’l Convention that I attended for the first time this year.

Affiliate Leaders’ Workshop

Wednesday, 20th March 2013

The purpose of this full day workshop was to illustrate

Voluntary Organizations

• The Special Nature of Voluntary Organizations
• The Association’s Value Proposition
• Issues Facing One’s Affiliate

Responsibilities, Roles & Relationships

• The Role of the Board
• The Partnership Between the Board and Staff

The Innovative Association

• Setting Strategic Directions
• Organizing Meetings

Thursday, 21 March 2013

In the morning there was an Affiliate Editor’s Workshop. Affiliates from all over the world exchanged their newsletters and other publications.

In the afternoon there was a Town Meeting. The Town Meeting is a Forum for the membership to ask questions about TESOL’s professional activities and other comments and suggestions related to current and upcoming activities. The meeting was led by the TESOL President and attended by the Board of Directors and the Executive Director.

Friday, 22nd March 2013

In the morning there was an Affiliate Assembly. New affiliates were presented at this meeting and affiliate leaders spoke about individual weaknesses, what could be improved and the importance of networking. In the evening there was the Annual Business Meeting.

This meeting was open to all attendees. The members voted on a resolution and learnt about the state of the association. The newly elected officers of TESOL were presented.

ESL Writing at the TESOL 2013

International Convention

by Melanie Rockenhaus

As language teachers we can all agree on the importance of Harmonizing Language, Heritage and Cultures, the title of the TESOL 2013 International Convention held on 20-23 March, in Dallas, Texas. Excited to attend and present, thanks to a TESOL Professional Development Travel Grant for Practicing ESL/EFL Teachers, I focused on sessions dealing with teaching writing to L2 learners. It is a pleasure to share what I learned and some of my enthusiasm with you.

Teachers can begin harmonizing language and culture even as they prepare their writing lessons. Alan Seaman gave a rousing talk, “Creating Effective Materials”, demonstrating that local photos, videos, and student realia (application forms, chats) can be used as material in class. Seaman urged teachers to assign exercises outside class and then to bring in ad hoc materials and let students communicate around these during the lessons. But is it effective when teaching writing to move from controlled activities at home to practice and then free communication in class? In his talk, “ESL Writing in a Flipped Classroom”, John Graney showed it can be. He reported moving form-focused work outside his university language class by creating a webpage where he posts YouTube videos about grammar, paragraphing, etc., alongside exercises for students who prefer more traditional learning materials. Students send him completed work to show they have dealt with this part of the content, and in class they write and discuss writing. Grammar exercises are banned from his classroom, and student attendance has soared. The classroom can be flipped like this at

(continued to p.12)
**WebWatch**  
by Esterina La Torre

April 23rd was a special day dedicated to the man regarded as *the greatest* writer in the English language “The Bard of Avon” William Shakespeare; it was, in fact, his Birthday and Death Day.

All over the world there were interesting activities and initiatives. A special one - which started in 2011 and is becoming an annual tradition - was held in New York where April 23rd has been proclaimed Shakespeare’s Birthday Sonnet Slam by the mayor: 154 readers of all ages read or recite all 154 Sonnets on stage at the Naumburg Bandshell in Central Park. The event is open to the public and free, though there are expenses for the recording of the event that will be part of the film project: “How Shakespeare Changed My Life”. You can see a sample of the event on [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fKK5-XDlPnU](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fKK5-XDlPnU). Here you can read about its origins: [http://www.ibardbooks.com/shakespearean-slam-dunk-2/](http://www.ibardbooks.com/shakespearean-slam-dunk-2/), but you can also find news about the happening on fb [https://www.facebook.com/SonnetSlam](https://www.facebook.com/SonnetSlam) or twitter [@sonnetslam](https://twitter.com/sonnetslam). Of course on the internet you will find millions of sites devoted to the great author. Almost four hundred years after Shakespeare’s death there are about 157 million pages referring to him on Google. They can be considered modern, or classic and serious but there are also curious and funny ones. [http://www.bardweb.net/](http://www.bardweb.net/) is one of the best Shakespeare’s Resource Center.

You will find links from all over the WWW to help you find information on Shakespeare. A funny and interesting section is [Ask The Bard](http://www.bardweb.net/) where you can type a question and have an answer.

