If you ever wonder why you work such long hours, mostly on a part time basis, beyond what you get paid for, think of the difference you make in so many lives.

The student success stories in this issue of Dialogue will give you a glimpse of the amazing paths our students take after they leave our classes, and these are only the ones that get reported. There are so many other successful outcomes that we don’t capture. You are all to be congratulated for these successes and also for the increased amount of writing you have added to your curriculum this past year. Never before have we had so many ESL students apply for scholarships and essay contests and who have won. You can read a couple of these essays in this issue.

On a program level, we have also made great strides in writing by identifying writing student learning outcomes (SLOs) for each level. Our ESL SLO committee has also developed checklists and rubrics for scoring writing at each level to determine level completion for each of our seven levels and VESL. During the Fall FLEX days we look forward to training you on implementing these writing assessments.

In addition to writing, another hot topic is “transition” – transitioning our students to ABE, the GED/high school diploma program, job training, and to college. Although we have a way to go in improving these links, we have made some progress this year in two areas. Our Transitional ESL Committee has finished a course outline for a new course that will better prepare our students to enter and succeed in college. We hope to pilot this class in September. In the vocational area, Donna Price has worked very hard to develop a course outline for a new course called Personal Care Assistant/Caregiver. Following the I-best model, a VESL instructor and vocational instructor will teach this course together, preparing students for jobs as personal care assistants and possible subsequent certified nurse assistant training. I would also like to commend Colleen Fitzmaurice for converting her beginning level morning class into an ESL for Work class. Her summary is enclosed in this issue of Dialogue. Future funding of adult education is changing to more specifically emphasize transitions to work and post secondary education. One of our goals next year will be to make students more aware of the “career pathways” available to them through our program. More to come on this.

Continued on page 2
Lee Mosteller Retires by Gretchen Bitterlin

As Lee Mosteller retires, our ESL Program loses one of the finest instructors and human beings that has ever stepped foot in our program. She began her career in 1976 or 1977 teaching in the ABE/GED lab in Linda Vista, but with the influx of Indochinese refugees in the late 1970’s, she was quickly recruited to teach ESL and has been there ever since. Having a pulse on exactly what her students needed, she wrote one of the best selling ESL texts ever written – *Survival English* in 1984, which has been re-printed twice since then. When companies were trying to maximize profits by publishing books with small print, Lee insisted that the print had to be large on uncluttered pages for beginning level students, and this is one of the things that has made her book such a big seller.

Lee’s contributions to our program are huge, but perhaps her fondest memories relate to the wonderful celebrations with her students at the end of the year, usually culminating in everyone doing the hokey pokey. Her classroom has always been a close knit community of cultures from all over the World. In the old days, Lee was the organizer for field trips to Sea World and World Day at the Linda Vista campus and editor of a student newsletter. These activities helped her students feel connected to more than their class.

Lee has also generously given her time toward numerous non-classroom projects over the years, including mini grants, level exit unit tests, and the family literacy math curriculum she wrote with Nancy Bachman. When anyone has needed a hand, Lee has always been there. When a transfer was required a couple of semesters ago, Lee was the first to volunteer to move to protect the needs of her fellow teachers. When asked to be the interim ESL Department Chair for Nancy Bachman at North City, what was supposed to be a 2 month job turned out to last for another year and a half. When Lee took over this assignment as a Chair, she exposed her talent as a facilitator and a leader.

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Jottings—Continued from page 1

As we come to the end of this year, I must take the time to thank our Assistant Program Chairs (Corinne Layton, Steve Gwynne, Jim Brice, Ingrid Greenberg, Barbara Raifsnider, Ann Marie Damrau), our CBET Coordinator (Barbara Pongsrikul), our EL Civics Coordinator (Jan Forstrom), our Citizenship Coordinator (Mechelle Perrott), our Technology Resource Instructors (Donna Price, Cindy Wislofsky), our committee chairs (Corinne Layton, Barbara Raifsnider, Lee Mosteller, Elissa Claar and Jim Brice), and all the ESL instructors and volunteers who have given time beyond their classroom hours (See the attached teacher recognition list) to improve our program. Your dedication is truly appreciated. It is an honor and a privilege to work with all of you.
ESL Textbook Committee Accomplishments by Barbara Raifsnider

Last fall the textbook committee was chaired by Colleen Fitzmaurice and Elisa Claar. For spring semester, Lee Mosteller and I took over chairing the committee. Some of the items the committee worked on during the year were a core textbook pilot project, textbooks for student purchase, textbook inventory, and how to survive the lack of funds for new class sets. We also had publishers’ reps come and share some of their new materials. The reps who presented during the spring semester included Sue Thompson from Cambridge and Lynn Graver from New Readers Press. Sue Thompson and Donna Price gave a presentation on the Ventures series for our February meeting. In April, Lynn Graver brought Ann Gianola to talk about her two new series, That’s Life and Life Goes On. Our December meeting featured Nancy Wichmann, our district bookstore supervisor. She talked about pricing, the return to publisher policy, a possible student book buy-back, and the possibility of selling books online. This discussion carried over into our first spring meeting as well. Colleen conducted a survey of the fall pilot project instructors during the spring semester. She reported her findings at our last meeting on April 30th. Important among her results was that most teachers liked using a core textbook.

A major topic for spring was how to provide class sets of books to instructors with limited funding. Since our budget won’t support getting many new books, we decided to look at ways to share existing sets of books. One decision we made was to look at the books teachers already had in their classrooms but weren’t using. After getting the list of these books from the teachers, the list was circulated and teachers were able to request and receive sets of books from other campuses.

In addition, teachers looking for a change or a supplement to their class sets e-mailed Gretchen with the title they were looking for. We also came up with a plan for sharing textbooks by partnering teachers who teach at the same level and with similar populations. We also decided that if we all look on our shelves for sample copies of books and put them together, we might be able to come up with several lender sets of ten or more. We have already discovered that we have a number of unused sets of books. Finally, at the opening of the ESL Teacher Library at Mid City on June 4-5, we also had a book fair to distribute even more class sets of books.

Since Lee Mosteller is retiring there will be a new co-chair, Ann McCrory. I’d like to take this opportunity to tell Lee that I have really enjoyed working with her and I want to thank her for the wonderful minutes she took. I would also like to welcome Ann McCrory and look forward to working with her once again.
During the past year or so teachers have been encouraged to use one of the new core textbooks in their classrooms. Many of the new textbooks are correlated with Model Standards, CASAS competencies, EL Civics and the texts integrate listening, speaking, reading and writing along with grammar. Numerous teachers began using these texts.

The textbook committee then discussed the possible benefits of using a textbook series across levels at the same site, for example teachers in levels 1,2,3 all using the same series. We encouraged teachers to do this and determined that there were four groups that qualified for the informal study conducted in the fall semester. After the semester we asked them to fill out a survey of their impressions. The four groups were: CBET teachers using Ventures across levels in their multi-level classes; Levels 1,2,3 at Clairemont using Step Forward; Levels 1,2,3 at Mid City mornings using Ventures and levels 1-6 at Mid City afternoons using Step Forward. Fifteen of the twenty four students surveyed responded. Here are some of their comments about using the books across levels:

- “I didn’t really want to do this, but decided to try it. I didn’t think I’d like it, but it surprised me how much I and the students liked it.”
- Because students understood book style, format and pacing when passed to next level, they spent less time learning about the book and more time learning English. (8 similar comments)
- Students in my multi level class were on same topic at same time. Students saw a clear progression.
- Students had greater awareness of progress. One student purchased the book on level for her class and the higher level book for home study.
- Teacher knows what the students coming to her from level below have learned and knows what the higher level teacher expects.

