



Winter 2002

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Crossroads Café

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Tunisian Minister of Education Moncer Rouissi and U.S. Ambassador Rust M. Deming with faculty officials at the Anglophone Village in Hammamet, Tunisia

TUNISIA LAUNCHES ENGLISH LANGUAGE CLUBS IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

Last summer, the Tunisian Ministry of Education launched a program to teach English in elementary schools as an extracurricular subject. This initiative is part of the national educational reform, to promote the English language among students aged 11-12. This effort involved recruiting and training 450 Tunisian elementary school teachers of other subjects in modern ELT methods, as well as an extensive English language training 'refresher English' course for teachers who were selected to coordinate the English Language clubs. Of the 3,000 teachers who applied nationwide, 450 were selected to participate in a two-week training course in Hammamet, coordinated by Mr. Salah Kaabachi, Director, Mr. Ridha

Ben Chakroun, Assistant to the Director, and 17 Tunisian secondary school teachers of English. The secondary school teachers trained the elementary school English Club coordinators, in coordination with Ministry of Education personnel. Support materials, curricular planning, and guest lecture workshops were provided by the American Center/U.S. Embassy in Tunis and the British Council. U.S. Ambassador Rust M. Deming joined the Tunisian Minister of Education Mr. Moncer Rouissi and other official guests on site at the Hammamet Institute for Tourism to commemorate this worthy effort. Feedback from the schools has been overwhelmingly positive and the initiative is expected to continue in summer 2002.

Editorial

Editorial



The American Center and RELO office in Tunis sincerely thank its many friends and colleagues from around the world who wrote and called to offer sympathy and support in the aftermath of September 11. Educators from around the globe joined hands to express how the tragic events have been addressed by students and teachers in schools at all levels. As President George W. Bush noted in his remembrance comments, «we will never forget the victims who came from more than 80 countries, and many races and religions».

Last November, President Bush joined leaders of non-governmental, private organizations at Marshall Elementary School in Washington to announce the formation of «Friendship Through Education,» a consortium of groups facilitating expanded links between U.S. students and students in countries with Muslim populations (<http://www.friendshipthrougheducation.org>). Initially, the Friendship Through Education consortium will encourage two types of

projects: E-mail pen pals and another project that encourages students to write essays describing the rules, ideals and principles by which they live and explain the sources of their laws of life. Similarly, International Education and Resource Network (IERN), created a guide called Connecting Cultures: A Teacher's Guide to a Global Classroom, in response to interest among educators to connect globally following the events surrounding September 11. Readers may download this document at <http://www.iearn.org/professional/index.html>. You can also find out how to establish classroom-to-classroom Internet partnerships and projects with international schools at <http://www.iearn.org/projects/index.html>

I invite readers to visit the web site of the International Information Programs (IIP) for authentic teaching materials related to recent world events, <http://usinfo.state.gov/usa>, in the interest of encouraging dialogue, fostering mutual understanding, and enhancing students' perspectives on U.S. society, values, and politics.

Bridget F. Gersten, Ph.D.

TESOL 2002 Electronic Village (EV) Online CALL Courses

The CALL Interest Section of TESOL, in conjunction with the EFL Interest Section, is proud to announce its second round of online sessions, including readings, discussions, chats, guest speakers, and task-based activities. If you can't come to the conference, now the conference can come to you!

The Electronic Village (EV) Online 2002 sessions are held prior to the TESOL Convention. They run for two months, starting on January 25 and ending on March 25, 2002. Registration for the sessions will be via email from January 7-24, 2002. You do NOT have to be a member of TESOL, nor do you have to register for TESOL 2002, to take part in these free events. (If you'd like information about TESOL 2002, however, please visit <http://www.tesol.org/> and click on TESOL 2002. The on-line preliminary program is available.)