On [http://shakespeare.palomar.edu/works.htm](http://shakespeare.palomar.edu/works.htm) there are links to all the collected and individual works by Shakespeare available on the Internet. There are four basic types: HTML editions, PDF versions, scanned versions and facsimile editions.

As Shakespeare is the most quoted author there is, of course, a search engine specifically for finding his lines on [http://www.rhymezone.com/shakespeare/](http://www.rhymezone.com/shakespeare/). You can also browse: Most popular lines and Comedies, Tragedies, Histories, Poetry, Help, Coined words. It is amazing to read 30 little known facts about William Shakespeare. It may sound like a gossip site but actually it reveals a series of useful information and resources: play summaries, quotations, characters, pictures, news about the Globe theatre and also a section dedicated to Shakespeare’s insults. A useful site for young learners may be [http://www.wartgames.com/themes/shakespeare/william-shakespeare.html](http://www.wartgames.com/themes/shakespeare/william-shakespeare.html) or [http://www.folger.edu/education/sfk_kids/](http://www.folger.edu/education/sfk_kids/). On these sites you will find mazes, crosswords, word searches and puzzles. The last link I can suggest is the Guardian online, where you can find a section with Shakespeare’s 10 best: it is a nice selection of 10 best Shakespeare’s characters, 10 best Othellos, 10 best Hamlets [http://www.guardian.co.uk/culture/series/the-10-best+shakespeare](http://www.guardian.co.uk/culture/series/the-10-best+shakespeare)

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**Geometric literature**  
by Filomena Savore  
TESOL Italy Formia group

On May 27th in Formia, Esterina La Torre held a workshop about “Geometric Literature” in the computer laboratory of the ITG “B. Tallini” from 3.00 p.m. to 5.00 p.m. The participants were ten, one of which enrolled to TESOL on the spot. Lina Vellucci, TESOL Italy vice-president welcomed the members of Formia TESOL Italy group and the other participants and illustrated “what is Tesol” with information about its aims and the associations and institutions which support it.

After that Ester La Torre showed us how simple geometric forms can help teachers to give a clarifying shape to abstract ideas and help students to focus their attention on the most important elements of the concepts explained. Geometric schematizations can solve several problems; for instance they can help to identify the main elements of a story, to outline a sequence of events, to compare two aspects of a problem focusing on the differences and similarities and so on. Moreover she showed us that using shapes is also a way to enhance students’ interest and participation and help them to organize their minds and work. Since our students belong to a “digital generation” this method can help arise their interest because it exploits their digital skills, too. La Torre gave us some examples applied to literature, but it was soon clear to everybody that the technique can be applied to other theoretical subjects, even to micro language technical literature. La Torre gave us a list of web sites which could help teachers to create their own geometric organizer and all the participants had the opportunity to practice what they learnt surfing the several suggested sites.

This event gave us a strong input and an enthusiastic encouragement to go on in our work as English teachers.

