Religion in the Public Schools: A New Series

Robert Courchêne
Contact, Editorial Committee

Introduction

With this issue, we begin a new series in *Contact* focusing on religion and education with specific reference to the school system. Our aim in initiating this series is threefold:

1) to present the main tenants of the major religions in Canada. While we often talk about Catholicism, Judaism, Sikhism, Islam, Buddhism, etc., much of the public is poorly informed about the basic tenants of these faiths,

2) to describe the consequences of being a member of one of these faiths on students' behaviour in the classroom and to determine what information teachers should have to allow them to better meet the needs of such students, and

3) to stake out the position of these religions on religion-in-school issues (see below).

Our purpose in initiating this new series is to inform. We are not interested in promoting any specific faith but rather in offering an opportunity for each faith to expose its fundamental beliefs and clearly indicate its position on different issues related to religion in the schools. For each of the major faiths, bearing in mind that there are divisions within them, and consensus on all beliefs will be impossible to attain, we will consult with suggested representatives. In addition, we will do our own research to supplement what we have obtained through the personal interview process. In each case, the representatives will be asked to address the three points mentioned above.

Setting the context

From the beginning of our existence as a country, religion and education have been closely entwined even

Inside

From the Editor

In this issue, we are happy to introduce a new series on the role of religion in schools. In our lead story, Bob Courchêne outlines the rationale for this focus. In each issue, we will present a primer on a different faith and interview members of the community to get their opinion on the extent they feel that schools should accommodate religion.

The first is Hinduism – a religion I have been intrigued with and confused by throughout my travels because of its diverse branches. While staying with a Brahmin (highest caste) family in India's Thar Desert, I was prohibited from eating with the family or setting foot in their kitchen. If I could not eat all of the food I was served, it was fed to the cows or beggars wandering the streets. I felt like an outcast (which I literally was) – so different from the acceptance I had felt in other countries (especially parts of Africa, where locals share a plate with guests).

In caste-less Bali, I experienced Hindu-'lite' – an interesting blend of Asian and Hindu traditions and a true anomaly in the middle of the world's most populous Muslim nation, Indonesia. Then, on the Hawaiian island of Kauai, I came across the largest Shaivite Hindu stone temple in the Western Hemisphere. Here, the majority of monks and worshippers were not Hindu-born but had converted (possible only in this branch of Hinduism). All but two of the monks living at the monastery were White and from the U.S. I was invited to participate in a puja ceremony – an invitation I had never been extended in four months of travel in Nepal and India.

This is the first issue for our Assistant Editor, Heather Saunders. Heather has experience in journalism and TESL, but most importantly, an interest in issues affecting our profession. I would also like to point out the enormous help our editorial committee offers *gratuit.* Despite the fact that Bob Courchêne is no longer on the TESL Ontario Board, he generously continues to contribute to *Contact* with impressive frequency and lightning-speed turnaround time, his excellent editorial skills. Jacqueline Jeffers is our ace grammarian/fact checker and is also very good with a deadline.

Also in this issue we present two academic papers. The first is on Information Communication Technology in ESL & EFL by Leslie Sheldon and Jean Compain. The second explores Variability in second language writing by OISE doctoral candidate, Ali Zhou. In another installment in his ESL and the Electronic Age series, regular contributor, John Allan offers an alternative to costly software upgrades. We are also happy to include the speech Elizabeth Coelho delivered at last year's TESL Canada conference in accepting its Lifetime Achievement Award.

In our last Conference Proceedings issue of *Contact,* Elaine Gardiner was inadvertently omitted as one of the presenters of the Teacher-Oriented Evaluation Criteria. We apologize for this omission.

I would also like to announce that with the exception of our May Special Research Symposium issue, this will be the last hard copy of *Contact* you will receive by snail mail. Much to the delight of forests, letter carriers and the more techno-savvy among us, *Contact* will be made available to members on the TESL Ontario Website. The first on-line issue will be available July 2003.

Brigid Kelso
Contact Editor

though they are treated as separate in the British North America Act. Under the specifications of the act,

"Common schools in Upper and Lower Canada would cater to the creed of the majority. Minority rights for Protestants (in Québec) and Catholics in Ontario were also enshrined."

The influence of these two religions, along with Judaism, has been of critical importance in shaping the philosophy of education, the content of the curriculum, the organization of the school year, the hiring of personnel – Eurocentric focus of the curriculum, prayer in the schools, observance of Christian holy days, moral values, etc. It is generally recognized that our constitution, laws and charters have been significantly influenced by Judeo-Christian values.[1] The importance of religion was reiterated more recently in the Preamble to Canada's *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, which states "Canada is founded upon principles that recognize the supremacy of God and the rule of law." B.C. Member of Parliament Svend Robinson's motion to substitute "intellectual freedom" for the "supremacy of God" in this Preamble, was strongly rejected in the House of Commons. The entwining of sacred and secular was similarly challenged when the government rejected the recommendation by a joint federal-provincial task force that courtroom witnesses no longer be required to swear on the Bible – "to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God".

This insistence on retaining such references to God runs counter to the importance of mainstream religions in the lives of many Canadians (although there has been a recent resurgence in church attendance). As Fleras and Elliot (2002) point out, according to Census figures "Canada is less religious than it used to be, but at the same time far more religiously complex" (p. 213). In the schools, these different attitudes regarding religion are played out in an odd way. On the one hand, some want the desecularizing of public schools, e.g. banning all religious symbols and ceremonies such as the cross on Remembrance Day, Christmas pageants, the Lord's Prayer, while others demand holding prayer meetings on school property during the school day. For example, many schools in urban areas with a significant number of Muslim[2] students are now providing them with a room for Friday-noon prayer. Some advocates of religious rights have requested (and been granted) that the school timetable accommodate the changing Friday prayer time. In a decision by the Ontario Court of Appeal, practising Sikhs have been given permission to wear the kirpan, their ceremonial dagger, to school provided that it is covered by an exterior garment and that they inform school authorities.

Many Canadians are disturbed by these developments. They believe that public schools should not promote any type of religion (even though in times past they did not protest the underlying Christian framework). The whole idea of public schools was to create a public space in which no specific religion would be taught or promoted. Alternatively, those who request time and space for prayer in schools see this as one of their rights under the Charter. They maintain that if it can be done within school time and in accordance with the school's operating framework, there can be no logical objection to such a request. They do not see it as a violation of the separation of church and state. It should be mentioned that in a number of religions there is no separation between these two spheres; religion guides all human activities.

In addition to requesting time and space for prayer, various groups are asking that their children be exempt from going to class when topics that directly oppose their religious beliefs (e.g., birth control in health education, scientific theories of creation) are being discussed or from attending specific types of activities (co-ed classes, Halloween and Valentine's Day parties). Should such exemptions be allowed? What are the limits to which one must go to respect religious diversity within public schools? Does every group have a right to be heard? What about the secular humanists, the agnostics and atheists, many of whom maintain that no religious activity be allowed on school property during school hours? What do we do when faced with such questions?

While the Ontario Ministry of Education, in its *Policy/Program Memo No. 112* in 1990, does not answer these specific questions, it has proposed a number of guidelines in teaching religion in its public schools:

1) the school may sponsor the study of religion, but not the practice of religion,

2) the school may expose students to all religious views without endorsing a particular one,

3) the school's approach to religion is one of instruction, not one of indoctrination,

4) the school's function is to educate about all religions, not to convert to any one religion,

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5) the school's approach is academic, not devotional,

6) the school should study what all people believe, but not what a student should believe, and

7) the school should strive for student awareness of all religions, not an acceptance of any one.

As we present articles on the major faiths in the upcoming issues of *Contact*, we will keep the above guidelines in mind.

We certainly hope that you enjoy this new series and that it will provide you with a framework for better understanding the beliefs and actions of your students.

References

Fleras, Augie & Elliot, Jean (2002). *Engaging Diversity: Multiculturalism in Canada (Second Edition)*. Nelson Thomson Learning: Toronto.

1 It is more than somewhat ironic that these same Christian values were also used as the basis for racist attitudes and actions toward Aboriginals, as well as Asian and Black immigrants to Canada.

2 By citing examples relating to students who are followers of Islam, I want to make it clear that I do not mean to single them out as a group making irrational and unacceptable demands.

Kali.

A Sadhu (holy man).

The 3 horizontal markings across this monk's forehead distinguish him as a follower of Shaivite Hinduism.

Hinduism

It is estimated that about a billion people around the globe practise Hinduism, the majority in India and Nepal, with other majority populations on the islands of Fiji, Mauritius and Bali (although Balinese Hinduism incorporates many traditions unique to that Indonesian island). It is the predominant religion in Asia and the third largest in the world, with its origins dating prior to 1000 B.C.

Hinduism adherents believe that they go through reincarnations that eventually lead to *moksha* or spiritual salvation, which frees them from the cycle of rebirths. With each rebirth, it is thought that one becomes closer to moksha; however, the speed with which this is achieved depends upon one's *karma,* or law of cause and effect. In this way, one who performs bad deeds throughout one's life may be reincarnated as an animal (or if very bad, maybe even an insect). One who practises good deeds throughout one's life will be reincarnated to a higher level.

Dharma, or natural law, defines the social, ethical and spiritual harmony of our lives. There are three categories of dharma: the eternal harmony which involves the whole universe, the harmony that controls *castes* (levels of society one is born into) and the relations between them, and the moral code one should follow.

The Hindu religion has three basic practices: puja (or worship/cleansing), cremation and the rules of the caste system. Its most holy books are the four *Vedas,* (divine knowledge), the foundation of Hindu philosophy.

Although it is widely held that one must be born Hindu in order to practise this religion, a branch called *Shaivite* (followers of Lord Siva) Hinduism allows converts from any religion.