The following sessions will be offered. Complete course descriptions and related material is available on line at <http://darkwing.uoregon.edu/~call/>:

* Webheads in Action: Community formation online and its role in language learning — Moderator: Vance Stevens (vstevens@emirates.net.ae) - CALL-IS

* Ways to Use Video in the Language Classroom — Moderators: Johanna Katchen, Monica Aparicio (Katchen@mx.nthu.edu.tw or jekatchen@yahoo.com; apariociom@speedy.com.ar) — VIDEO-IS

* Managing NS-NNS Teachers of English: Maintaining Equality in the Workplace — Moderator: Aiden Yeh (aidenyeh@hotmail.com; aidenyeh@yahoo.com) — EFL-IS

* Using the Internet in Teaching ESL Composition — Moderator: Jim Kohn (jimkohn@sfsu.edu) — CALL-IS

* CALL and the Human Spirit — Moderators: Elizabeth Hanson-Smith, Suzan Stamper (Moody), Tom Robb, Vance Stevens,

Joy Egbert (ehansonsmi@yahoo.com or ehansonsmi@aol.com; smoody@cuhk.edu.hk or suzanstamp@yahoo.com; egbert@wsu-nix.wsu.edu; vstevens@emirates.net.ae; trobbs@cc.kyoto-su.ac.jp) — CALL-IS

* An Internet Workshop for Beginners: Using existing activities and designing your own — Moderator: Jo Ann Miller (joanmiller@terra.com.mx) — EFL-IS

To register for these online sessions, please complete these steps:

1. Send an e-mail message to the moderator(s) of your session between January 7 and 24, 2002, requesting subscription to the session (title). The moderator will subscribe you to his/her session in Yahoo! Groups.

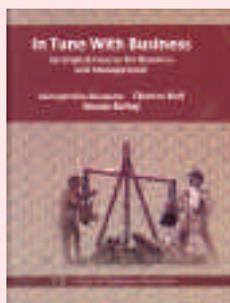
2. Obtain a Yahoo! ID to access the course. You will not be able to access the course without it. Note: The Yahoo! ID you choose must be unique. It does not need to match your e-mail address. * Click on the Registration link on any Yahoo! Groups page. To register, visit <http://groups.yahoo.com> and click on Register. * Complete the registration form and click on «Submit This Form.» * You should receive an e-mail confirming your registration. Be sure to record your Yahoo! ID and password. You will need these to sign into Yahoo! Groups.

3. Now you're ready to sign in at on the site.

4. You will receive an e-mail message from your moderator, inviting you to join his/her EV ONLINE 2002 session. Please click **REPLY** to the message and send it. You need not write anything in the body text.

5. Your moderator will receive a request from Yahoo! Groups to approve your subscription to his/her session. Please note: It might take as long as 24 hours before the registration process is complete and you receive full access to the special features of the site.

IN TUNE WITH BUSINESS IS OUT!



In Tune with Business: An English Course for Business and Management was published in December 2001 by Tunisian Centre de Publication Universitaire. The authors of this textbook, Maggie Alouane (ISG, Tunis), Houda Bel Hadj (IHEC), and Charles Hall (University of Memphis), worked closely with their colleagues in Tunis for one year to develop this textbook for

first year students of English who major in business and management. *In Tune with Business* is an English course with guided readings on business and management issues as well as a systematical review of grammar, followed by various types of application tasks focusing on reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills. The two-semester textbook includes a CD-ROM with listening material, adopting a Global English approach. This book is the first of its kind in Tunisia.

The American Center and RELO office supported this project, an ambitious task that was successful because of the team work involved in creating it. Hats off to the authors from ISG and IHEC who have reaped the sow of their labor!



University of the Middle East Project

The University of the Middle East Project Announces a 4-week Teacher Training Program in Boston, July 6-August 4, 2002