At the end of the meeting, on the behalf of the whole school, our Vice-Principal gave the speakers our best regards together with some presents representing the activities our school is involved in.
Why is it that translators write? I mean, that translators feel somehow urged to tell about their translations and translational experiences? Why are they so inclined, almost innerly compelled, to report about the processes, changes and outcomes that the translational act itself has caused inside them? It is true that back in the '80s André Lefevere had already defined the activity of translation as a form of “rewriting”, but that was primarily referred to the target text that the interlingual passage would inevitably generate. What I would like to emphasize here, instead, is the prolific and collateral writing production that translators have spontaneously engaged with in most recent years – at least since the Translation Studies discipline acquired the academic status of a scientific area per se - and Italy is no exception in this. I have in mind the so-to-say “metatranslational” genre which is a mixture of discourse analysis, think-aloud-protocols, textual criticism, and, above all, narrative enterprise. From what I’m able to recall, the trend was publicly started by Laura Bocci, with her book Di seconda mano whose subtitle significantly explains: Né un saggio, né un racconto sul tradurre letteratura (Rizzoli, Milano, 2004, pp. 196). Here Laura Bocci constructs a tale which starts in Berlin (“Prologo – Berlino”), continues with the typical dilemma “Tradurre o non tradurre”, then approaches the question of patronage in “L’editore”, and, after mentioning “Tradurre in arabo” and hinting at another geographical location – “A Bamberg” – entertains the reader with discourse-like, gender-oriented, and literary topics: “Il colore delle parole”, “Romantici”, “Donne tedesche”, and so on. The book comes close to an end with a chapter titled “Memories”, and, to come full circle with the initial “Prologue” set in Berlin, finishes with a final “Epilogue” in Heidelberg. As it is evident, there is a clear-cut narratological frame and a self-declared narrating intention, beyond or in addition to the translational remarks – usually expected and strictly connected to the translator’s job in itself - that the author wants to share with her readers. In other words, there is another kind of text, a brand new one, that the translator writes as a consequence of her engagement with the prior text s/he has decided to translate and restitute to an audience different from the original one. I say “restituere” on purpose, as, to put it in Lotmanian sense, the texts in the semiosphere are already all there, ready to be brought to surface by the act of translation. In such a virtuous circularity, the act of translating pre-existing texts induces the act of creating not-yet born – but ready to jump out - texts. Translation is energizing!On a similar, but different note, another example of “translator’s tale” is Franco Nasi’s La malinconia del traduttore (Medusa, Milano, 2008, pp. 106), which can be defined as a collection of short stories focused on prototypical moods affecting the translator’s mind and heart: “solitude”, “fear”, “discouragement”, but also “laughter” (there is a hilarious chapter titled “Riso” where the narration starts with a reference to the polysemous quality of the word “riso” in Italian). Finally I would like to mention the case of Susanna Basso’s Sul tradurre. Esperienze e divagazioni militanti (Bruno Mondadori Pearson Italia, Milano- Torino, 2010, pp. 166). “Tradurre è una forma di lettura, o di ascolto, ad alta intensità. […] Questo libro sul tradurre è un diario. Un manuale, una rea dei conti, una collezione di storie”, Basso claims. Just as an example, let me quote a short passage: “Sono passati molti anni da quando, studentessa, mi avventurai nella traduzione di un libro di Robert Coover sul quale oggi molto probabilmente non mi sentirei di lavorare. Si tratta della sua iperbolica raccolta di racconti postmoderni che già a partire dal titolo – Pricksongs & Descants – avrebbe dovuto farmi desistere. Invece ci provai, rimandando di mesi la fine degli studi e lavorando con entusiasmo a un compito decisamente al di sopra delle mie possibilità. // Tra quelle pagine battute a macchina con poca disinvoltura perfino in fatto di dattilografia, ritrovo più l’inizio della mia storia di traduttrice che le storie raccontate dall’autore” (op. cit., p. 143). (bold character mine).

As you can read, the story of Basso’s translation is the story of her perception of becoming a translator. The projection is total, the identification neatly overlapping, translation is indubitably a perfect form of transfert. And coincidences don’t stop here…At the moment (Saturday 18th May, 2013) the Salone Internazionale del Libro is open in Turin. Among the various events, a special section is scheduled called: “Oltre Cortina. Il traduttore racconta” where Ada Vigliani, Ljiljana Avirovič and Giussi Drago, translators, will talk about their respective works and authors. Here again, a flourishing of translators’ tales... But, believe me, it could be a never-ending story!
Co-operative project planning for the EFL class
by Anna Maria Nanni

The L’Aquila TESOL Local Group had the pleasure to have Anna Rosa Iraldo as speaker for the seminar and workshop on December 3, 2012 and January 7, 2013. The goal of the meetings was reaching improved planning ability through transparent planning, based on the assumption that if planning is done together with the people involved, it becomes transparent and the program is easier to follow. The steps of the seminars and workshop are described below.

December 3, 2012

1) Introduction
The facilitator introduced the planning method for GOPP (Goal Oriented Project Planning) a copy-left technique which has been used in the past years by several development, training and cooperation agencies—from FAO to FORMEZ. This method facilitates the definition, planning and management of group projects through a participative process. The result of GOPP is a logical framework, a matrix which structures the main features of a project and connects data, activities and expected results.

The group defined the theme of the workshop as: ELT teaching and learning in L’Aquila secondary schools.

2) The Identification workshop
   developed in different steps i.e.: a) Introduction: what do we want to achieve out of this workshop? b) Partner analysis: what is each of us giving and what is each of us taking? c) Problem analysis: which is the situation we are actually facing? d) Objective analysis: which is the situation we want to reach in the future? e) Clustering: in which area/sector our project/s will operate f) Logical framework

All the participants answered the questions:

What can I give to this project? Enthusiasm, Curiosity, An outlook of our school/students, Experience Time Motivation.