However:
- Teachers did not collaborate more with their colleagues using the same series.
- Three teachers felt less creative using the core texts.
- All supplemented the texts with other materials, especially with reading and grammar materials.

These are some general comments about using their particular textbook:

- Almost everyone would use the text again
- Prep is greatly simplified
- Met course objectives
- Level appropriate
- Kept me on track with competencies
- It created a pathway and outline for syllabus
- Would be helpful for new teachers who need guidance

Thank you to the teachers who filled out the survey: Rheba Smith, Ann McCrory, Ana Traganza, Ann Gianola, Catalina Vela, Stephanie Thomas, Eileen Schmitz, Colleen Fitzmaurice, Edith Kreiger, Elissa Claar (2), Nancy Johansen (2), Mindy Tenen, Steve Gwynne.
From July 2008 to July 2009, we trained over 100 instructors. The topics of the workshops and trainings on integrating technology in ESL came from needs assessments given in the beginning of the fall semester and requests made during the year. Topics we covered included:

- Basic Word tips/Working with Word
- Online CAV summary
- Online Attendance Roster
- How to enroll and report Flex activities
- Assistance in the lab
- E-mail management
- How to access Public folders
- Using the electronic rollbook
- Creating a class website on Quia and Google Sites
- PowerPoint
- Publisher
- Demonstration of software

Forty-four instructors completed an online training survey. 98% of the respondents said that they were ready to apply the skills they learned in the workshops; 86% had already tried the skills that they learned; and 95% said they planned to apply this skill again. We feel very gratified when instructors give us feedback like the following quote from a workshop participant: "Training was very well organized and helpful in answering any questions I might have. Having written instructions to take home is great as now I can do it independently."

In the fall we are planning workshops on teaching vocabulary with Quia, practicing spelling with Spelling City and making a blog/website with WordPress. One of our goals is to provide ways for instructors to integrate technology in their classes. We are there for follow up because we all know that technology sometimes doesn't work the way it's supposed to and sometimes watching a demonstration several times really helps it sink in! Donna and Cindy are available to meet one-on-one if you have a specific question on how to integrate technology in your class, how to use the Faculty Web Services, or how to manage your e-mail, etc.

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The ESL Learner Persistence Committee has had another productive year. The following committee members should be acknowledged: Corinne Layton (Chair), Connie Falconer, Lee Mosteller, Sheri Bartlett, Gretchen Bitterlin, Cindy Wislofsky, Jim Brice, Starlene Dahl, and Barbara Pongsrikul. We have also recently welcomed Sharon Javdan to our Committee. As the title of our committee indicates, our primary goal is to develop strategies to increase learner persistence. To achieve this goal, we have developed a number of effective orientation tools that improve learner persistence. One of those orientation tools is the ESL Student Guide, which we revise every year based on changes in the program and teacher feedback. It contains useful district and campus information, course offerings, frequently asked questions, useful English expressions, phrasal verbs, a verb chart, community resource information, emergency numbers and a bookmark with websites for English practice. The Guide also contains a chart that shows paths students can take to transition from ESL into other programs such as ABE, GED and Job Training. Students also use record sheets in the Guide to keep track of attendance, weekly test results and CASAS testing. Last year we added a section on Culture Tips and U.S. Laws, developed sample lessons using the Culture Tips and presented the Culture Tips at a Flex Day Workshop in January. Based on feedback from instructors at the Culture Tips workshop, the Committee decided to develop and provide information on classroom/school protocol titled “Classroom Reminders” that will be added to the 2009/2010 Guide. This information will be presented at a Flex Day Workshop in September. In addition, the Committee and Mark Neyn dorff have developed around 26 visuals illustrating a variety of cultural tips, including those related to classroom protocol.

The Committee has also been working on a comparative study of managed and open entry enrollment classes at Mid-City Campus and the relationship to learner persistence. An article with the results of our initial research was published in a previous edition of the Dialogue Newsletter. The data indicated a strong correlation between managed enrollment and learner persistence. To further our study we have requested the assistance of the Research Committee and District Researcher Cathy Hanson. One of our next steps is to collect data on learning gains (for example CASAS pre/post test, level completion) as an indicator of learner persistence.
Tuesday’s Tech Tips Travel to Teachers Statewide

Thanks to OTAN’s Technology Mentoring Program (TIMAC) and connections that Cindy and Donna have made with fellow technology trainers at other schools, Tuesday’s Technology Tips are now being distributed to several adult schools throughout California. Besides our 670 CE employees, the tips are being e-mailed to over 500 other teachers and staff statewide through technology mentors at sister adult schools. Here’s a sampling of some of the supportive comments received from them:

“I had to write you and say THANK YOU SO much for this great tip!!!!!! I have wanted to know how to do this for the longest time. Keep up the great work.”

“These have been awesome and inspiring.”

“I am a current member of TIMAC and am on your email list for your Tech Tips. We think they are fabulous. We are big fans here at the Newport-Mesa Unified Adult School!”

Lee Mosteller’s Retirement  continued from Page 2

Through her excellent communication skills and patience, she was extremely successful. Most recently, Lee has served on the Learner Persistence Committee, making major contributions to our ESL Student Guide.

I think the essence of Lee’s personality can be captured by an anonymous quote she placed on the Xerox machine at the North City Campus when she was the department chair there,

“The longer I live, the more I realize the impact of attitude on life. Attitude, to me, is more important than facts. It is more important than the past, than education, than money, than circumstances, than failures, than successes, than what other people think or say or do. It is more important than appearance, giftedness, or skill. It will make or break a company, a church, a home. The remarkable thing is we have a choice every day regarding the attitude we will embrace for that day. We cannot change our past.

We cannot change the fact that people will act in a certain way. We cannot change the inevitable. The only thing we can do is play on the one strength we have and that is attitude. I am convinced that life is 10% what happens to me and 90% how I react to it. And so it is with you. We are in charge of our attitudes.”

And so it is not so much what Lee has accomplished, which is outstanding, but how she has communicated with her students, colleagues, and administrators over the years – a truly awesome and inspiring experience. Thank you, Lee, for your 32 years of service.
This semester I have been teaching a new beginning low class called English for Jobs. We opened this class because many beginning level students were asking for English instruction related to jobs. Late in the fall semester I visited the level 1 classes and told the students about the class. Enough students were interested to warrant opening the new class.

It has been a most interesting and rewarding experience for me and I think for them too. The persistence was very high, very few students dropped, I have never had so few drops. Of those who did drop, the reason was usually because they got a second job or moved. Some got a first job and most continued attending on their days off after they got a job.