Are you a teacher, teaching in the last three years of high school? Are you proficient in English? Are you from a country in the Middle East, the Arabian Gulf, or North Africa? Do you want further training in teaching methodologies, curriculum, and assessment? *The University of the Middle East (UME) «Teacher Education Institute» (TEI) is designed for you!* This is a four-week program in teaching methodologies for teachers from a variety of subject areas. It includes innovative techniques of teaching, enhancing teacher-student interactions, and the use of the Internet, taught in English at the highest academic by professors from prestigious universities in the United States (Harvard University, MIT, Boston College, Boston University) for secondary teachers from countries in North Africa, the Arabian Gulf, and the Middle East. Full scholarships are available for candidates, according to income status. All necessary information and application forms are available at <http://www.ume.org>. Deadline for applications is February 10, 2002. For further information, contact UME by telephone, (001-617) 232-6331, e-mail (raym@ume.org), or mail, University of the Middle East Project, 1318 Beacon Street, Suite 9, Brookline, Massachusetts (MA) 02446. [Please see a report on the UME TEI in the RELO Newsletter, Fall 2001 at: <http://www.usembassy.state.gov/posts/ts1/wwwhrel.html>].

IN TUNE WITH BUSINESS: A TUNISIAN SUCCESS STORY

Interview with Maggie Alouane, ISG Tunis; Houda Bel Haj, IHEC Tunis and Charles Hall, University of Memphis

You were involved in a project to develop a textbook for Business English in Tunisia in collaboration with colleagues from ISG and IHEC in Tunis. Tell us how this project got started.



Maggie Alouane (MA): It was a happy coincidence. Dr. Bridget Gersten, the RELO and Mr. David Queen, Director of the American Cultural Center, paid a visit to ISG, met with the Dean and me, and wondered how they could help improve the English teaching at our Institute. This happened at a time when the members of the English section started to feel that the «home-made» 1st year materials we had been using for nearly five years needed a thorough overhaul.

And Dr. Limam, our dean at that time, had long been encouraging us to publish a «real» book instead of simply photocopying the materials for the students at the beginning of each university year. So that meeting was the starting point for the textbook project.



Houda Bel Haj (HBH) - As we have been using foreign material for a long time we realized little by little that we needed some kind of in-house material which would motivate the learners who are more demanding than what we thought. A few years ago, a team of about ten Tunisian teachers from different institutions met and agreed to work on a collaborative project: writing a textbook for management and business institutions. We had a few meetings where we tried to design a needs

analysis. Then, there were so many time constraints, divergence of needs, and absence of a leader within the group, so that we just gave up. When the RELO offered to advise on this project, Maggie and I thought that it was the right time to start our new project, especially since the Ministry of Higher Education decided to have the same syllabus for our different institutions.

Charles Hall (CH): As is often the case, the book began when a group of dedicated teachers realized they needed more appropriate materials to effectively teach their students; I am constantly amazed by the dedication that EFL teachers display under often difficult situations.

How would you define this book, as its genre, that was written for 1st year students of English in Tunisia?

MA : It is an English course for so-called «pre-experience» students of business and management, introducing the vocabulary and notions of the specialty by means of very recent texts, and offering a general review of basic grammar structures.

HBH : The textbook also aims at developing students' reading skills in particular. It's a communicative tool that allows them to handle business texts. It's Tunisian because its main goal is to give learners the opportunity to practice a foreign language, while taking account of their local background and their national approach to second language learning.

CH : Personally, I'd say this is an ESP text written for those interested in both tourism and information technology at use in the business community.

Who is the book for? What is unique about it?

CH : Although the book is specifically designed for first-year university students who will be studying business, it could be used for self-study by motivated professionals. By using only intrinsically interesting, authentic materials from a variety of English media, the book offers students a wide range of writing styles, analyses, and activities. The book is truly written from a «Global English» perspective.

HBH : This book was designed for 1st year students whose primary interest is in business and management. It's unique because it tries to respond to a special community's needs that are related to a certain academic policy and a special economic environment

MA : We can also say that the book is for first-year students with various levels of competence. Good students will find interesting activities and extra reading texts, that they can also listen to on the CD. Students who need more training in basics can turn to the second part of the book, where the grammar rules are introduced through exercises. The objective was to cater for the needs of all first-year students studying business and management. Most of our classes are what we could call «mixed-ability» classes.

What were some of the major challenges you faced writing this textbook with a team of some one dozen people working on more than one continent?

HBH : It was a very enriching experience for all of us. We often had to make concessions, be patient with talkative persons (like me!). Otherwise, each one of the group had his know-how and his or her incisive ideas.