Despite the fact that *guru* is the Hindi word for teacher, gurus are more guides, who, by example, lead their followers down the right path in their spiritual search.

Gods

There are 330 million Hindu gods and demons, but you can think of them all as manifestations of *brahman.* This one god has three physical representations: *Brahma,* the creator, *Vishnu,* the preserver and *Siva,* the destroyer and reproducer. To complicate things, though, these gods all have a consort or female counterpart, and, like the gods, the consorts also have many manifestations. In addition, each god has a vehicle and a symbol.

Brahma is usually represented as having four bearded heads and four arms, which hold a sceptre, a drinking bowl, a bow and the Vedas, the contents of which he spoke. His vehicle is a white swan or goose. *Sarasvati* is his female consort (and is often depicted as his daughter). She is the goddess of science, music and speech, and the inventor of the *Sanskrit* language.

Vishnu is associated with the 'right action' and is seen to be a lawful, devout Hindu, protecting all that is good in the world. He sits on a couch made of the coils of a serpent and in his hands he holds a conch shell and a discus. His vehicle is the half-man, half-bird known as *Garuda* (who happens to deeply dislike snakes). *Lakshmi,* his beautiful consort, comes from the sea and is often shown sitting on a lotus flower. She is the goddess of wealth, prosperity, honour and love. Vishnu has nine incarnations, one being Krisha, 'the blue one,' we often see in Indian art.

Siva, the destroyer, (without which rebirth could not occur) is represented either with one or four faces and four arms which hold fire, a drum, a horn or a trident. He is often shown arched by flames and sometimes has a third eye. His matted hair is said to contain *Ganga,* goddess of the River Ganges. Siva's creator role is represented as the phallic and much-worshipped *lingam. Parvati,* the beautiful, is Siva's consort. She is the daughter of the Himalayas and is considered to be the perfect wife. She is a form of the mother goddess *Devi,* whose body is India, and who also appears as *Durga,* the terrible, who holds weapons in her 10 hands, rides a tiger and slays the demons of ignorance. She is also the form of *Kali,* the fiercest (wears a garland of skulls and demands sacrifices) of the gods.

Siva and Parvati have two children: Ganesh, the elephant-headed god of prosperity and wisdom (not to mention, the most popular god). How he acquired this head is interesting. Returning home from a particularly long trip, Siva found Parvati with a young man. Without thinking that it could be his son, Siva chopped his head off. Parvati demanded

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that Siva bring their boy back to life, but Siva could only do so if he gave his son the head of the first living thing he saw. Ganesh's vehicle is a rat. Siva and Parvati's other son is the 12-armed and many-headed Kartikkaya or Skanda. Known as the god of war, his vehicle is a peacock.

The Cow

Those Hindus who eat meat (Brahmins are often vegetarians) eschew beef because, by law, cattle may not be killed. Unfortunately, once cows are finished giving milk, they are let loose into the streets, like stray dogs, left to feed themselves on garbage heaps.

Markings

Hindus apply powder smudges to their foreheads on holy days, not unlike the ashes Roman Catholics receive on Ash Wednesday. These *tikas* vary in colour and markings according to sect and can be self-administered to mark special days (like New Year's) or applied by a temple priest as a blessing. Three horizontal stripes indicate the follower is a Shaivite Hindu. Three vertical stripes are common for Vaishnavites – the vermillion central stroke representing Lakshmi. After a woman is married, she might be seen with a red powder stripe along the centre-part of her hair. It is common for women travelling and going to weddings to have *mendi* vegetable dye designs applied to their palms and feet. They are thought to bring good luck and offer some relief in the scorching summer.

Bindis are the colourful little stick-on dots worn by both Hindu and non-Hindu Indian women. They are not religious, but simply a fashion accessory, often coordinated with the wearer's outfit.

Hindu Holy Days and Festivals

February/March: *Holi* marks the end of winter and is celebrated by people throwing coloured powder and water at each other.

March/April: *Ramayana* celebrates the birth of Rama. This most famous Hindu epic is in one of the Vedas, or holy books. Rama is one of Vishnu's incarnations. In the story, Rama, the King's nephew, is married to Sita. Although the King wants Rama to get the throne, the Queen wants it for their son. To avoid trouble, Rama leaves the Royal Court with Sita and his brother Laksmana. They live peacefully in the forest until one day when Rawana, the evil

Demon-king of Sri Lanka, abducts Sita and brings her to his palace. While looking for Sita, Rama and Laksmana encounter a land of giant monkey-beings. Hanoman is a white monkey who can fly. He is also General of the monkey army. When he sees his friend, Rama, he offers his services to help find Sita. Hanoman flies to Rawana's palace, sees Sita, then returns to tell Rama. Of course, this means war. Armed with the monkey army, they use earth from sacred Mount Meru to build a land bridge all the way to Sri Lanka. The battle ensues, and good wins over evil, with Rama slaying the Demon-king. When Sita's virtue is questioned, she proves her innocence by walking through fire. They return to the Royal Court, where the Queen has changed her mind, agreeing that Rama be the next King, and they all live happily ever after.

July/August *Raksha Bandhan* : Girls affix amulets to the wrists of their brothers, protecting them for the coming year. The brothers reciprocate with gifts.

August/September *Janmashtami*: Krishna's birth is celebrated in this national holiday, although the festival is particularly observed in Agra, Bombay, and Mathura (his birthplace).

Ganesh Chathurthi: The god Ganesh is worshipped on this most auspicious day of the year. Idols of the elephant-headed god are brought into the home and worshipped for a specific period of time, before the statues are immersed in a river, sea or tank of water.

September/October *Dussehra:* A popular 10-day festival that features burning images of the Demon-god Ravanna.

October/November *Divali* or *Deepawali:* This five-day festival of lights is the happiest, in which oil lamps are lit to show Rama the way home after his exile from the Royal Court. On the first day, houses are cleaned and doorsteps are decorated with chalk designs. Day two celebrates Krishna's victory over the tyrant, Narakasura. On the third day, Lakshmi, goddess of fortune is worshipped and a new financial year for companies begins. Day four commemorates the visit of the friendly demon Bali. On the last day, men visit their sisters to have a tika put on their forehead. Sweets are given and fire crackers are also lit during this perhaps best-known of the Hindu festivals.

Brigid Kelso

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Interview with Indira Basu, LINC coordinator, South Asian Family Support Services

Contact: What can teachers do to better meet the needs of their Hindu students?

Indira: There isn't really anything the school needs to do. Hindu students pray at home or at the temple.

Contact: Are there any holy days that teachers can expect their Hindu students to be absent from class?

Indira: There are 13 festivals in 12 months in the Hindu calendar. Diwali is probably the most important. It's a week long, usually in October or November, but parents will usually send their children to school. It's not like when Muslim parents keep their kids home on Eid el Fitr. If my LINC (adult) students stay home on any days, it's during Diwali. Sri Lankan Hindus celebrate Diwali one day before Indian Hindus. Sri Lankan Tamils celebrate New Year's April 14.

Contact: I once had a Hindu adult ESL student who refused to close her eyes and participate in a guided meditation I was leading during our ESL unit on stress management. I wondered if it had anything to do with her religion.

Indira: I don't think so. Meditation is a part of life for Hindus. That's the way we worship any god.

Contact: I understand Hindus believe in karma and reincarnation – your actions in your present life affect your next. She told me that she had been an insect in her past life – a very good insect. Do Hindus know what they were in their past lives?

Indira: I've asked a lot of people this and they agree that no, Hindus would not know what they were in a past life. We have a saying: if you waste water and food in this life, you will be a bird in your next life always searching for water.

Contact: Are there any beliefs in Hinduism that would go against the school curriculum? I'm thinking of the same way Christians may not want their children to learn about evolution theory.

Indira: Religious Hindus are very sensitive about cows being slaughtered. But students would not be offended if beef is served in the school cafeteria. Some Hindus are vegetarians, but many are not.

Contact: I also had a student who gave me one day's notice before telling me she'd take the next day (Wednesday) off to get married. She said that her mother had consulted a numerologist and she had deemed that day the most auspicious to wed. Preparations were made hastily. I was preparing the class to enter the workforce and told them it would be unacceptable to give an employer just 24 hours notice before taking a day off. The student, as promised, returned to class on Thursday with a vermillion powder stripe down her centre-parted hair. She was very happy, and I remember her bringing colourful photos of her wedding to show the class the following week.

Indira: Numerology is very important to Hindus especially relating to marriage. It happens in the most modern families. Certain days you cannot get married, and there's even a whole month that you should not in some parts of India. It also has to do with the time of day. You might have to get married between 5:17 and 6:15 in the morning or something like that. It even affects real estate for Sri Lankans. They consider the numbers 5 and 6 very lucky, but no matter how good a deal it might be, they will never buy a house with 7 in the address.

Brigid Kelso

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Send in Your Contact Submissions to the Editor at teslontario@telus.net

South Asian Family Support Services (SAFSS) Profile

SAFSS is a non-profit organization with three locations in Scarborough providing newcomer and family support services to refugees and new immigrants. Its mission is to help newcomer women, youth, seniors and families reach their potential and become fully contributing members of Canadian society.

The first Executive Director, Aruna Papp started SAFSS in 1990 to serve victims of domestic violence. It now encompasses the agency's Family Counselling, Breaking the Cycle of Violence and Afghan Women Outreach programs.

In 1992, SAFSS acquired funding from the federal Immigrant Settlement Adaptation as well as LINC programs to meet the settlement and language needs of its clients. Then, in 1996, it broadened its services to all newcomers and became one of the first organizations to help Bosnian refugees.

Two years later, SAFSS became the first Canadian organization to win the SmithKline Beecham/University of Pennsylvania's Institute on Aging Innovation award. The US $200,000 was used to start a two-year health education project for seniors about the importance of resolving health issues before they become critical.