What do I expect? Making cooperative learning effective Becoming more skillful in coping with problems. Share experiences and materials. Reflecting and trying to work out everyday problems.

Problem analysis
This is the most important part of the process because it gives the picture of how things are in reality. It is important that problems be worded in concrete negative terms.

A problem is: a) a present negative situation, real, based on facts, not on opinions; b) objective, based on facts that can be proved; c) representing negative conditions; d) clear and understandable; e) specific, concerning precise aspects and elements (people, places, time, etc.)

The more tangible and concrete the formulation of the problem, the better the project.

The group went through the different steps in problem analysis. After the formulation of the problems and a phase of “check for understanding” a Problem Tree was built. The facilitator highlighted that the Problem Tree is important in this kind of planning process because: a) it gives a shared vision and a description of reality; b) it shows where we want to arrive; c) it implies cognitive sharing, taking on responsibility, shifting point of view.

The group identified the following problems in the schools of L’Aquila:

- Not enough classrooms available
- Inadequate equipment
- Little funding for equipment
- Not enough opportunities for communication
- Teachers are bound to the syllabus
- Not enough time to prepare and do extra activities
- Evaluation tests are time consuming
- Too many students in a class
- The institutions don’t invest enough in languages
- There are different levels of competence in a class
- Many students fail
- School hours have been reduced
- Students prefer extra syllabus activities
- The pace of teaching is not adequate
- Students do not read
- Poor school equipment and facilities supporting oral skills

January 7, 2013

1. Problem Tree
The analysis of the problems led to the creation of a Problem Tree, i.e. “a diagrammatic representation of a negative situation, showing a cause-effect relationship” to be read from bottom to top. (see Attachment 1). The core problem was: many students fail.
2. Objective Tree
The hierarchy of problems was translated into a hierarchy of objectives and these objectives were then analyzed (objective tree). All the problems were rephrased as objectives from top to bottom. The wording of the problem formulation, a negative state, was transformed into a positive, forward looking state and the main objectives were formulated, the main objective being: more students succeed (see Attachment 2).

3. Clustering
The objectives were clustered in areas in order to define the activities the group should carry out in order to reach the main objective, i.e. fewer students fail.

One area (concerning funding by the state - in yellow in attachment 2) was considered outside the possible actions of the group. This kind of condition is called “assumption” i.e. “an external factor which could affect the progress or success of the project, but over which the group has no direct control”. Even though the main problems seemed to be the overcrowded classes and the lack of equipment, these were considered assumptions. In order to face and to bear upon reality it was suggested that the efforts of the group should be directed to find ways of dealing with untracked classes.

4. Activities
The group very briefly discussed the kind of activities teachers might devise in order to reach the objectives. The following activities were hinted at. Expected results are outlined in the logical framework grid (attachment 3) that was not completed but just sketched.

The activities suggested for teachers were:
- Read and discuss articles on untracked classes (see websites and references attached);
- Record activities done in class in order to discover useful repeatable and transferable features;
- Discuss activities with colleagues;
- Create checklist of “can do” (CEF) on syllabus materials;
- Create a checklist of “can do” on extra syllabus materials.

The rational was the following: if the teacher is aware of the different kinds and levels of competence requested for classroom activities, she can keep record, exchange them with colleagues, repeat them, create an individual and common store, thus saving time and tailoring the same activity or text to the individual needs and abilities of the students both for teaching and for evaluation purposes.

5) Features of participatory planning
- The workshop ended with few observations on principles in Gopp as participation, i.e. combining the knowledge of all participants in order to devise relevant interventions, transparency, clear definition of concepts, logical relationships, on the function of techniques as parroting and visualization and on interpersonal skills such as active listening.