I developed the syllabus around the steps of getting a job: Looking for a job, Applying, Interviewing, Keeping the Job (Being a Good Worker) and Moving Up at Work. We began each week with a dialog and followed with various activities integrating listening, speaking, reading, writing, grammar and pronunciation skills. I tried to use functions that would apply to various jobs, and each week or so I featured one type of job that I taught specifically, with pictures, job title and duties, for example home health aide, cashier, dishwasher or custodian.

Often it’s frustrating for teachers because we don’t hear our beginning level students applying the language we’re teaching in class. That’s why I love teaching a content based class. I think they internalize the language because it’s useful to them. I actually hear them applying the language in context. One came to me while I was using the computer during the break and said, “Sorry to bother you.” I commonly hear them saying, “If you teach me, I can learn.” or “I’ll try my best”, phrases we learned early in the semester. They can describe their work values, “I am dependable and honest.”

I have 4 groups in the class, one high, one low/literacy, and two typical level 2 students. Each group has a color and I color coded the tables by taping a sheet of color construction paper to the table. This assures that they always sit in their like groups. Each week I rotate the colors around the room, so no one group is always in the back or front. At times they practice in their like groups and other times they practice with other groups. Each group is given jobs which they perform daily. Examples of jobs are handing out papers, erasing, helping new students, or writing the date on the board. Each job involves speaking practice. The best job is making announcements to the class. A student stands in front each day and greets the class, asks the date, then says, “Please turn cell phones off” and “Put gum in the trash.” They got a kick out of it and so did I.

I think this is a valuable class in these difficult economic times. Our students are competing for jobs and we can help them by giving them the skills to be competitive. I encourage other sites to teach beginning level job classes too.

Class Statistics

- 40 students actively attending
- 32 students persisted since beginning of semester
- 13 explained drops
- 10 unexplained drops
- 23.23 ACS to date
Reflecting on Your English  by Kathren Bouldin

A great lesson emerged after I attended the FLEX workshop on Cooperative Learning. In class, I was telling the students about the workshop and how during the co-op activities I had thought about them and how proud I was of them and their tremendous ability to use English. I told them that I thought they probably didn’t appreciate their competence in English and that I wanted them to take some time to reflect on how much progress they had made. Then I thought, “Why don’t we do this right now?” And so we did.

I had no plan to do this activity. Then it occurred to me that using the Venn diagram we had used in a team-building activity in the Cooperative Learning workshop could be a good vehicle for facilitating a discussion on the topic of “Reflecting on Your English.”

1. What is something you feel proud of with your English?
2. What is something you are working on improving?
3. What is a weak area/situation for you?
4. What is a “sign” for you that you really HAVE English?
5. What is something that you never imagined you could do, but you CAN?
6. What is a big wish you have with English? I wish I could...

In groups of 3, the students made their own Venn diagrams. They were to pass the diagram around and each write their responses to the questions listed above:

After the diagrams were done, the students talked with each other about their responses. The next step was for each group to see if they could find one or two things they realized they had in common. One person from each group would tell the “in-common” things to the whole class. Good interaction came out of this; the students seemed quite amazed that they all had so much in common. For the “big wish” question, a couple of students had the dream of getting a professional job and being able to do it in English. A couple of others said their wish was to understand movies 100% without captions. But overwhelmingly, the big wish was: I wish I could speak English like a native speaker.

I collected the diagrams so I could see all the responses.

The final step was to have the students write a separate feedback sheet on what they had liked about the activity. Here are some excerpts:

Continued on page 18
A Successful Classroom Project

by Sandie Linn

Each spring semester, students in the VESL/Basic Education class at Centre City embark on a reading project. Right before spring break, they begin reading a book from cover to cover. This semester, students read *The Translator: A Tribesman’s Memoir of Darfur* by Daoud Hari. *The Translator* is the story of a man who decided to do his part to solve the Darfur conflict using his English skills as his weapon instead of a gun.

Students in the class read the book, turned in written responses to questions and essay prompts, and wrote a book review as part of their participation in the book project. Here is an excerpt of a book review by Marco Gonzalez:

I am currently reading this book and so far it been deeply sad and fascinating to me. I would say the issues in this book about the Zaghawa tribe’s suffering and the fact that they have been killed by Jangaweed and the Genocide are a tragedy. As a child, Daoud Hari saw Sudanese militia groups attacking, raping and murdering citizens and burning Darfur villages. The book was very clearly and written and Hari uses fascinating words and provides interesting stories. The author achieved his goal, as his intention is to take you into this book he wrote and keep you interested in learning about Darfur.

In addition, several students completed the four mile Walk for Darfur on March 29, 2009 to help raise money and awareness of the genocide in Darfur. They walked as a team, called Continuing Ed Students. As the grand finale of this project, the students participated in a live telephone conference with the author, Daoud Hari. They prepared questions ahead of time, so each had an opportunity to interact with the author.
Integrating Technology into the Classroom: Google docs by Steve Gwynne

Every day introduces a new website, buzzword or Ed-tech tool that creates discussion in the technology circles. This semester, it was “Cloud Computing.” Imagine my surprise when I found out we were already doing it in a multi-level advanced ESL and VESL class at Mid-City Center.

Some experts say the future is in the “clouds,” that being the Internet, where so-called, “software-as-a-service” exists. Google, in their quest for doing just about everything, offers something called Google Docs. This Internet-based software provides a word processing program, a slide presentation program similar to PowerPoint, a spreadsheet and a form tool. Access is free and through the Internet so it is available anytime. But the real magic is that it allows users to easily collaborate on projects while working from separate computers. Thanks to Cindy Wislofsky’s TIMAC mentoring, I learned just enough to be dangerous.

Our first task was a cultural presentation. Students worked collaboratively to create short presentations on what they thought people should know about their countries and cultures. The groundwork was set up with Cindy Wislofsky’s help over a few weeks at our weekly lab as students learned the basics of opening, saving and using presentation software. Surprisingly, a fair number of students accessed their projects and continued to work on them in the learning labs or from home. A few, of course, went beyond the instructor’s level of knowledge and did things like embed video and animations. The presentations were informative and delighted everyone. It gave students an opportunity to speak publicly, but from within the safety net of their group. This, along with the visual aid provided by the presentation software, took some of the anxiety away from speaking in front of the class.

Students also wrote essays in both classes and saved their work on Google Docs. This tool allows the teacher to comment on student work as well as glean learner errors for whole class correction later in the week. In addition, students learned to revise online. As a culmination to the semester, volunteers printed out their essays and read them to the class.

I recommend integrating Google docs in classrooms with high intermediate to advanced students as both a collaborative tool and a way of saving student work. Familiarity with email is an indicator of success. Google Docs lends itself to a variety of projects including some of the EL Civics objectives. Number 32 comes to mind, for example. The key is to start teaching it early in the semester. As you develop the learner base of experienced students, they will help each other get on board. I’m sure Cindy would be more than happy to show anybody in the district how to get started. And I would be willing to show more than a few people at Mid-City how to get up there in the “clouds” with their class and Google Docs.
Sharing Customs from other Cultures—Celebration of the Persian New Year
by Angie Moeen

On March 19, Linda Kozin, Mary Zimmerman and their students joined Angie Moeen’s class, three evening classes at North City - Miramar, to observe the typical Haft Seen Table which decorates every Iranian house at the time of the Iranian New Year. This coincides with the first day of spring. Two of Angie’s Iranian students gave a presentation on the significance of the seven items which start with the letter “S” in the Persian language and are called Haft Seen. Angie herself shared more information about this tradition. The teachers as well as the students seemed to be appreciative and thought the whole presentation was exciting as well as informative.