SAFSS obtained charitable status in June 2000, allowing the agency to tap a wider base to raise funds. In October of that year, it received one of 19 Department of Immigration's Citizenship awards for providing outstanding services to Canadian immigrants. In 2001, SAFSS became a United Way member agency, resulting in sustained core funding, and allowing it to better address community needs.

Settlement services help clients access housing, education, social assistance and find employment including volunteer job placements.

SAFSS youth services include health counselling for young people at risk, a youth volunteer program and employment workshops.

The agency also gives information and referrals for victims of elder abuse, substance abuse and clients with mental health needs.

Services are available in English, Hindi, Urdu, Gujarati, Punjabi, Tamil and Farsi.

For more information, call 416-431-4847.

TESL Ontario
is applying for
LINC conference assistance
for the 2003 TESL Ontario Conference
Broadening Our Perspectives
November 20-22, 2003
at the Holiday Inn on King Street.

If funding is granted, funding priority will be given to LINC instructors who conduct presentations, seminars, or workshops at the conference.

What are the Major Sources of Variability in Writing in Second Languages?

Ally A. Zhou
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Being both a teacher and learner of ESL writing, I have always wondered about the major sources of variability in my own and my students' writing. This article reviews major sources of variability regarding textual organization based on studies of contrastive rhetoric and subsequent problems in using contrastive rhetoric. It will be argued that employing Hornberger's (1989) continua of biliteracy is a more promising avenue for conducting future research on sources of variability in ESL writing.

Sources of Variability Identified by Contrastive Rhetoric Studies

1. Different Thinking Patterns

Following the publication of Robert Kaplan's 1966 article examining whether rhetorical differences in ESL writing reflected different thinking patterns of learners (cf., Kaplan, 1987, 1988), a stream of contrastive rhetoric studies has been conducted concerning sources of variability in written products and writing processes of second language writers (Connor, 1996). To the present day, researchers continue to do extensive research guided by theories of contrastive rhetoric, seeking explanations and pedagogical solutions to ESL writing organizational structures. However, Kaplan's exploratory study and subsequent thesis about rhetorical differences and their relation to thinking patterns have received criticism since their initial publication. Connor writes:

> Kaplan's "traditional" contrastive rhetoric has been criticized for several reasons: for being too ethnocentric and privileging the writing of native English speakers (Matalene, 1985); for examining only L2 products and ignoring educational and developmental process variables (Mohan and Au-Yeung Lo, 1985); for dismissing linguistic and cultural differences in writing among related languages, that is, for including Chinese, Thai, and Korean speakers in one

"Oriental" group (Hinds, 1983a); and for considering transfer from a first language a negative influence on second language writing (Raimes, 1991a) (1996, p. 16).

2. Linguistic, Cultural, and Educational Explanations

For many years, contrastive rhetoric researchers have also done extensive research on the linguistic differences between English and other languages, as well as cultural and educational backgrounds of ESL writers. According to Leki (1991), these studies involved text linguistics and discourse analysis, discourse and textual analysis of comparing English with other languages, and educational analysis of school writing instruction. Contrastive rhetoric researchers, as pointed out by Matsuda (1997), have been making contributions to "the understanding of discourse-level structures that are observed in different languages" (p. 47), emphasizing aspects which are believed to be the most influential for L2 textual organization. Researchers in contrastive rhetoric, depending on their perspective, offer three separate linguistic, cultural, and educational explanations for lack of coherence in ESL written texts. Matsuda (1997) comments that each of these three explanations emphasizes a different factor influencing the L2 writer's organizational structures: the writer's first language, cultural background, or schooling in organizational structures. However, as shown by recent studies in the field, these explanations for ESL writing organizational structures are problematic in addressing an extensive array of sources of variability in ESL writing.

Problems with Using Contrastive Rhetoric Studies to Explain Variability

The three major explanations identified by Matsuda look at L2 textual organization from different perspectives, and they all lead to a potentially fuller understanding of sources of variability

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in ESL writing. Nonetheless, there are problems with using such explanations to address appropriate and comprehensive sources of variability in ESL writing.

First, as only previous writing and learning experiences of ESL writers have been considered, each of these explanations is fragmental and static, leading to a major problem for contrastive rhetoric studies. Zamel (1997) challenges assumptions that the writing of L2 writers is the product of their primary language backgrounds. Zamel, along with Kubota (1999) and Matsuda (1997) also question the view which considers L2 writers as fixed by their world views and less able to think critically.

A writer's previous experiences of writing and learning in the target language within his/her home country and current experiences of writing and learning are of great importance for success in writing in a second language, yet this has been a neglected perspective by some contrastive rhetoric researchers. Yuko, a participant in Spack's (1997) study, serves as a good example of these criticisms. Yuko struggled in the beginning to read and write according to the academic standards of American academia, but eventually learnt to cope with the heavy literacy demands of a U.S. university through immersion in the academic setting for an extended period of time. On the one hand, her previous experiences of reading and writing or literacy background caused her to initially struggle. On the other hand, they also contributed to her eventual success as she eventually integrated these experiences. She successfully managed her studies and was able to manipulate the new academic system. Yuko's current experiences of reading and writing in courses with professors and peers in an American university added to her intention of dropping out of the program at one point, but her learning or immersion experiences in the same environment also gave her courage to continue the program and helped her develop coping strategies for reading and writing tasks in her chosen courses. In short, her past and current experiences impacted her decisions at different periods in her development as a writer.

A second problem with contrastive rhetoric is that its explanations make overgeneralizations. Findings of recent studies contradict these explanations of sources of variability in ESL writing. For example, it is argued that traditional Chinese text structures, especially the four-part *qi-cheng-zhuan-he* (which is similar to *ki-sho-ten-ketsu* and *ki-sung-chon-kyul* claimed by contrastive rhetorical researchers to be the typical pattern for Japanese and Korean expository prose respectively) and the eight-legged essay, influence Chinese ESL writers. However, a recent study by Kirkpatrick (1997) suggests that the four-part or eight-legged style does not influence Chinese students' writing in Chinese, neither is it likely to influence their writing in English. From a personal perspective as a Chinese learner, this has been true in my case. I am not aware of what exactly the eight-legged style is or how to compose a piece of writing following it. The style, in fact, was severely criticized by Chairman Mao (1967), and I was told constantly by school teachers not to use it. Ironically, my knowledge of the eight-legged style actually comes from reading contrastive rhetoric studies in North America. Similarly, Kubota (1999) challenges the premise that Japanese written texts are characterized by a unique cultural convention known as *ki-sho-ten-ketsu* and warns researchers not to stereotype cultural conventions of writing in any language. She also argues against previous contrastive rhetoric studies that overgeneralize culture characteristics and tend to view language and culture as static instead of dynamic.

A third problem with contrastive rhetoric is the debate over the influence of the L1 on ESL writing as a benefit or an interference. As shown by Hornberger's (1989) discussion on using continua for understanding biliteracy, there are no clear-cut findings in this regard. Therefore, it is difficult to claim confidently whether L1 hinders the learning of L2 writing or if it enhances it. From Hornberger's (1989) point of view, in reality, there are no endpoints where biliteracy ceases. The answer may be found by using the notion of continuum as a conceptual framework to investigate the interrelationships of the continua of biliterate contexts (i.e., the contexts in which biliteracy is embedded), the continua of biliterate development in the individual (i.e., "the development of the biliterate individual's communicative repertoire," p. 275), and the continua of biliterate media (i.e., the channels the biliterate individual uses to communicate). She argues:

> The individual's biliterate development occurs along all three continua simultaneously and in relation with each other; that is why the notion of transfer has been such a tenacious, and, at the same time, frustratingly elusive one. (p. 286)

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This may also hold true for second language writing studies.

Further Research is Needed

Contrastive rhetoric studies face difficulties in explaining accurately and comprehensively sources of variability in ESL writing. However, these difficulties may be compensated for by looking for answers to a group of questions regarding (a) learning, teaching, context, and content/language; (b) interrelationships of the writer's previous and current literacy experiences; and (c) the interrelationships of (a) and (b) in authentic ESL writing settings based on the comprehensive framework proposed by Hornberger (1989). Such research can be performed by using case-study or ethnographic study approaches.

In essence, Hornberger (1989) provides researchers with a framework to understand biliteracy in general, and second language writing specifically. There are many factors which, from my point of view, influence sources of variability in ESL writing if we consider that "writing is text, is composing, and is social construction" (Cumming, 1998, p. 61). For example, the criteria for good writing held by the reader or the teacher play an important role in variability in writing. A teacher's approach to teaching writing and mentoring students, as suggested by Li's (1996) cross-culture study of "good writing," affects the way that he/she deals with students' writing. And this raises further questions: Do writing topics or genres make a difference? What about the ESL student's motivation, career goals, and social contexts of writing? Do sources of variability differ at different stages of learning? Even though this list is not meant to be inclusive, these issues and questions are all in need of further research using a comprehensive framework of biliteracy.

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Contrastive rhetoric studies face difficulties in explaining accurately and comprehensively sources of variability in ESL writing.

There are many factors which, from my point of view, influence sources of variability in ESL writing.

Call for Applications for TESL Training Institution Advisory Committee (TTIRAC)

Applications are being accepted until May 15, 2003 for membership on the TESL Training Institution Advisory Committee of TESL Ontario's Professional Standards Advisory Committee. Two new people are needed for this committee. Here is the job description:

Each member will represent one or more of the following perspectives: LINC, University, non-credit provider – school board, community college, community program. Each member will have demonstrated knowledge and expertise in TESL training for instructing Adult ESL. Three members adjudicate each program application for recognition. The TTIRAC Chair shall not assign a member who may have a real or perceived conflict of interest in an application to that adjudication; that member will be replaced by a member-at-large of the Professional Standards Advisory Committee with TESL training knowledge/expertise and no conflict of interest.