Attachment 1 Problem tree to be read from bottom to top

![Problem Tree Diagram]

- MANY STUDENTS FAIL
  - TS OF SC. MEDIA DON’T KNOW WHAT TS OF HIGH SCHOOL EXPECT
  - SS (AND TEACHERS) HAVE NOT ENOUGH TIME FOR ORAL INTERACTION
  - TS HAVEN’T TIME TO COPE WITH THE PROBLEMS OF EACH STUDENT
  - MANY Ss GET BORED EASILY
  - TOO MANY Ss IN A CLASS
  - INADEQUATE EQUIPMENT
  - NOT ENOUGH ROOMS
  - SCHOOL HOURS HAVE BEEN REDUCED
  - Ss HAVE SHORTER AND SHORTER ATTENTION SPAN
  - Ss DO NOT READ
  - TS ARE CONSTRAINED BY THE SYLLABUS
  - INSTITUTIONS DON’T INVEST ENOUGH IN LANGUAGES
**Attachment 3 Logical framework**

**OVERALL OBJECTIVE**
Why the project is important in terms of longer terms benefits

- participants involved in influencing the programme at the planning stage

**PROJECT PURPOSE**
The central purpose of the

- fewer students fail
- Ss more interested in class work

**RESULTS**
The product of the activities undertaken

- S’s world is brought into the classroom
- Features of activities fit for different levels are found
- Transferable formats are created
- Literature is demistified
- Syllabus is demistified
- Ss are involved in decision taking

**ACTIVITIES**
Actions and means to be taken/ provided in order to produce the results

- **Teachers**: Read and discuss articles on untracked classes (see websites and references attached). Record activities done in class in order to discover useful repeatable and transferable features.
  
  Discuss activities with colleagues.
  
  Create checklist of “can do” (CEF) on syllabus materials.
  
  Create a checklist of “can do” on extra syllabus materials.

  **Rationale**: if the teacher is aware of the different kinds and levels of competence requested for classroom activities, she can keep record, exchange them with colleagues, repeat them, create an individual and common store, thus saving time and tailoring the same activity or text to the individual needs and abilities of the students both for teaching and for evaluation purposes.

- **Students**: Keep a log of classes activities.
  
  Keep record of T’s questions and waiting time.

  **Rationale**: working for a real purpose and keeping control builds self confidence. Each student can be more or less articulated when keeping a log.
5) A few observations on techniques and principles in GOPP

FEATURES OF PARTICIPATORY PLANNING

• **Participation:** combining the knowledge of all participants in order to devise relevant interventions

• **Transparency:** the plan becomes a *contract* between the parties

• **Clear definition of concepts:** participants are stimulated to be specific; they are asked to become more specific about what they know and mean

• **Logical relationships**

  The establishment of logical relationships creates *confidence* in the product of the planning session and a high degree of *ownership* of the plan because each participant is able to recognize his own image in the product

TECHNIQUES

• **Parroting**

  teacher/facilitator repeats utterances in *correct form:* the stress is on communication not on error

• **Visualization**

  1) has a recording function: every contribution is recorded, which creates *transparency* and *visual progress* of the process

  2) gives *equal weight* to the contributions (because they are anonymous)

  3) increases the *analytical power* of the brain as analysis is linked to the visual part of the brain

  4) makes the process facilitatable. Cards permit to focus the discussion *on one issue at a time.*

INTERPERSONAL SKILLS

• **Active Listening**

  Listen to what the other person says while suspending one’s own thinking

  Respond with supportive, usually non verbal expressions or gestures

  Summarize briefly and objectively what they have said: use their own words.

  Use summary to help to structure thinking and wording

  Check if this is actually what they meant

• **Use of questions**

  Ask questions to help the other person in their thinking

  *Closed questions:* useful in conjunction with summaries to check some facts

  *Open questions:* let the other person explain their ideas, knowledge, perceptions

• **Giving effective feedback and avoiding destructive criticism**

  • effective feedback is: while destructive criticism is:

    | Specific | General |
    | Describes behaviour | Describes character |
    | Requested by receiver | Imposed by giver |
    | Future oriented | Past oriented |
    | Based on future potential for change | Based on value judgement and bl |
    | Addresses the needs of the receiver | Addresses the needs of the giver |
6) Final remark
All the activities the group will organize through the year, however diverse they may be, should tend to the achievement of the objective identified i.e.: how can each of the issue the group will come across be turned into a step forward towards dealing successfully with mixed abilities classes.