The Dinner Club by Maryam Sotoudehriazi
(Student in Kathren Bouldin’s TOEFL Class)

In Kathren Bouldin’s ESL classes, we started going to different restaurants and learning about other cultures by eating their food. Our goals are to improve our speaking, make friends, and learn about different cultures, to boot. We try to find restaurants with both good quality and also affordable prices for everybody. There are no limitations; everybody can take part in these outings. We started with a Vietnamese restaurant at their New Year’s time, and so far we have also been to Korean, Iranian, and Ethiopian restaurants. We have plans to go to German, Japanese, and Mexican restaurants. We all agree that eating the food of other countries is one of the best ways to know about their culture and their customs. Then even if we don’t have a chance to visit these countries, at least with our “dinner club” we will have a good chance to eat their food and know a little more about the country. The more you know, the less ethnocentric you will be.
Mid City ESL Students Volunteer in the Community  by David Hamrah

Three of my students had the wonderful experience of volunteering in an elementary school. The students were Kam "Queenie" Leung from Macao and Danica from The Philippines, and Bic Nguyen from Vietnam.

These students were angels as they had to figure out transportation, go through TB testing and wait for months as I tried to get the permission and cooperation of the school. (The overwhelmed staff were giddy at the idea of volunteers but, in fact, had no experience in HOW to go about integrating "help" into their routine.) In the end, they were able to start volunteering regularly. They came in a couple times a week to help out in the classrooms, work with the kids and help the teachers prep materials. Also they were a big help during the special events like the Rummage Sale and pancake breakfast. I believe our students are an excellent source of volunteers to the community, and in particular, schools since they have that priceless combination of qualities: depth of experience, refreshing enthusiasm and diverse cultural backgrounds.

Having our students volunteer is one of those perfect "win - win" situations where everyone has rare opportunities to gain: our students gain practical experience in English and U.S. culture while students in the public schools are allowed to experience and genuinely connect with people from different cultures. Given more time (that priceless commodity), I would like to develop a master guide which can enable student volunteers to introduce aspects of their culture and experience to elementary school children. As a teacher, I think it's easy to forget how lucky we are to work with so many interesting people from so many places. Outside of City Heights, there is a whole city of students who are missing out on rich, real life experiences of the world outside and all the strong and fascinating people who end up in our communities. Through volunteering, our students can gain invaluable exposure to real English and U.S. culture while students in our elementary schools are afforded the desperately needed and priceless opportunity to meet, understand and enjoy people from anywhere on the globe.
This is the year of big numbers ("Billions and Billions," as Carl Sagan used to say). And while ECC can’t claim to have served billions of ESL students yet, we did have an ACS of 30, with many classes bulging out the door, overflow classes, and long waiting lists to boot: Mil Gracias to those teachers and staff that dealt with the masses with grace under pressure.

As this was my first year back at ECC since Mary Beauparlant started our orientation classes, I was very impressed with the impact that Mary’s orientation has on the students and the program. A few thousand students a year go through the class, and not only do students arrive in class better prepared, but because of the way the orientation and placement take place, they arrive in a way that is less disruptive even though the classes are open enrollment classes.

We have to add EL CIVICS to the time tested list of death and taxes as unavoidable, and ECC had full compliance, having tested over 36 objectives this year!

Another important civic duty that we have is to provide citizenship classes to our community, and it is with much civic pride that I can announce that our citizenship classes under the tutelage and guidance of Elvia Kerlick and Catalina Vela helped almost two dozen students pass the test with at least eight more scheduled to take the interview within the next month and others waiting to be scheduled.

A few more numbers: ECC had four ESL students win scholarships at this year’s Continuing Education Scholarship Ceremony held at ECC in a packed theatre on May 27. One of those students, Verenice Escamilla, who attends Beth Bogage’s Advanced ESL class and my VESL lab, won twice. Two other winners from Beth’s class were Silvia Rivas and Hawa Ismail. Beth herself won our admiration as she and Barbara Pongskrikul started the Norma Ledesma Memorial Scholarship this year in honor of one of their former students, and they gave out its first scholarship this year. Thanks to all of those people who made ECC proud at the ceremony.

Our VESL program had a handful of graduates in C.N.A. and now has another handful starting out in C.N.A., BIT, and Home Daycare. Those graduates are textbook examples of student persistence, both of them having started the program two years ago!

One is a small number, but ECC has one great volunteer, Staphanie Jarrett, who has volunteered for over ten years, doing conversation groups one day a week in our morning ESL 6 class and our afternoon VESL lab. And guess what happens on that day? Numbers go up!

Another person who proves that just one person can make a difference is ECC’s Carmina Gerardo. Through her efforts, the May 28 ECC talent show provided a wonderful ending to a sometimes difficult year, and reaffirmed for us, that no matter what the budget circumstances are, The Show Must Go On!
Center City Student and Faculty Successes  by Barbara Raifsnider

It seems that Centre City ESL students have talent. Both the statewide winner and the district winner for the 2009 CATESOL Adult Essay Contest were from Centre City. Gladis Jimenez from Marcy Bergqvist’s class won the CATESOL State Conference contest, and Sandie Linn’s student, Luis Ernesto Buendia won our district level contest. Luis also won a scholarship award last year. Meseret Lemma, Minerva Lopez, Sisi Reperttg and Hamilton Pena from Sandie’s class also wrote essays for this contest.

Irene Sanchez from Sandie Linn’s class won two scholarship awards, a Farmer’s and a classified scholarship. In addition, one of Louise Winheld’s students, Susan Zheng, wrote a good essay for the scholarship contest as did Francis Turkson, Luis Buendia, and Hamilton Pena. They didn’t win, unfortunately, but they worked hard on them. Francis Turkson received a full scholarship to City College and will start his program this summer.

Some of our past students have also been achieving great things outside of our program. Laura Leon is a student at SDSU. Javier Vargas, currently an aide and formerly a Centre City ESL just graduated from City College with honors and will be starting SDSU in the fall. Nader Tazbaz, the ESL deaf student who presented at Convocation last fall, just graduated from Mesa College with a certificate of achievement in Hotel Management and Hospitality.