The TTIRAC Chair liaises with the TESL Ontario office and manages the process.

The Committee convenes in Toronto on an as-needed basis following the two yearly deadline dates of May 1 and October 1 to consider applications received against established standards and criteria for recognition. Much of the work will be handled by email.

These are volunteer positions and the term of the appointments is three years. Travel expenses are reimbursed.

Questions and applications are to be directed to Sophie Beare, Certification Chair, TESL Ontario.

Notice:
Important Changes to Recertification Requirements

Many current TESL Ontario members who took out their certification in 2000 were informed that certificate renewal in 2005 would require continuous members in TESL Ontario and proof of professional development and 400 hours of teaching in adult ESL over the 5 years.

As a result of revisions made at the January 25, 2003, TESL Ontario board meeting, please note that TESL Ontario Certificates will be renewed only if members meet the following criteria:

➢ continuous membership and 25 hours of professional development over five years

Sophie Beare
Certification Chair
TESL Ontario

TESL Canada Life Membership Award: Acceptance Speech

by Elizabeth Coelho

This written version of my speech has been reconstructed, several months later, from notes I made just a few hours before presenting it at the TESL Canada conference in Regina. Those of you who heard my talk may not remember it exactly like this: but this is how I would like to have said it!

Thank you for this award. It is a tremendous honour to be recognized by my peers in this way. I am especially grateful that my advocacy for ESL learners is one of the aspects of my work being honoured here today. I have always tried to be a voice for students, especially newcomers who are not yet able to represent their own interests.

So, while I have you as an audience, I cannot neglect this opportunity to advocate for the need to focus within our organization on the needs of school-aged ESL learners. I suggest three ways to develop this focus:

1. TESL Canada and affiliates should develop a proposal for a national policy on the education of immigrant children and the children of immigrants whose first language is other than Standard Canadian English. Immigration is a federal program that benefits all of Canada, and the federal government supports language programs for adult immigrants. However, the education of school-aged children is a provincial responsibility, and there is no federal funding for K-12 ESL programs. As a result, ESL learners in different parts of the country receive different levels of support and sometimes no support at all.

Because this is often a neglected population, it is hard to find meaningful data on ESL support and student achievement across Canada. We know from the work of Hetty Roessingh and David Watt in Calgary that the cost of not providing sufficient support is a disproportionately large dropout rate among ESL learners of secondary age. We also know from a study conducted by Harold Klesmer in Toronto that even six years after arrival in Canada, most ESL learners still lag behind their English-speaking peers in many aspects of language performance – and that their teachers are largely unaware of their ongoing needs as ESL learners. These two studies indicate that there is a need for further study of the academic performance of ESL learners across the country, and of the programs and instructional approaches that make a difference. As ESL professionals, we all know from our own experience and from data that may be available locally, that English language learners need more support over a longer period of time than most are receiving. However, in the last few years, the level of ESL support has declined, even as the number of ESL learners has increased. At the same time, educational standards across the country have become more rigorous, making it even more difficult for ESL learners to catch up to their peers not only in academic contexts but also such large-scale assessments as provincial literacy tests.

I believe we need a national plan for the education of immigrant children and the children of immigrants, and that this plan should include the following components:

- National standards for the provision of ESL support;

- Federal-provincial cost-sharing arrangements tied to the standards;

- National standards and benchmarks for assessing and tracking second language proficiency among English language learners;

- National standards for data collection that will enable provincial Ministries of Education and school districts to track the progress of English language learners, identify learners' needs, and gather data on programs that promote language development and academic success.

2. TESL Canada and its affiliates should advocate for a core component in teacher education that will prepare new teachers to work with students who are learning the language and culture. Canada has the largest per-capita immigration program in the world, and our schools are increasingly multilingual,

> The education of school-aged children is a provincial responsibility, and there is no federal funding for K-12 ESL programs. As a result, ESL learners in different parts of the country receive different levels of support and sometimes no support at all.

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multicultural, and multiracial – in terms of the student population, at least – yet few faculties of education prepare teachers for this reality in their pre-service teacher education programs. While the TESL Canada Standards for ESL teachers, programs and training institutions help to ensure that adult ESL learners receive high quality instruction, no such standards are in place to ensure a similarly high quality of instruction for their children.

The majority of provinces have standards and programs in place for the training of specialist ESL teachers. However, English language learners spend most of their time in mainstream grade level and subject classrooms. As a result, many ESL learners receive no instruction at all from an ESL specialist. It is essential that all teachers (not just trained ESL teachers) provide a learning environment that enables English language learners to participate in the academic program while receiving support for language acquisition. Some faculties of education do offer courses intended to make future teachers aware of multicultural/antiracist education and the needs of English language learners, but these courses are optional, and the content varies enormously from one faculty of education to another. Most new teachers receive no training to prepare them to work with multilingual, multicultural, and multiracial student populations.

I believe that TESL Ontario has the necessary expertise to develop "core competencies" related to English language learners and multicultural/antiracist education, and to advocate for the integration of these core competencies into every pre-service teacher education program in Canada. At a time of great renewal in the teaching profession, we should take this initiative now in order to ensure that future teachers are better prepared to work with students of various linguistic and cultural backgrounds, and to support students who are learning the language of instruction at the same time as they are learning the curriculum.

3. TESL Canada and its affiliates should broaden their scope to include support for students' first languages. While adult immigrants have competence in their first language before arriving in Canada, school-aged ESL learners begin learning English before completely acquiring their first language. However, our schools often tend to focus only on competence in English. While this is an immediate and obvious need, it is important to remember that children learn best in the language they know best. This is not a new concept: half a century ago, a UNESCO report recommended the first language as the most effective medium of instruction for all children. In many countries around the world, various models of bilingual education have been developed in accordance with this principle, enabling children to continue learning in their first language while developing their proficiency in the second. Still, in Canada, relatively little has been done to build on the language knowledge that ESL learners bring with them. Indeed, in Ontario, English and French are the only permissible languages of instruction. I believe we need to re-think some of the ways we deliver instructional support for ESL learners. While bilingual education may not be not a practical or politically feasible option in all jurisdictions across Canada at this time, it is difficult to argue against the notion that learning in a second language is less effective than learning in the first – at least until proficiency in the second language is adequate for the demands of the grade-level curriculum.

We have learned from the work of Jim Cummins, Virginia Collier, and others, that a strong foundation in the first language is essential for effective second-language acquisition. We have also learned that it takes a minimum of five years for most ESL learners to catch up to their peers to use English in academic contexts. Restricting these learners during this period to perform at their level of English proficiency only often puts them years behind their peers and years behind their proficiency in their first language. In addition, we know from experts such as Lily Wong Fillmore that first-language maintenance helps children maintain a sense of cultural identity, enhances communication within the community, and supports family cohesion. Therefore, we must promote the maintenance and continued development of students' own languages through whatever means available to us.

In those jurisdictions where maintaining the first language is not feasible, the next best alternative is a strong ESL program which compensates for the fact that students are learning in a language other than their own. Many of us are involved in developing such programs. As we design programs intended to promote English language acquisition and enable learners to cope with the demands of the curriculum, we must also find ways to validate students' languages and support programs that

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enable the learners to maintain and continue to develop proficiency in their first languages. For example, we can:

- work with families and communities to support heritage language programs;

- ensure that schools use community languages to communicate with parents;

- advocate for the hiring of teachers and other school personnel who speak the languages of the community;

- give students opportunities to use their first languages in dual language activities and assignments;

- train students to act as bilingual school ambassadors and peer tutors;

- work with students and parents to develop multilingual signs, notices and display material that will raise the profile of community languages in the school;

- advocate for heritage language instruction that is integrated into the elementary school program, and for secondary school International Languages courses in the languages of the community;

- work with school librarians and parent groups to select or develop reading material and other resources in the languages of the community, including dual language books;

- celebrate bilingualism and multilingualism, encouraging English speakers as well as English language learners to become proficient in more than one language.

I would like to see an increased emphasis on bilingual education, first language development, and multilingual education in future conferences and publications of TESL Canada and its affiliates.

Suggested Reading:

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As we design programs intended to promote English language acquisition and enable learners to cope with the demands of the curriculum, we must also find ways to validate students' languages and support programs that enable the learners to maintain and continue to develop proficiency in their first languages.

I would like to see an increased emphasis on bilingual education, first language development, and multilingual education in future conferences and publications of TESL Canada and affiliates.

Steer a Course for Open-Source Software

Open-source software is an alternative to expensive upgrades for operating systems such as (Microsoft XP or Macintosh OSX), office suites (Microsoft Office) and Internet browsers offered by the dominant corporations. At the Abu Dhabi Men's College, the staff is considering open-source software (operating systems, browsers, office software and dedicated programs) for its ESL programs.

What is open source?

Before open source, only programmers who created and distributed software could legally alter the source code, whereas open sources allows software to be shared and altered by others. In this way, the software evolves in an uninhibited, unlimited manner, creating improved computer programs at rapid rates compared to conventional software development. Software bugs and problems can be solved more quickly when a community of software developers attack them. Also, adaptations of the software, unrelated to the original, can be produced and available on the Internet. Open-source software is available in two forms: raw code (translated from computer language into English) that can be altered, or a compiled version of the program that can be run or played as it is intended for the final end-user.

What is open source to the ESL community?

Open source lets schools acquire operating systems, browsers, spreadsheets, databases and word-processing software at little or no cost. On the whole, the programs run faster than the "bloatware" offered by the software giants such as Microsoft. Bloatware refers to software products that have too many bells and whistles. Much of it is code to fight piracy. These programs often occupy large amounts of hard disk space and also clog the RAM (random access memory) even after you have closed them. The open source community hopes to change this situation. Piracy isn't a concern, as it is distributed at no cost. Also, the software is streamlined into only necessary functions, unlike the excess that characterizes many software packages on the market.