WEBSITES

http://db.formez.it/guideutili.nsf/1bac62e165abd03cc12570bd002a765b/a31f3d13f24d0349c12570bc0036d103?OpenDocument Le Tecniche Tradizionali: il metodo GOPP – Goal Oriented Project Planning e il PCM – Project Cycle Management

http://www.dors.it/pag.php?dcm=4493 La tecnica “Goal Oriented Project Planning”regione Piemonte
http://egov.formez.it/files/progettazioneGOPP.pdf La progettazione integrata con il metodo GOPP Goal Oriented Project Planning di Federico Bussi

http://www.tesol-france.org/Colloquium09/Ur_Workshop_Handouts.pdf
http://www.particip.com
http://eltj.oxfordjournals.org/Teaching heterogeneous classes

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- Sarah Warshauer Freedman, Verda Delp, Suzanne Mills Crawford (University of California, Berkeley) Teaching English in Untracked Classrooms in Research in the Teaching of English Volume 40, Number 1, August 2005

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PERSPECTIVES
The “food for thought” article on collaboration in this issue and the experience of L’Aquila group on participative planning argue the value of collaborative practices in support of ELT and their implications for pedagogy and teacher education.

The only instance of some form of collaborative support I found in my old Poliglotta collection of the year 1903 is the following “corrispondenza” column in the May issue.

I wish I knew if and how it worked out.
Food for thought
by Franca Ricci Stephenson
(continued from p.1)

any moment, and it was exhilarating to see some of these students in class. In her talk about “Learning to Paraphrase”, Qian Du advocated having students discuss what they understand paraphrasing to be and so lead them to appreciate its purpose and advantages. Students should then practice this skill repeatedly in class, not at home alone. Moreover, Du claimed that allowing L2 writers to compare difficult skills such as sentence construction and paragraphing between English and their L1 gives them an even greater sense of control. Katherine Evans came to a similar conclusion in her study “L1 Use During L2 Writing”; she reassured teachers that the use of L1 for understanding can be quite useful, whereas students soon realize that discussing and practicing skills in English during class is the most effective path to improving their writing.

Feedback remains a key issue for all writing instruction, and based on his study about “Writing Instruction and Transfer of Learning”, Mark Andrew James reported that students learn from teacher feedback, and manage to transfer it to their English-language writing, if teachers’ comments are considered relevant and fair. It was encouraging to think how only a few hours before Paul Kei Matsuda and four other well-known writing experts had dealt with this same issue in their lively presentation “Writing Assessment Rubrics”. They pointed out that since rubrics can ensure fairness and uniformity, their use renders feedback more objective and consistent over time and among students, and they urged teachers to use rubrics in giving feedback to students on their writing.

In short, all presenters I had the privilege of listening to agreed that teachers can make a big difference before, during and after class. The final plenary speaker, Bonny Norton, emphasized this in her speech “Identity and Language Learning”, quoting one of her Ugandan students who had said: “When you communicate, you think your own English”. By using original materials, flipping some of the content to outside of the classroom while allowing time in class for students to discuss / practice what they are learning, and striving to give impartial feedback, we can help our students think their own English, to harmonize their language(s), in all their spoken and written communication.
REQUISITI PER IL RICONOSCIMENTO

Si raccomanda a tutti i colleghi impegnati o che intendono impegnarsi nella costituzione di un gruppo provinciale TESOL-Italy di inviare all’Executive Committee la seguente documentazione:

1. Elenco nominativo degli iscritti (minimo cinque), con allegata fotocopia della ricevuta del relativo versamento sul c/c postale n. 15774003 intestato ad Associazione TESOL-Italy, Via Boncompagni 2, 00187 ROMA.
2. Verbale dell’assemblea costitutiva del gruppo da cui risultino l’elezione e il nome di un Coordinatore.
3. Programma delle attività che il gruppo intende svolgere nel corso dell’anno scolastico.
4. L’Executive Committee, preso atto della documentazione prodotta dal gruppo, si riunisce per deliberarne il riconoscimento ed invia successivamente il testo della delibera al Coordinatore.

Il Coordinatore del gruppo TESOL-Italy rappresenta a tutti gli effetti l’Associazione nell’ambito della provincia in cui il gruppo svolge la sua attività ed è tenuto a presentare una relazione annuale in sede di National Committee.

Le colleghe incaricate dall’Executive Committee del coordinamento nazionale dei gruppi sono Simonetta Romano (e-mail: simonetta.romano@infinito.it– tel. 06/6390532) e Maria Grazia Maglione (e-mail: mg.maglione@libero.it).

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