Centre City also has the great honor of having an instructor nominated by our district for the Professor of the Year Award. Sandie Linn is an outstanding instructor who successfully instructs a variety of students - ESL, DSPS, VESL, GED and ABE- in a variety of subjects- ESL, American Sign Language, Math, and Vocational ESL. One of her most admirable traits is her ability to make her unique mix of students feel like they are a part of one family. Sandie’s class is always humming with activity. Besides all the subjects they study, Sandie also has her students do a project every fall and read a novel every spring semester. They get involved in community projects as well as classroom projects. Sandie spends many hours preparing for her classes and grading papers. She’s truly someone who deserves our district nomination. For her outstanding work this year, she was also chosen as the outstanding contract faculty member by our President Anthony Beebe at the annual Hail and Farewell Ceremony in May.
Cesar Chavez Student Successes by Barbara Raifsnider

Chavez ESL students have been busy writing essays for the scholarship contests. These are the students who wrote essays:

Rosa Limon’s students – Reyna Cardenos, Pedro Lozano, Martha Rodriguez, Efren Torres and Cecelia Valverde

Roberto Santa Ana’s students – Alicia Navarro, Hipolito Salinas, Fernando Ramirez, Angela Barron de Acosta, Satoe Tsuchida and Claudia Estrada

Thomas William’s student – Tania Ocampo

Remy Lopez’ students – Radahi Mata and Josue Batalla

Irene Ayon’s students - Martin Pinal, Habacuc Arroyo, Lorena Verdin, Eduardo Chura, Marcela Villalobos, Daniel Varela, Yolanda Ochoa, Susana Cruz, Taynel Hernandez, Jesus Lopez, Mosel Gloria, Augustin Hermosillo

Two of Irene Ayon’s students won scholarships. Alfredo Soria won $300 for his essay, and Magdalena Chavarria won $200 for her essay.

ESL Beautification Project, Miramar Campus, North City

Kudos to Angie Moeen and her students for planting a garden in front of their ESL classrooms. With all the construction going on at Miramar, this provides a more pleasant environment for all, including all the rabbits that also hop around there.
This semester, seven of my students applied for the various scholarships that were offered and wrote very enlightening essays with respect to their current and future educational goals as well as how they have benefited from taking classes through continuing education. It is with great pride to announce that one of our students, Lily (Xioli) Zhang received the $300 Senate Classified Award. Needless to say, she was shocked! At first, she thought that maybe her English wasn’t good enough to comprehend what was being said on the other end. When it finally sank in, she was overjoyed to say the least. Lily started at Level 5 in our program and slowly moved up to finally reaching my Advanced Level 7/TOEFL class. Her main goal was to be able to communicate in her daily life and be able to help her daughter and communicate with her teachers. This she feels she has accomplished because now she has the confidence to do so. In the September, 2006 issue of the Dialogue, Ola Steenhagen had submitted a very informative article that Lily wrote entitled “Hands are Very Important in America but The Mouth is The Most Important.” That was two years ago. She has made remarkable progress since then. She truly has been an inspiration to me and to our students.

Chuong Nguyen is the evening instructional aide in the computer lab at LVPC. He very helpful and works well with people as he is amiable and funny. Jane Uhle and I are very proud of him. He was an ESL student in Mimi’s class from 07/02 until 01/03. He then went up to Jane Uhle’s class, and he studied with her until 01/04. In 09/03 he entered Mesa College where he studied and continued to improve his English skills. In September 2008, he entered the Radiology program after having been on the waiting list. He has since been thriving in the program. This semester he applied for 5 scholarships and was awarded three worth $3,000. His mother, Phuong, is also very proud of him. She was my student from 2005 to 2007. In 2006, Chuong wrote a winning essay for The New Americans Immigrant Museum Essay Contest about the sacrifices his mother made for him, so he could have a better life here in the US.
Reflecting on your English—Continued from page 10

1. This activity showed me how I can organize my thoughts better.

2. It gave me confidence in what I’m doing now. I’m self-motivated again, not getting into a slump about learning English.

3. It made me see that my answers are usually abstract. Other people’s answers are more specific. I recognized that I don’t have specific strategies. It made me proud of my previous efforts and encouraged me to work for English.

4. I normally rush doing my daily routine tasks. This activity let me stop the train, to think about what progress I did.

5. It’s true that I can communicate in English. It made me happier, and motivated me to study more. I envy even the homeless, because they can speak fluently.

6. I realized that not having to concentrate to understand when I listen to English is a sign that I “have” English.

7. I realized we have many things in common, and we can help each other solve our problems.

8. I don’t usually think about positive things in my English like proud or the sign that my English is getting better. Today I could find the sign that my English is getting better.

9. I realized that all of us frantically want to speak like native speakers.

10. The session revealed my strong and weak points.

Just as I had imagined during the co-op learning workshop, my students would shine in this activity, and would have no trouble talking up a storm. This reflection time made them proud of their English and proud of themselves. And for me, it just made me even more proud of them!
(To Susan Morgan, Level 6 ESL instructor, North City, Miramar Campus)

It’s been a really long time since I sat for the last time on one of those comfortable chairs inside the ESL classroom. I can still remember how wonderful it was to sit there and just start discussing some topic, or just listen to one of your awesome speeches.

But, you know what people say, all the things that you like the most have an end, and then you have to move on. I really had a good time when I lived there. I had the chance to learn many things, not only English, but also simple things about life. I have realized that I am definitely not the same man that went with a childish mind to the United States. I think I had the chance to grow up by being far away from my family for a considerable amount of time.

As my sister Ana must have told you, I am now working for HP as a Technical Solutions Representative, in an outsourcing account. That means that HP pays for my work, but I am actually providing a service to another company. In this case I am providing technical support to Pfizer over the phone. I have been taking calls for just a week, and it’s been really difficult. There is a lot of stuff to learn, but I like challenges, so I think I will do well there, after a while of taking calls.

I have to thank you, because a great part of my knowledge on this language is thanks to your patience when teaching your students how to use and pronounce a word, when to use an expression, and how to use that on the American culture context. I have to tell you that I found your classes really interesting.

I hope you get along with Ana. She is a really nice girl. She is a little shy. However, when she starts talking to someone and gains some momentum it is very difficult to stop her. I’m just kidding. She told me that you said that we have a similar smile. Well, lots of people say that we are like twins. But we are actually very different.

Well, I don’t want to extend this letter because it would get boring. I just wanted to say hello, and to thank you for your efforts to make my English skills a little better.

And I will ask you to do me one favor. Please tell all the people I met in your class, that I still remember them. We all had a lot of fun together. I wish I could go back in time to enjoy a little more those hilarious classes. And for the ones that had not the chance to know me, tell them the story of the legendary student that left his footprint on everyone’s mind. I’m teasing once again.

Best regards,

Carlos Gutierrez,
Your former favorite student
**More Letters**

*From Starlene Dahl, ESL instructor at North City Miramar Campus*

About 2-3 years ago a young woman from Iran came to my class at Clairemont. I thought she was too advanced for that class, and asked if she would be able to attend my Saturday class at Miramar. She came for two or three semesters and we got to know each other quite well. She was a doctor and wanting to obtain a residency here in the U.S. She sent me her application for a program and asked me if I could review it. I gave her some help with it, and thought of her now and then.

Last week she sent me an email thanking me, and letting me know she was accepted for a psychiatric residency program at Stanford!! She is not only a brilliant woman, but so delightful to know. I am so proud of her, and personally feel this is one of those joyous moments in one's teaching career.

Coincidentally, I helped another Persian young woman in my class with her personal statement and she recently found a job as a doctor in New York. Our students can be so amazing!!