School administrators may question why they need faster computers mostly to run word processors, as most CALL sessions require. In the early 90s, a 286 processor with one megabyte of RAM satisfied this need. Why do schools now need Pentium IV computers with 256 megabytes of RAM? Old computers sitting idle could be used for word processing, database, spreadsheet or Internet browsing activities.

Linux

Many older computers can be cleaned up and used creatively until they physically expire. The most attractive feature of open source for ESL is that older systems can be transformed into Linux machines. Linux is an open-source alternative operating system that comes with a spreadsheet, database, word processor and an excellent Internet browser.

As a server or personal computer operating system, Linux has proven to be an impressively stable and versatile operating system. Since it isn't bloatware, it runs more effectively and efficiently on a personal computer. This is a good first step.

A common concern for end-users who wish to use open-source software is the lack of technical support and warranties. Since the software's license encourages revision and customization, it is nearly impossible to support. This is why Red Hat Software created the "Official Red Hat Linux" and is able to sell this normally "free" software package. The primary consequence of this is that Red Hat adds a warranty and technical support to the Linux package. For schools, the assurance of technical support is an essential factor in the decision to buy Linux instead of simply downloading it for free. In addition to Red Hat, there are several other companies that have packaged Linux, usually with additional software, for resale.

We have been trying Linux with our college ESL students. It seems adequate for word processing, spreadsheet, database and Internet browsing. All Microsoft Word documents can be opened with the resident Linux word processor, and documents created in Linux can be saved as Microsoft-compatible documents. We seldom experience

any crashes or low-downs within the Linux environment.

We have, however, had several headaches over installing pre-made proprietary packages on our Linux computers. Linux is not Windows; therefore, many CALL software programs will not run on it. Unfortunately, this is the downfall of this operating system. Since it is not a commercial venture, many companies shy away from producing CALL software for Linux. We have had success running our on-line content through Mozilla, the core of Netscape's browser with activities generated in Hot Potatoes.

We are experimenting with a variety of programs that are open source within our Linux operating system and hope to report our findings within 15 months on our Website. Unfortunately, we are not having much success with proprietary CALL programs but we are trying to either adapt existing ones or create our own version that is suitable for open-source delivery.

Other open source success

Besides Linux, other popular open-source-based software includes Mozilla, Apache (Web server), PERL (Web scripting language) and PNG (graphics file format).

Where to locate open source software

There are several well-known Web sites that archive, share and distribute open-source software; i.e., Freshmeat.net, SourceForge.net, OSDir.com, developer.BerliOS.de and Bioinformatics.org. These websites are confusing to navigate at first because they use current technical language.

Whether or not you decide to try an open-source program, the movement will continue, and, hopefully, it will offer more specialized programs for your CALL lab in the near future. Remember, if you are developing your CALL materials for an independent platform such as HTML, through Hot Potatoes, then Linux is a consistent platform to drive all of your lessons.

John Allan HCT, United Arab Emirates

Poetry

Estelle Berry's Student

Why did you close the door of your heart?
When will you open the door of your soul?
Just for me, with a beautiful sunset
Coming out from your dark eyes.

I'm standing in front of it
Seeing you through the window
But you are afraid to look into my world
Outside your own.

During the day I've been planting roses for you
For when I'm not here anymore
You'll remember me because of the colours
And patience I had for you.

At night, when I was still waiting
For your arms to be around me
I slept in the tree in front of your door
Reaching to the stars, wishing for the warmth
of your dreams.

Now it's raining inside my mind
Giving me strength
To look for other doors
That will open for my love.

by Andrea Acosta Duarte
(level 7 student in the
Parkdale Library class)

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Kay Eastham, Remembered

The following is an excerpt from a speech given by Susan Holmes at last year's conference to honour the work of Kay Eastham, who recently passed away. The November 23, 2002, plenary was dedicated to her.

She devoted much of her public life to equity and accessibility for immigrants and refugees. Early on, while at the Ministry of Citizenship, Kay worked on women's projects for the NLOC classes. She promoted literacy and childcare for women and sought to improve employment opportunities for youth.

In 1973, as the youngest person to achieve a Director's position in the Ontario Public Service, Kay became a role model for other young women. Most recently, after retiring from government, she was Executive Director of the Ontario Association of Youth Employment Centres, where she worked to improve the future for young people.

On the cover of our conference brochure we have a photo of a beautiful bridge and over it is our conference theme for this year – 'Bridges to the Future.'

It's interesting to note that the bridge on the cover is shrouded in mist and you cannot see the foundations. As with any bridge, the size of the gap that it spans determines the number of supports needed. The gap between newcomer and Canadian society is wide. Kay Eastham's work formed some of the foundation for ESL in our province today.

Regretably, I met Kay only once, at the establishment of the Canadian Language Benchmarks Board at the Toronto YMCA in March of 1998. So I was only superficially aware of her accomplishments for ESL. Learning more about her life of public service these past few weeks has indeed been rewarding.

Kay was born in Swansea, Wales, and came to Canada in the 1960s to further her education in Hamilton. Like so many before and since, she stayed and made significant contributions to our society.

Her awareness of and concern for those who needed help in Ontario led her to many areas of service. She devoted much of her public life to equity and accessibility for immigrants and refugees. Early on, while at the Ministry of Citizenship, Kay worked on women's projects for the NLOC classes. She promoted literacy and childcare for women and sought to improve employment opportunities for youth.

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Joanne Millard, now at York University, worked with her in government service. She remembers that Kay kept adult education issues, including ESL issues, on the radar of the Education and Training ministries during difficult years.

In addition, she communicated the point of view of TESL stakeholders in policy discussions with the ministry. She also supported the implementation of the Canadian Language Benchmarks in provincially funded adult ESL programs. The effects of this are evident in language delivery not only where I work but all across Ontario today.

Elizabeth Taborek, our past president, wrote that Kay listened to our proposal about certification, encouraged us to apply for grants and steered the organization in the right direction. She took an interest in ESL that had not been shown before. Elizabeth recalls that Kay was delightful to work with.

Bill McMichael, past president of TESL Canada, remembers her as an essential link to government, especially concerning the Canadian Language Benchmarks. He fondly recalled that she took him to the Art Gallery of Ontario one Saturday afternoon and taught him how to read art interactively and reflectively as one might read a book. He has never forgotten what he learned from her. What a lovely gift to leave to someone!

Kay was a lover of jazz, Tafelmusik, theatre, knitting, puzzles, travel and her family. She also liked to stroll along the boardwalk near her Toronto Beaches home. These are just a few comments from colleagues:

She was taken from us before her time and she is greatly missed.

She left the world a better place and today we wish to salute her contribution to ESL and recognize her as one of the strong foundations for ESL in Ontario. May her life be an inspiration to us all.

The Sorcerer's Stone and Apprentice Wizards?: Some ICT Issues in ESL & FL Teacher Training[1]

Jean Compain, Second Language Institute, University of Ottawa
Leslie Sheldon, English Language Teaching Division, University of Strathclyde (UK)

Abstract:

The inevitability of the Internet in Foreign Language teaching is taken for granted (at least in well-resourced contexts), though many experienced teachers are not entirely happy with the attendant resourcing and career implications. Online multimedia and hypertext most often dovetail with a constructivist, individuated and democratic classroom environment, which one might *expect* to be especially attractive to young (and presumably literate and Net-wise), teacher trainees.

After an initial discussion of the 'cyber-optimism' surrounding the place of ICT in education, this paper then discusses the surprises revealed in a study of the attitudes and skill backgrounds of apprentice L2/FL[2] teachers at the University of Ottawa, with regard both to their perceptions of the relevance of ICT (Information Communication Technology) and their definitions of the machine and electronic literacy skills which they feel are requisite for effective cybernauts. Little is known about the experiences, thoughts and feelings of FL teachers about confronting/accommodating the new medium, and even less about the perspectives and opinions of 21st Century teacher trainees. The following attempts to shed some light on this new research area.

ICT in Education

In terms of general educational principles as they are currently being developed in (or perhaps imposed upon) the classrooms of the early 21st century, it would appear that there is a confident expectation that Information Communication Technology (ICT) is destined to become a fundamental part of the educational experience. In the online *E-Learning Magazine*, for example, a number of optimistic – and perhaps typical – statements/predictions about what one can (and should) expect for the year 2003 have recently been voiced. In Eliot Masie's view, ICT will quite simply "become more mainstream and integrated with the classroom", while for Dolores Hirschman (Director of the National Foundation for Teaching Entrepreneuship), "2003 will further integrate technology into the classroom until e-learning and face-to-face instruction are no longer distinct…E-learning will be merged with traditional learning to bring the best of each to the classroom."

This would appear to be a 'tall order', both in terms of the numerous implications for pre- and in-service teacher training (funding, revamping of syllabi, training trainers to cope with – and then promulgating effectively the teaching skills associated with 'e-learning'), and in terms of how practicing and intending teachers perceive, whether legitimately or not, what can be expected of them. It implies a great deal about what is/is not perceived to be professional competence, and about the skills of 'e-pedagogy' – i.e. that this is adequately defined 'somewhere', and has sound and articulated theoretical bases. In various ways it could be seen as being too threatening, if, for example, one were a teacher who did not feel himself/herself as adept in the mysteries of 'e-learning' as he/she might be with regard to the skills necessary for successful "face to face instruction". One is entitled to wonder whether all teachers would find such an ambitious statement of aims and inevitable development to be particularly reassuring or even practical in terms of money and

It would appear that there is a confident expectation that ICT (Information Communication Technology) is destined to become a fundamental part of the educational experience.