**Letter from a student in Carol Goldstein’s Advanced ESL class, West City Clairemont Campus**

I arrived in the states on March, 2008 from Vietnam. I was a shy, quiet girl, always scared of everything. The first two months, I just stayed home, ate, slept and chatted on the internet. I never stepped outside the house unless my dad went with me. I felt dependent and thought I’d never adapt to my new life. Everything started to change after my uncle led me to the San Diego Community College. At first, I was very shy. In my imagination, the teacher would be very strict and she would ask me a bunch of questions about the lesson. Oh! I felt so pressured! But surprisingly, my first day was perfect.

My first teacher, SANDY, was my first American teacher and was so nice to every student. My second teacher was CAROL who is even more amazing!

I wondered why all the teachers could understand everything the students said, with so many kinds of accents. Their English is super understandable for non-native people like us. We feel comfortable whenever we attend the class and feel free to ask questions. The class is never boring and is full of warmth and laughter.

Studying ESL has changed me gradually, but deeply. I feel more confident to talk to Americans, and I know more about the native customs. I understand more slang and idioms, too. I love to meet a lot of friends who come from many countries because they teach me new things and we exchange our thoughts and our knowledge. Generally, the school just makes me feel more valuable. I’m no longer shy. I feel I love life more. I even got a sales job recently.

San Diego Continuing Education School, which we called, "Adult School," is the first, perfect school for me in America and I will never forget it. Our teachers are not simply teachers. They are more than that! They are good friends, and sometimes good mothers. They share with us true stories from their life. They are short but make us understand more about life in America and how to put aside our fears and step into the future with confidence. I believe my confidence helped me to be recently hired doing sales for a cell phone company and I am so thrilled about that.

Nguyen Le
My New Vision of Life   By Vanessa Quinonez

(student in Rheba Smith's West City ESL class)

I was born in San Diego. Soon after, my mother moved back to Mexico taking me with her because had divorced my father who still lives in San Diego. When I was seven years old my mother got remarried. Two years later, she had my sister. I was very happy. I always looked after my sister. We are a small but close family. It is sad that I don’t know my father.

As a child, I always thought about being a cosmetologist. I like to do nails, make beautiful hair, and it is marvelous how the makeup looks! But in Mexico it is very difficult to enter this career because there are no cosmetology schools in my town. When I finished high school my mother and I were thinking about what I should do next. So she talked with my aunt, who lives here, and my aunt invited me to come to San Diego. My mother decided to bring me here, she accompanied me because she wanted to be sure that I was going to be ok. I really wanted to be here, because I wanted to have a good future.

At first, I was very scared because it is a different country and I did not speak English well. When I had lived here for a month my cousin took me to Mesa College to take the entrance test. I was very nervous. I did not understand the counselor who explained the test. Unfortunately I did not pass! One day, my neighbor told me about the ESL classes at West City Clairemont Campus. She took me to the school. I started in the fall semester. In the beginning it was difficult for me. Finding the transportation to school is an obstacle. I was afraid because I had to take two buses to get to the school. It takes an hour to get to class each way. While waiting for a bus, I was nervous because San Diego is a big city. Seeing so many people from different countries at a bus stop makes me scared.

Now, I am so happy because Continuing Ed has changed my vision of life. I can understand what people are saying and I can have a conversation with them. I feel very happy because now I can help the other students in my class that do not understand the English well, I think about when I started and felt in the same situation.

And I am very grateful to the teachers that helped me to start my dream. When I finish the other ESL levels and get to ESL level 7 in Continuing Ed, I will be able to take the entrance test with confidence. Finally, I can start the Cosmetology course and complete my goal and vision on a new life.
How San Diego Continuing Education Has Changed My Life!

By Xiao Li Zhang

(Student in Rose Babayan’s Level 7 ESL Class)

Since I came to San Diego in 2005, I have gone through many difficult situations. I have often felt useless, hopeless, as though the sky was always gray. I was afraid to communicate with my daughter’s teachers. I didn’t know how to schedule appointments with a doctor when my husband wasn’t around. I wanted to answer the phone, but I didn’t have the confidence. I thought I would never be able to take care of things on my own because of my poor English.

Things started to change after I started taking ESL. I think that my English has improved a lot over the past three years. I started in level five, and then I moved on to the computer class and met an amazing teacher. Now I am in level seven with another great teacher. She has given me a lot of courage. As a result, I have started to volunteer at my daughter’s school. Before ESL, I would have never had the confidence to do that.

I feel more useful now. I have a plan for my future. I want to continue learning English in ESL and maybe someday start my own business. I think English is the golden key in my life. I always wanted to do business in America, but I couldn’t communicate with other businessmen and women. After the help of ESL, I think I actually have a chance of becoming a successful business woman.

I appreciate my ESL teachers. They not only taught me English, but also encouraged to help me succeed. As a result, I have gained more confidence from what I have learned. I would like to say, San Diego Continuing Education gave me a great opportunity to improve my life and work skills. It has changed my life from depression and lack of confidence to great courage. Last, but not least, I would like to thank all my teachers who have taught me.
Two of my students in my ESL Level 7 class at Clairemont won ASB Scholarships for the essays that they wrote. One of these students is Maria Fernanda Camargo from Colombia. In addition to being a great student, she single-handedly made beautiful decorations to turn our old bungalow into a beautiful classroom. Below is her winning essay.

**A journey following my star**

My name is Maria Fernanda Camargo, I was born in Bogota, Colombia; I come from a family which has been involved in the medical field for over decades: my father is a pediatrician, my mother is a nurse, and my brother is studying in the Medical School. I have a Bachelor's degree in Microbiology from Colombia.

In my last year of college I took a Genes and Cancer class. I was impressed by the progression by which a mutant cell becomes a fatal tumor and the fact that external environment could induce this condition, and I decided to study it more.

I therefore decided to get an internship abroad because at that time in Colombia nobody was working on the issue I would like to learn. In order to allow me to gain a deeper knowledge about the molecular techniques used in the study of cancer's biology. I moved to Mexico to gain my first research experience at the Laboratory of Epigenetics and Cancer, led by the research director of the National Cancer Institute of Mexico, Dr. Dueñas González.

My parents couldn't afford to pay for the expenses of my living and to make the internship possible I decided to live in the resident's room, just four floors away from the laboratory and just a few steps away from the hospital. I didn't have to pay but even today still hear the voice of the hospital operator at night paging my roommates for an emergency and I smell the bleach of the hospital bed sheets.

As time passed, I became very involved with patients who suffered from the illness. Most of them came from distant villages searching for a chance to survive, hoping that their limited savings would help them stay alive. They spent weeks in the hospital fighting for their lives, but in the end I saw just a few going back home. Some of them reminded me of my grandfather who passed away from prostate cancer, my best friend’s mother who passed away from breast cancer, and my cousin who is still in the battle. This was an emotionally difficult time for me, but I am thankful for this experience, I discovered how important it is to study new strategies and approaches to help patients with cancer in order to prolong their lives and ameliorate the quality of their life.