It could be seen too threatening, if, for example, one were a teacher who did not feel himself/herself as adept in the mysteries of 'e-learning' as he/she might with regard to the skills necessary for successful "face to face instruction".

time. The article in *E-Learning Magazine* does not appear to quote teachers.

ICT in Teaching English as a Second Language

All this is not restricted to teachers of Mathematics or Science or Social Sciences, of course, and similar millennial fervor (with all it benignly assumes about resources, time, money, career realities, institutional politics) is increasingly becoming part of the pedagogical 'discussion' in the Teaching of Foreign Languages, particularly ESL. Indeed, the absolute centrality of 'e-learning' is taken for granted in much of the literature (e.g. Norbrook, 2001, Warschauer & Kern, 2000), despite problems of recalcitrant, unreliable technology, non-user-friendly software and interfaces, the cultural imperialism/value judgments behind the concept of the 'Digital Divide', teacher resistance and technophobia, and the frequent clumsiness and confusion surrounding institutional attempts to formulate policies for the introduction of new technology.

The upbeat perspective expressed by Elizabeth Hanson-Smith in 1997 is perhaps a typical statement of cyber-optimism as it relates to the teaching of English as a Second Language: "There seems little doubt that the personal computer will become as prevalent around the world as the TV and VCR, perhaps in some form replacing these appliances by the beginning of the new century...People all over the world, including language learners and teachers, now have the potential to communicate freely and instantaneously with one another" (Hanson-Smith, 1997, 1). As any survey of the relevant journals will reveal, articles on the use of participative e-mail projects, newsgroups and Web CT courseware in ESL instruction are now legion, and it might seem that the seamless integration between e-learning and 'face to face' instruction can be taken for granted. Certainly, ICT is here to stay, and much is being claimed for it, with resulting pressure being put on ESL teachers. For example, an official spokesperson of the Ministry of Education in Egypt recently observed: "During the past century, illiteracy has been linked to the inability to read and write. It appears in this 21ˢᵗ century, that illiteracy will be linked to the inability of individuals to use the Internet" (*Egyptian Gazette*, 39293, November 3, 2000, 2). This is a challenging, provocative state-

ment, especially coming as it does from an educational infrastructure typified by pedagogic traditionalism.

But thinking about Hanson-Smith's prophecy (with all its implications) and the hopes expressed in the Egyptian context (which are probably typical of the *de facto* perspective in many other places) in light of the reality in 2003, it is possible to question to what extent it is true *practically* for most teachers, whatever the numerous pedagogic advantages that are evinced by ICT (for a listing and discussion of both the pros and cons, see Sheldon, 2000/2002, Pusack & Otto, 1997, Felix, 2001). In ESL terms, at least, there would appear to be a gap between statements of the 'ideal' such as Hanson-Smith's and the actual context/pedagogical practice faced by actual instructors in the 'field'.

Some Practical Considerations

E-learning is still very much an exotic tool, only used by a few, and it is fair to assume that the Internet has little impact on the lives of most of the world's population (including ESL and Foreign Language teachers), and will not for a very long time to come, despite the undoubted potential of its revolutionary and fundamentally transformative nature. Though Esther Hargittai maintains that the whole point of modern education worldwide should be the creation of "an informed and knowledgeable Internet citizenry" (Hargittai, 2003), this may have an aspect of wishful thinking. As Subbiah Arunachalam observes, with a certain degree of bitterness, "As long as the World Wide Web is 90% in English and 99% irrelevant to a peasant in Bolivia or a factory worker in Russia, we can't be overly confident about the benefits of connectivity...There are too many examples of projects that are only bombarding the Third World with computers, in the most irresponsible matter and for the benefit only of hardware and software companies" (Arunachalam, 2002, 11).

Great Expectations, Some Stereotypes, and a Specific Context

In all this there is a presumed need for TESL/ Foreign Language teacher training syllabi to define 'cyberskills' with some precision (e.g. from the viewpoint of mechanical machine-skills, facility with navigating the 'cybermedium' – program interfaces and Web pages – as well as, on a more complex level of proficiency, the ability of an

"During the past century, illiteracy has been linked to the inability to read and write. It appears in this 21ˢᵗ century, that illiteracy will be linked to the inability of individuals to use the Internet."

E-learning is still very much an exotic tool, only used by a few, and it is fair to assume that the Internet has little impact on the lives of most of the world's population (including ESL and Foreign Language teachers), and will not for a very long time to come, despite the undoubted potential of its revolutionary and fundamentally transformative nature.

instructor to exploit effectively/creatively the multimedia potential of ICT through the creation of teaching materials). Subsumed in this too, at least in 'developed contexts' such as Canada, is perhaps the confident, stereotypical assumption that the 'new' generation of young teacher trainees, who have essentially grown up with PCs are, as a matter of course, sympathetic to the use of ICT in education and adept to a large degree in the pedagogical 'possibilities' and the technical complexities of the machines themselves.

In this paper we would like to consider our own teacher training experiences in three courses at the University of Ottawa, to explore the implications of what we discovered about the actual attitudes of our students against the apparent background of 1) the avowed primacy in education of ICT, 2) assumptions that the current generation of teacher trainees are, in a sense, already 'half-way there'. Our experiences would suggest that there is a need for systematic research (initially across the province, perhaps through the TESL Ontario network) into actual trainee attitudes toward ICT (and their perceptions of its value in second language teaching), as the stereotypes do not seem to be applicable. Trainee attitudes would obviously have an important influence on developing effective ICT/FL teacher training syllabi.

The Courses in the DLS[3] Program

Trainee attitudes were collected using a combination of anonymous questionnaires and informal interviews with participants of single-semester courses DLS 3101 (Education Technology and Second Language Learning) and DLS 4100 (Special Topics in Information Communication Technology; See Appendix A for course outlines), offered through the Second Language Institute at the University of Ottawa 2001-2002; the two courses alternate between being taught in French one year and English the next. The students are primarily 4th year undergraduates intending to teach L2/FL, and the basic instructional goal is to make the trainees adept at using computers in language learning/ education in a proactive and critical way.

For the purposes of comparison/contrast we also monitored student reactions to ICT in two single-semester English literature courses (English 3317 A and B, 'Spenser and Milton') and to the introduction of ICT (specifically a thematic, online class discussion group). Some of the students, who were a mixture of 3rd and 4th year undergraduates, intended to teach ESL or English literature to native speakers.

Voices from the 'Chalkface'

The feedback we received from our DLS participants was in some ways counter to assumptions we had initially about the likely 'cyber-enthusiasm' and adeptness which would be evinced by the young intending teachers who had themselves grown up with computers. What they did have to say is probably not atypical, and could provide a possible touchstone for current attitudes among the 'learner-clientele', in 'developed contexts' and perhaps more universally. It is certainly an area that is worthy of large-scale qualitative research[4].

As one of our DLS participants wrote on his final examination, "It seems to me that the ideal course designer and instructor for a [Network Based Language Teaching] course and program would be a computer hacker-linguistic mastermind". This remark shows how many novice FL and ESL teachers see the role of ICT, at least for public consumption, and how they perceive what effective teachers should know about it (whether or not they really do). On the other hand, one of the same group also observed: "As a student, myself, I realize [the importance of] first impressions. For example, I have received assignments or midterms that were handwritten by professors and I found this to be *neither professional nor authoritative*". For some, the mettle of a teacher's professionalism and authority resides in whether or not he/she is capable of deploying at least minimum technological savvy, extending to the production of his/her teaching materials. We cannot assume that in well-resourced contexts that such expectations will diminish over the years.

The Skills Profile

If the formation of an 'informed Internet citizenry' is a universal (rather than just an American) goal, this predicates a number of challenges for FL teachers, particularly in terms of their putative 'ideal' ICT skills profile at the beginning of the Information Age. They would seem to be responsible for more than just teaching the language (...and we use the word 'just' advisably).

The 'new' generation of young teacher trainees, who have essentially grown up with PCs are, as a matter of course, sympathetic to the use of ICT in education and adept to a large degree in the pedagogical 'possibilities' and the technical complexities of the machines themselves.

For some, the mettle of a teacher's professionalism and authority resides in whether or not he/she is capable of deploying at least minimum technological savvy, extending to the production of his/her teaching materials.

There have been attempts to define machine skills and what one could term 'higher level' issues relating to the effective use of ICT in Foreign Language teaching, the former through the European Computer Driver's License Scheme (http://www.ecdl.co.uk/), the latter via the International Society for Technology in Education's (ISTE) National Educational Technology Standards Project, or 'NETS' (http://cnets.iste.org), which posits the need for teachers to have a *sophisticated* and flexible awareness of the instructional potential (and social implications) of ICT in order to be effective practitioners. NETS attempts to provide skill specifications which include not only 'motor skills' and basic ICT concepts, but which define what teachers and learners should also know in order to make creative, higher-level use of the new medium, and to deal adequately with issues of access and confidentiality (to name but two).

It is clear from the foregoing that questions arise about 1) the circumstances wherein ICT can be a relevant tool and 2) the exact implications for the FL teacher's job when ICT forms part of the pedagogic mix. First, the general rule of thumb for the use of ICT must be 'it depends', the myriad details of the context dictating whether the introduction of technology is appropriate (Sheldon, 2002). The scenario must be a 'needs-related' one, always deferring to the exigencies of the situation:
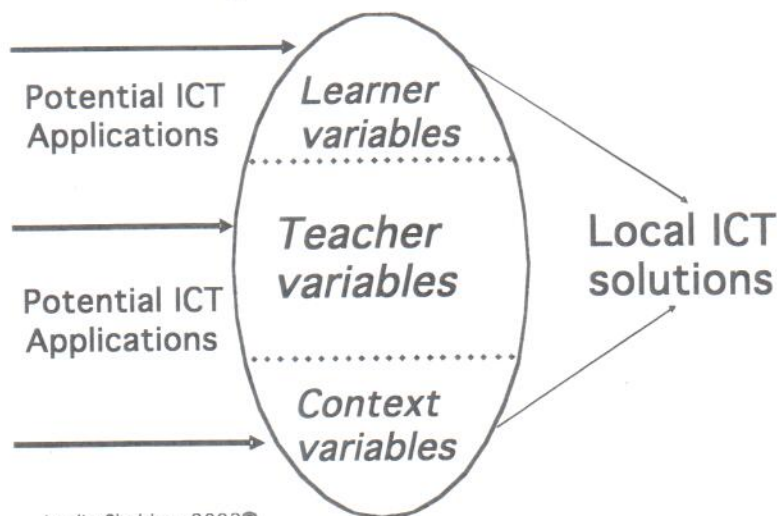
In any particular context, a matrix of potentially complex resource, fiscal, attitudinal, 'political' and institutional issues exists, and it may be (for perfectly good reasons), that funds are more appropriately spent on books than on multimedia labs or ICT training for teachers.