This experience sparked off my interest in epigenetic research because of its potential to inform cancer biology, diagnostics and therapeutics. I was very interested in the apparent role of epigenetic changes in the earliest stages of carcinogenesis, because

*Continued on page 24*
A Journey Following my Star  continued from page 23

these are potentially reversible with treatment and may provide an epigenetic-based strategy for cancer prevention. Still in Mexico I applied to Master's program in Experimental Biology at the National Autonomous University of Mexico. I gained a Master's in Science scholarship provided by the National Science and Technology Council and the Scientific Institute Pfizer Scholarship, University Program in Health Research. After I graduated I continued to work as part of Dr. Dueñas-González's team. One of our main achievements was the identification of a drug which was able to restore almost completely the activity of specific genes damaged before the treatment with this drug. This finding is extremely relevant in allowing low income sectors access to treatment, due to the low cost of the drug.

My experiences over the last four years have given me a sharper focus on my future. I am now sure of my commitment to become a researcher and I am planning to apply to a doctoral program in UCSD. I see the Ph.D. program as a professional stepping-stone and as the way to continue studying the treatment of cancer and the molecular mechanisms that regulate the process of transformation and the association of these mechanisms with the resistance of malignant cells to different treatments. Doctoral studies would be valuable to me in several ways. Firstly, I would like to learn other molecular techniques and would also like to broaden my horizon and study cancer's biology not just in the epigenetic, but also in the genetic field, to improve the efficacy of treatments and to learn other mechanisms implicated in this illness. Additionally it would give me teaching experience I am eager to acquire.

To make not just my dreams come true, but my husband’s too, we decided to look for a place where he can continue his studies in brain tumors and where I can find a PhD’s program that would suit me best. That is why we are in San Diego: my husband is a postdoctoral research associate at the Institute of Cancer Research while I am preparing to apply to the UCSD Biomedical and Biological Sciences Graduate Program.

I am aware of the demands and the long hours Ph.D. programs involve, but I do know that I have the commitment and stamina to meet this challenge. Also, I know that I have to get a good score on the GRE, so I have been taking English classes to improve my language skills and sitting in on classes related to Biochemistry, Biology, Genetics and Molecular Biology in order to broaden my knowledge of these topics.

I see the Ph.D. program as a large book with many chapters and myself as an eager child who has just learned to read. It will be challenging, but I know this is the best way to become the kind of scientist I envision myself to be: knowledgeable and socially aware.
Mid-City VESL Graduation by Steve Gwinn

The spring semester ended with Mid-City evening VESL students Mhalou Silveyra, Nadia Razaqi, Belelham Taffese and Jose Rivera graduating from the prevocational CNA to the Certified Nurse’s Assistant program at Centre City. In addition, Fabiola Robles completed the VESL Food Service program. Congratulations also go out to Raquel Murillo and Angelica Gutierrez who transitioned to GED at Mid-City.

The morning VESL Class salutes Miriam Castañeda Quiñonez, another graduate to CNA, who also won a scholarship for her essay. Several graduates and fellow students gave moving speeches chronicling their struggles to achieve their goals despite great odds. The evening was bittersweet, however, as graduates to CNA learned that their class had been cancelled due to the shortened summer schedule. Regardless of the setback, they are eager to start in fall.
North City LVPC VESL Graduation by Wes Popham, Xanh Lam and Cindy Wislofsky

On June 2, 2009, our LVPC VESL lab held a graduation ceremony to recognize three outstanding, hard-working students. Nadia Arambula and Iva Clark completed the VESL BIT program, and Toan Do became our very first VESL Auto Mechanics graduate.

Nadia came from Mexico 8 years ago as a determined young lady. She set her goals and worked diligently on them. After completing a high school program, she enrolled in our VESL BIT program to prepare for her next goal, a degree in accounting. In April, as soon as she had finished the program, she got a job at a party-supply store. Nadia is now pursuing accounting program options at West City as well as Mesa College.

Iva, originally from Bulgaria, one day came into our lab to inquire about BIT. We asked her to try a couple of the VESL BIT reading lessons on the computer. An hour later, she was done with the whole unit of 16 reading lessons! After that, she must have been working 24/7 because we could not get the materials and check her work fast enough. Iva completed the VESL BIT in record time, 28 days. Like Nadia, she wants to pursue a career in accounting.

For months, Toan Do could not decide what he would do when he completed the ESL program. One day he expressed his desire to become an auto mechanic and was afraid that the VESL program would be too hard for him. Once he tried it, he did not miss a day of class and completed the program in two months. Toan is trying to get into the Automotive Technology program at ECC in the fall.

Congratulations to Nadia, Iva, and Toan!
The ESL Program salutes the following instructors and staff who contributed to the improvement of our program – 2008-2009

**ASB, student government assistance at Mid-City:** Rosa Elena Pilco, Cindi Hartman (with her Joy of Reading Program), Mechelle Perrott

**CASAS field testing of workplace interview tests:** Beth Bogage, Jim Brice

**CASAS Validation Study of the new CASAS listening tests and touch screen methodology** – Ana Olivensky, Barbara Raifsnider, and Marina Vera

**CATESOL State Conference Presenters:** Gretchen Bitterlin, Donna Price, Cindy Wislofsky, Jim Brice, Beth Bogage, Barbara Raifsnider, Ann Marie Damrau, Kathren Bouldin, Jan Forstrom, Barbara Pongsrikul

**CBET Workshop Presenters:** Laurel Slater, Mozhdeh Fadavizad, Iryna Scharer-Filatova, Maja Czapla

**Contributors to the CBET newsletter:** Sharon Javdan, Karla Rodas, Mozhdeh Fadavizad, Ana Traganza

**ECC Talent Show:** Carmina Gerardo

**EL Civics Curriculum Developers:** Colleen Fitzmaurice, Stephanie Thomas, Laurie Cozzolino

**EL Civics Examiners:** Laurie Cozzolino, Kendra Dawson, Darlene Elwin, Jan Forstrom, Marla Goldfine, Lynn Graver, David Holden, Jessica Maguire, Joan Meier, Veronika Norris, Barbara Pongsrikul, Kenna Veatch

**EL Civics Mentors:** Nancy Johansen, Xanh Lam, Ann McCrory, Kenna Veatch, Amy Watt


**ESL Lab Networking Committee:** Chair, Jim Brice; Members: Gretchen Bitterlin, Beth Bogage, Ann Marie Damrau, Liz Flynn, Steve Gwynne, David Hamrah, Xanh Lam, Sandie Linn, Wes Popham, Donna Price, Barbara Raifsnider, Ola Steenhagen, Richard Weinroth, Cindy Wislofsky

**ESL Learner Persistence Committee:** Chair, Corinne Layton; Members: Cindy Wislofsky, Lee Mosteller, Starlene Dahl, Jim Brice, Barbara Pongsrikul, Connie Falconer, Gretchen Bitterlin, Sheri Bartlett, Sharon Javdan

**ESL Student Learning Outcomes Committee:** Stacia Castaneda, Vikki Regier, Jim Brice, Laurel Slater, Cindy Wislofsky, Barbara Raifsnider, Jan Forstrom, Corinne Layton, Veronika Norris, Barbara Pongsrikul, Nancy Johansen, Chris Stone, Beth Bogage, Jeannie Ross, Ann McCrory

**ESL Teacher Institute Workshops:** Gretchen Bitterlin, Corinne Layton, Barbara Raifsnider
ESL Textbook Committee: Chairs: Colleen Fitzmaurice, Barbara Raifsnider, Lee Mosteller, and Elisa Claar. Members: Ann Marie Damrau; Ann McCrory; Barbara Pongsrikul; Barbara Raifsnider; Catherine Coxey; Cindy Wislofsky; Colleen Fitzmaurice; Corinne Layton; Donna Price; Eileen Schmitz; Elaine Fuller-Zachey; Gretchen Bitterlin; Jan Forstrom; Jane Halsema; Jean Washington; Jim Brice; Lee Mosteller; Linda Kozin; Susan Morgan; Toan Humphrey; Victoria Regier; Xanh Lam

ESL validation Study of the ESL Appraisal: Corinne Layton, Barbara Raifsnider, Jim Brice + the instructors and assistants at Mid City Campus, Centre City Campus, and ECC

Mid City Joy of Reading Club: Cindi Hartman

Miramar D-400 building beautification project – planting a garden: Angie Moeen

Revision of ESL Newcomer’s Guide: Cindy Wislofsky, Ann Marie Damrau


Teachers who assisted students in the process of applying for essay contests or scholarships: Sandie Linn, Marcy Bergqvist, Rosa Limon, Ana Traganzo, Steve Gwynne, Kathren Bouldin, Beth Bogage, Roberto Santa Ana, Remy Lopez, Thomas Williams, Irene Ayon, Rose Babayan, Ingrid Greenberg, Monica Garr, Carl Luster, Louise Winheld, Carol Goldstein, Jane Uhle, Ann McCrory, Rheba Smith, Magda Kwiatkowski, Toni Fernandes

Teachers who helped facilitate Demonstration Lessons for new instructors: Eileen Schmitz, Kathy Sayavong, Elaine Barrett, Elaine Fuller-Zachey, Cathy Coxey

Technology Mentors: Jim Brice and Beth Bogage, ECC


Technology workshop presenters: Beth Bogage, Donna Price, Cindy Wislofsky, Steve Gwynne

TIMAC Mentor: Cindy Wislofsky; Mentees: Steve Gwynne and Beth Bogage

Transitional ESL Course Outline developers: Sandie Linn, Susan Morgan, Marla Goldfine


USCIS Observations in April and May 2009: The following teachers observed live Naturalization Interviews and interacted with USCIS examiners: Colleen Fitzmaurice, Lesley Robin, Carol Kwan, Patricia Miyamoto, Rosa Elena Pilco, Catalina Vela, Carolisa Morgan, Pete Amarillas, Elvia Kerlick, Donna Huchel, Rheba Smith, Francisco Guevara, Marlene Hadge, Mechelle Perrott

Volunteers in ESL and Citizenship classrooms: Carol Shull, Patsy Brown, Chris Gommel, Marcelino Pilco, Melanie Piche, Susanne Nogata, Lonnie Brunini, Leslie Dufour, Erica Gosling, Stephanie Jarrett, Rosalind Cottingham, Molly Karlsodgt
A Veteran Volunteer by Beth Bogage

Stephanie Jaret has been bringing conversation practice to the ESL classroom for nearly 10 years! Stephanie worked as a BIT Instructor at ECC from 1988 - 2000. In 2000, she stopped teaching, but still wanted to maintain some kind of connection with students. It was then that Stephanie approached former ECC VESL teacher, Donna Price, about the idea of bringing conversation groups into her classroom on a weekly basis. The two instructors agreed that this arrangement would be mutually beneficial--Donna's students would get small group discussion practice with a native speaker other than their instructor, and Stephanie would have a chance to continue working with students, an experience that was rewarding to her.

Ever since then, Wednesdays have been a special day for students at ECC. Every Wednesday, Stephanie visits Beth Bogage's Level 6 class for an hour, and then goes to the ESL Lab, where she works with students from a variety of levels. In Stephanie's conversation groups, students have an opportunity to practice expressing themselves, in English, about a variety of topics; they also get a chance to practice pronunciation and learn new vocabulary. Beth says that "students really look forward to this unique opportunity to listen to and talk with another native speaker of English. Stephanie has become so much a part of our class, that we just can't imagine not having her!" Thanks, Stephanie, for your continued service to our ESL students.
Mindfulness seems to be coming a hot topic in many fields at this time. I hear it mentioned not only in Buddhism but also in diverse magazines, in healing modalities, in the teacher’s lounge, and even in Wikipedia. Our inner worlds do have a profound affect on our outer worlds and our personal growth shapes ourselves individually, our students and in the workplace.

Jon Kabat-Zinn, a well-known teacher of mindfulness meditation and the founder of the Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction program at the University of Massachusetts Medical Center has a useful definition:

"Mindfulness means paying attention in a particular way; on purpose, in the present moment, and nonjudgmentally."

How often do thoughts, feelings and sensations take us away from the present moment – from now - when now is all we ever have? Practicing mindfulness, being present, observing, we can create a space where peace and serenity can grow, even amidst difficult times, if that is what we want in the first place.

Mindfulness helps me individually, turning my attention within, noticing my thoughts, feelings, and body. My inner world is actually quite fascinating and bizarre when I take the time to really pay attention to it. I find that if I look outward too much, externalize too much, I lose my own innate sense of being and balance. This not only affects me but students and colleagues as well. Just like icebergs in the ocean and roots of trees, what is not seen holds a tremendous amount of power.

As a teacher, I frequently notice my steps as I walk to the classroom. I try to be more present with students and in the classroom when I notice that my thoughts have drifted away. I can stay more centered when I become aware of my thoughts, feelings, reactions and body sensations in meetings and with colleagues. I can always return to my breathing in any situation to bring me to the present moment.

Being with students, I am sure that we already have many ways of helping them be mindful in the classroom but perhaps we don’t quite use that language. I have started just reminding my students to focus and be present. I invite them to leave their problems and to do lists outside the door and be as present as possible in the classroom. Reminding my students helps me remember too. I believe that when students are present and focused and in the now, there is more space for learning and retention of that learning.

Continued on next page
Creating a focusing activity is another way to bring their attention to this moment. I frequently start with a dictation as a purpose and process of focus, as well as practicing listening and writing skills within a certain context. I am sure most of us have ways of helping our students focus and become present to learning.

There was a wonderful article in Tricycle magazine about a Singapore immigrant who brought a personal growth program to a major corporation – Google. He states, “Google wants Googlers to grow as human beings on all levels – emotional, mental, physical and beyond the self.” He emphasis the practicality of this endeavor as it helps people become more creative and contribute to the “bottom line” in business. Some of his offerings are based in mindfulness - mindful listening and mindful emailing. Helping employees on all levels is in the best of interest of the workplace.

Ultimately, what I realize is that there is only now, and now, and now. I think about the future – now. I think about the past – now. When I am aware or conscious of what I am thinking/feeling, I have more freedom to choose what will serve the students and me – now. When I am not aware of my own process I am at the mercy of habits, reactions and unconscious programming. Ghandi says: “Seek to be the change you wish to see in the world.” I will continue to practice mindfulness to be as present as I can with students, colleagues and at the workplace. And, I am a work in progress being patient and compassionate with myself as I dance with forgetting and remembering over and over again.

“Seek to be the change you wish to see in the world.”
Ghandi