Unquestionably, new demands will be made on teachers as more and more communicative and 'daily life' activity in fact takes place online; as one of our Ottawa DLS trainees asked during a classroom interchange: "I want to teach the foreign language. Do I have to be a computer teacher too?" The answer is, we think, a qualified 'yes'. Moreover, the instructor who wishes to introduce ICT into his/her context, especially if it allows for NBLT applications, is opening a Pandora's box, both for himself/herself and his/her learners. It must not be forgotten that methodological choices represent ideologies; NBLT can be a democratizing force, whereby students become 'stakeholders' who are given increasing power and autonomy, including responsibility for formulating their own educational agendas (as befits a constructivist, 'bottom-up' approach). The decision to relinquish partial control to students is not a universally accepted outcome; young teachers are just as worried about this as older ones, as issues of credibility and 'face' are in some ways even more acute.

Our teacher trainees had, at least in theory, a very vibrant conception of what it is an intending

The "it depends" lens

Potential ICT Applications → Learner variables

Potential ICT Applications → Teacher variables

→ Context variables

Local ICT solutions
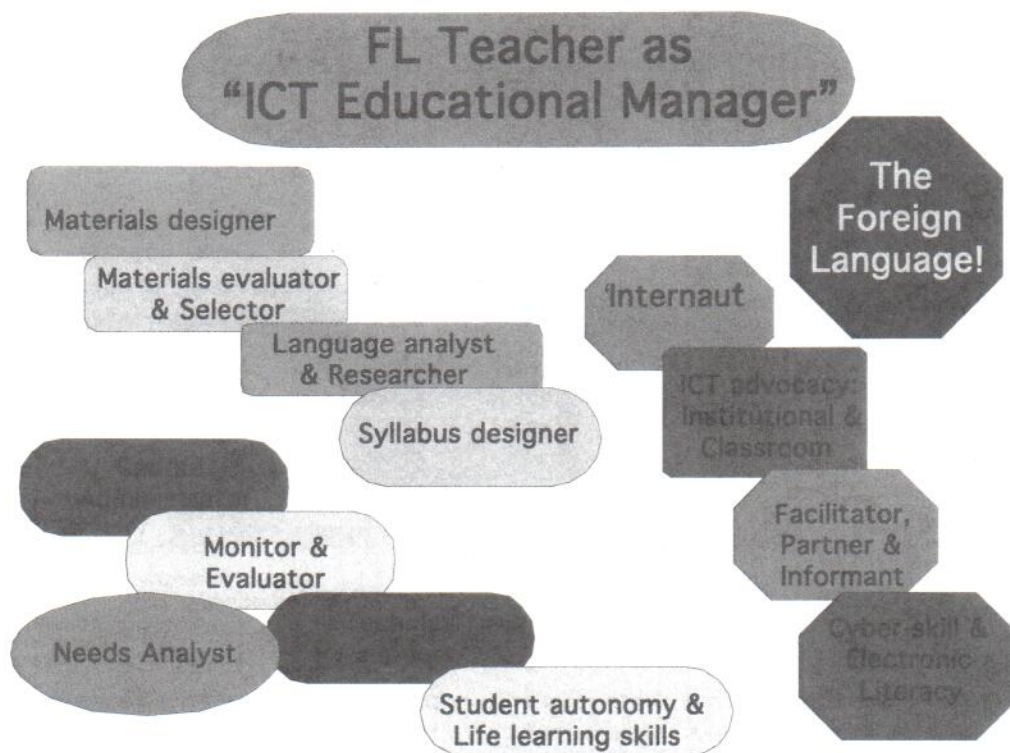
Leslie Sheldon, 2002©

teacher of Foreign Languages *should* be able to do. Now we should just add that some of these trainees thought that a major impediment to the increased extension of ICT in the classroom was caused – pure and simple – by the glut of unimaginative aged teachers (in their view, ALL 'baby boomers') who were squatting, dinosaur-like, in the way of their progress (the 'old teachers' so identified, incidentally, were those in their 40s and 50s). That being said, here is the collaborative competence scenario that we developed with the students via the DLS seminars:

FL Teacher as "ICT Educational Manager"

Materials designer

Materials evaluator & Selector

Language analyst & Researcher

Syllabus designer

Monitor & Evaluator

Needs Analyst

Student autonomy & Life learning skills

The Foreign Language!

Internaut

ICT advocacy: Institutional & Classroom

Facilitator, Partner & Informant

Cyber-skill & Electronic Literacy

Leslie Sheldon, 2002

Perhaps the most challenging is that the teacher must be an 'internaut', who heuristically explores the medium in his/her spare time, outside class hours and at home: something not every teacher wants to do, especially as this would be at the expense of something else (for example, time which could be spent on deciding how to creatively exploit the coursebook or designing more traditional, non-NBLT exercises).

To name but two requirements, the teacher is not just responsible for teaching the language in a traditional way (e.g. from a textbook) but for knowing how to solve any technical hardware/software problems that arise (it can NEVER be assumed that bespoke 'Help' is going to be available), and being aware of how the Foreign Language itself is actually changing in the electronic genres being created on the Web, both from the point of view of register and sociolinguistics. With the reduced face-to-face context on the Web (whatever the promise of multimedia – streaming video 'talking heads' etc. – the experience of most users is still textual, due primarily to bandwidth restrictions) the discourses are, for example, 'marked' graphically for meaning/attitude via such graphical devices as 'emoticons'. He/she must be
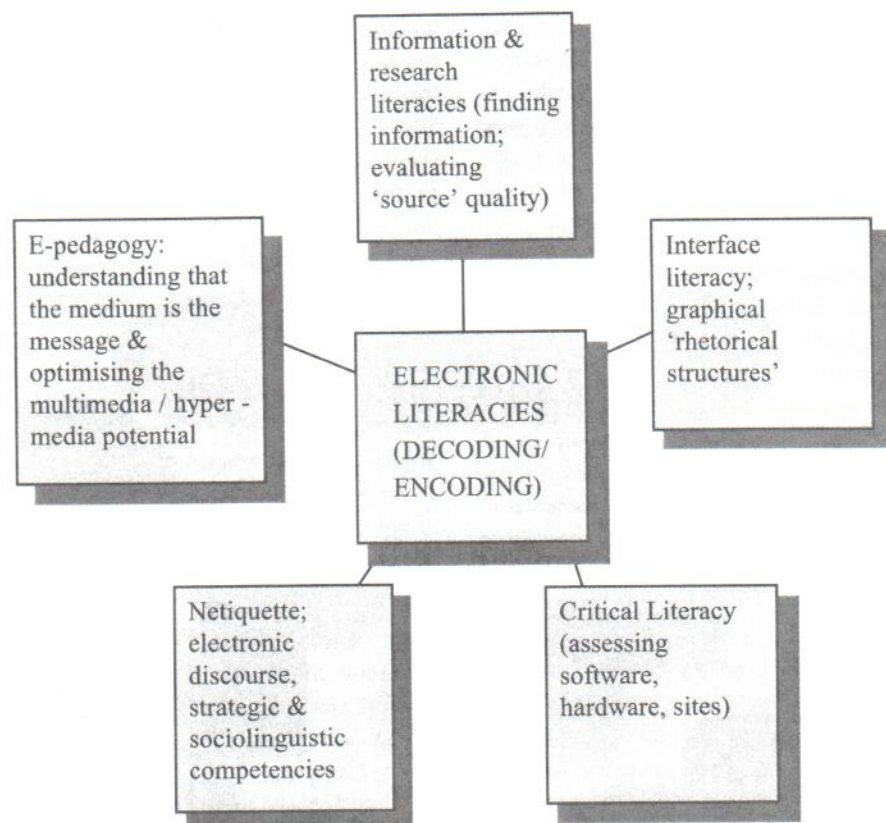
aware of what is available on the Net and how to exploit it in his/her classroom. Perhaps the most challenging is that the teacher must be an 'internaut', who heuristically explores the medium in his/her spare time, outside class hours and at home: something not every teacher wants to do, especially as this would be at the expense of something else (for example, time which could be spent on deciding how to creatively exploit the coursebook or designing more traditional, non-NBLT exercises). As one of our trainees observed, "I like the Net because I can work in my pyjamas…"; a teacher has to be a 24/7 hobbyist who is 'into' the medium in a big way.

With regard to their definition of 'e-literacy', the trainees helped to formulate at least some of the relevant components:

So it might seem that the new generation of FL teacher trainees who are entering the system (and the introduction of ICT has clear implications for teacher training), are bright young, super-literate beings who deplore us slow-moving old folk and are internauting all over the place.

What we found too was that many (but by no means most) students use computers and the Web simply to write essays, send e-mails, play computer games, and to meet people in chatrooms.... *none* of the teacher trainees had, at the outset of the course, used the WEB for 'research' purposes. They also never created a personal Webpage.

We also found what amounted to a significant level of downright 'technophobia': they felt that because such a high level of skill and technical prowess was required, ICT was basically beyond the abilities of the average teacher, and not worth the time/ money required to 'catch up'.

Information & research literacies (finding information; evaluating 'source' quality)

E-pedagogy: understanding that the medium is the message & optimising the multimedia / hyper - media potential

ELECTRONIC LITERACIES (DECODING/ ENCODING)

Interface literacy; graphical 'rhetorical structures'

Netiquette; electronic discourse, strategic & sociolinguistic competencies

Critical Literacy (assessing software, hardware, sites)

So it might seem that the new generation of FL teacher trainees who are entering the system, (and the introduction of ICT has clear implications for teacher training), are young, bright, super-literate beings who are internauting all over the place and deplore us slow-moving old folk. It is not quite like that, and some representative comments, taken from surveys of our students' attitudes, might be useful here:

[ICT] gives students access to so much information that teachers, even the most qualified, simply can't offer...

...women just want the computer to function so that they can do their work, whereas men want to know how it works, why it works this way, and how to fix it if it breaks.

Teachers simply do not have the time it would require to use CALL/NBLT as the primary teaching tool.

Though a teacher is inevitably boring at times for students, they are on the whole much more engaging than a computer screen could ever be.

The use of more and more complex programs will eventually require both student and teacher alike to be the perfect students and teachers, combining motivation for students, superior linguistic and pedagogical competence and knowledge for the teachers and the mind of a computer hacker for both. We obviously don't yet have this and I doubt we ever will...Until teachers are required to take computer-programming courses, then I doubt it will happen with anything but one in a million frequency. (with the exception of the professors of this course)

However, using the Web comes down to knowing when to use it and when not to use it. The students' and the teachers' e-literacy skills must be taught properly, covering all issues and implications, and the e-pedagogy must be used only as a tool and not a complete method.

Some comments from the English 3317 students (who used a literature online discussion group for the first time in the course) are also illustrative and complementary to what is a general reluctance by 'the young' with regard to the ICT enthusiasm we might otherwise imagine that they would have:

I do not want to see the education process gravitate towards ICT. I think it would become too impersonal and the value of education would decrease.

it's not as scary as I thought it would be!

Cool, but...a lot of literature loses its appeal when it's on a shiny screen and not a dusty old book.

I think it is good for writing essays, but don't think that it should be used as an excuse instead of handing out papers in class – not everyone's priorities are about spending their time fussing with a computer and wasting time downloading or trying to reach sites – on the other hand, I like the idea that I can e-mail my essays on time!

The interesting thing here is that for the latter 21-year-old student, teacher credibility necessarily entails a flesh and blood teaching presence during class hours (forget all this constructivist out-of-hours stuff); you are up there, doing what you're supposed to – and hand out the paper to prove that it's happened: QED.

Some further sceptical remarks are probably illustrative in such a context:

I have had classes where ALL of the class content was on the Internet. In each of these classes I rarely attended and received A's. I must say it was nice to not have to go to class, but a bit of a waste of money.

I prefer actual flesh and blood discussion groups. However, this is a very decent alternative.

I love the feel, smell of books.

Good idea in general but I hate computers.

So, it would seem that for many young, intending teachers, the relevant phrase with regard to ICT in FL pedagogy is 'Yes, but...' It was very interesting that when we suggested putting the final examination 'on-line', a scenario to which ALL the course participants had to agree under the regulations, the final decision arrived at by the group was to have the examination performed the same old way. The comments varied from "Whenever there is anything important to do, my computer breaks down...I'm afraid it would do that this time", to "with all due respect to both professors, if we need help we are not sure you could be available on e-mail in the same way you could if you were there 'flesh and blood' in the exam room'.

What we found too was that many (but by no means most) students use computers and the Web simply to write essays, send e-mails, play computer games, and to meet people in chatrooms. The more sophisticated ones could download pirated MP3 files, but *none* of the teacher trainees had, at the outset of the course, used the Web for 're-search' purposes. They also had never created a personal Webpage. We found by the end of the course that few of them knew what RAM was, so perhaps the currency of these technical terms is not all that essential.

Some Conclusions

When we began teaching the DLS courses at the University of Ottawa, we had the idea—perhaps the stereotype – that the use of new technology in the Teaching of Foreign Languages was already considered by young trainees a *sine qua non* of professional competence in the 21st century, and something toward which they were profoundly sympathetic. We also believed that they were technically adept themselves and understood the 'message' implied by the electronic medium and its uses. What we found was a surprising lack of meta-cognitive awareness of the pros and cons, or of how ICT could really be exploited in the classroom (perhaps this was based on their own exposure to ICT in their previous educational experience); we also found what amounted to a significant level of downright 'technophobia': they felt that because such a high level of skill and technical prowess was required, ICT was basically beyond the abilities of the average teacher, and not worth the time/money required to 'catch up'. Indeed, in the end, they seemed much more concerned about developing their repertoire of traditional, non-technical 'core' classroom skills. There is perhaps less 'internautism' out there than one might expect, the attitudes being pragmatic rather than endlessly enthusiastic – which is perhaps just as well if we are to avoid the unwitting promulgation of a kind of pedagogic fascism whereby non-use of ICT is seen as culturally downscale. To borrow a metaphor from a recent conference we attended, none of us would want to be sent to 'Cyberia' for not embracing ICT wholeheartedly.

At the same University of Ottawa conference (Technology In Education), we were struck by a remark made by a student at the close of the initial Round Table, who began by addressing the panel of ICT-literate FL and ESL Professors: "There has been *much* talk here about students and of student needs/wants, but if you really want to help us you need to know what our priorities REALLY are. You REALLY need to listen..." The implication was that our purported concern for learner-centeredness would need to be genuine based on how learners

There is perhaps less 'internautism' out there than one might expect, the attitudes being pragmatic rather than endlessly enthusiastic – which is perhaps just as well if we are to avoid the unwitting promulgation of a kind of pedagogic fascism whereby non-use of ICT is seen as culturally downscale.

I think similar research needs to be conducted in order to find out what teacher trainees across the province think about how ICT fits (or does not fit) in their future personal, professional and pedagogic lives.

actually feel about their educational goals. I think similar research needs to be conducted in order to find out what teacher trainees across the province think about how ICT fits (or does not fit) in their future personal, professional and pedagogic lives. I am sure that even bigger surprises would be revealed.

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Appendix A
Course Outline

DLS 3101 EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY AND SECOND LANGUAGE TEACHING

Language laboratories, projectors, audio and video recorders

The electronic classroom; multimedia language laboratories.

The computer:
Operation and place in second language teaching (Listening - Speaking - Reading – Writing)

The digitalization of texts, images, sound and video; CD-ROMS and DVD.;

Study of software; introduction to authoring programmes;

E-mail, interacting online technologies, Internet-based communication.

Instructional Goals (See M. A. Kassen and C. J. Higgins, *Meeting the technology challenge* in

Technology-Enhanced Language Learning, M. D. Bush and R. M. Terry, Editors, 1997, p. 270)

> to establish a certain degree of familiarity and comfort with the computer

> to become familiar with the role of computers in language learning and education

> to use the software required in the courses you will be teaching

> to explore the software and network resources available at your place of employment

> to demonstrate your ability to integrate technology into your teaching

> to develop your ability to critically evaluate Language Learning Technology

> to reflect on your experiences with technology and the role it plays in language learning and teaching

Readings
Required:

1. **Technology-Enhanced Language Learning**, Michael D. Bush, Editor and Robert M. Terry, Associate Editor, The ACTFL Foreign Language Education Series, National Textbook Company, Lincolnwood (Chicago), 1997, 378 p.

2. **New Ways of Using Computers in Language Teaching**, Tim Boswood, Editor, TESOL, 1997, 309 p.

Recommended:

CALL Environments - Research, Practice, and Critical Issues, Joy Egbert and Elizabeth Hanson-Smith, Editors, TESOL, 1999, 523 p. (ISBN 0-939-791-79-2)

Course Outline

DLS 4100 SPECIAL TOPICS IN INFORMATION COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

* using personal computers to produce video clips
* computer, electronic and information literacies
* the production of multimedia teaching materials (including interactive webpages)
* electronic conferencing
* the characteristics of electronic discourses
* theory & practice of network-based language teaching
* task-based language learning
* electronic distance learning

* student research & publishing
* synchronous and asynchronous learning resources
* evaluating FL teacher websites
* privacy, safety and ethical issues

Instructional Goals

> to become adept at using computers in language learning and education

> to use the software required in the courses you will be teaching

> to demonstrate your ability to integrate multimedia technology into your teaching (including website creation)

> to develop your ability to critically evaluate ICT

> to reflect on your experiences with technology and the role it plays in language learning and teaching

> to become aware of the implementational, policy and ethical issues involved in applying ICT to FL teaching contexts

Readings
Required:

1. Warschauer, M. & Kern, R. (Eds)(2000). **Network-based Language Teaching: Concepts and Practice**. Cambridge: CUP. ISBN 0 521 667429.

2. Warschauer, M., Shetzer, H. & Meloni, C. (Eds)(2000). **Internet for English Teaching**. TESOL. ISBN 0-939791-88-9

1 A version of this paper was presented at the CAAL/ACLA conference (Toronto, 25-28 May 2002).

2 The B.A. Program in L2 Teaching trains teachers principally, but not exclusively, for L2 contexts.

3 Everyone refers to the program as DLS (Didactique des langues secondes) even though the English title is the B.A. in Second Language Teaching (SLT).

4 We are expanding our initial research into this question at the Second Language Institute, but the authors would like to hear from interested parties at other institutions who would like to explore FL trainee attitudes in their particular context. The authors can be contacted by email: jcompain@uottawa.ca or lsheldon@uottawa.ca

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