CH : Logistics was a major issue. Without the Internet, I could never have participated on the project. I literally received and sent material from four different continents; North America, Africa, Europe and Asia.

MA : It seems to me that one of the main challenges you face when working in a large group is keeping up a climate of cooperation and friendly relations between its members. In our case there were no problems. In the English section at ISG, we had long been doing things as a team, so the only novelty introduced for this project was the integration of colleagues from IHEC into the group.

Then, team work over such a long period really takes a great deal of organization, which can be quite a challenge. Someone - the most stubborn member of the group, maybe - has to take the responsibility for pushing things forward and reminding everyone of what has to be done, never losing sight of the objectives. In addition, the RELO was a precious help organizing things from the outside: most importantly, by enabling us to work with Dr. Charles Hall, but also through meetings and peppy or worried internet messages when she thought we had kept silent for too long. Finally, as Charles said, communication is also a challenge for this type of group work. We in Tunisia made use of all media - from telephone calls and notes posted on the wall of the faculty room, to e-mail. Since we were fortunate enough to work with an American ELT-consultant, the Internet became a privileged means of communication. Tasks, exercises and grammatical rules were bounced back and forth in cyberspace between Tunisia and the countries where he happened to be. (And don't tell me the result is not Global English!)

How would you classify this textbook, written for Tunisians and by Tunisians (with a 'foreign consultant's involvement)?

HBH : I'd call it a textbook that tries to reconcile itself between the pressures of the international work market and the Tunisian students' profile. It is also the fruit of many years of our colleagues' experience in dealing with a variety of details, with observing their students' behavior, and coming up with the best possible instructional materials.

MA : We have tried to make a truly communicative course including all skills and encouraging the students to express themselves as much as possible. We have aimed at active learning.

CH : Yes, it was written by Tunisians for Tunisians, but it really includes issues and factors that make it relevant for any student in the Arabic speaking world.

So what is specifically «Tunisian» about this book, if anything?

CH : The book builds on the astonishing progress that has been made in English language proficiency in Tunisia during the last twenty years. Before starting work on this project, the last time I had been in Tunisia was in 1983. The spread of English and the fluency of the teachers and their students since then was unbelievable.

MA : One thing that makes this book «Tunisian» is the fact that it has grown out of the particular Tunisian context. Since English is neither the language of instruction nor the language of communication in society, the students have very little exposure to English outside of class. It is then up to the teacher, and to the materials, to create a situation where communicating in English seems as natural and motivating as possible. If I add that many of our students prefer to read about issues that are in some way related to their own environment, and that in first year they still have no experience of business, you will easily understand why it has been impossible for us to find ready-made books that meet our requirements.

HBH : I'd say this book is «Tunisian» in the way it has been conceived, designed and—as we wanted it to be written in global English—it has been spontaneously laid out and «formulated» in the Tunisian statement. No matter how fluent our English is we can't help thinking and writing in the Tunisian way!

You piloted this textbook while it was being written & involved students in its evaluation. Why was this important and what was the result of this?

MA : The students, as end users of our product, obviously constitute an important component of the project. One generation of first year ISG-students were given questionnaires about what type of texts they would like to study, and what they would expect a first-year course in English to contain. The following year, the next generation of first-year students used some of the new units in class, and were invited to react to them by filling in evaluation sheets. These comments were pooled by the teachers, who also added their own impressions. This piloting eventually brought about some changes like clearer rubrics, new types of questions and the elimination of others—even an audio reordering of the units. These transformations were a way to make the materials better adapted to the needs of the teachers and the students.

HBH : The students' evaluation is important, because first of all it's an opportunity for teachers to show their confidence in their students' ideas, and it's also one way of making them responsible and telling them that they may have a word about what they will consume.

CH : And let's not forget that it's crucial to pilot materials that will be used in many different schools or countries. We had to make sure, for example, that teachers who were not involved in the writing process would understand and be able to make use of the exercises and activities we included. It's hard for writers to be objective about the actual level or usefulness of their own work. The piloting led us to revise some material, add some, and dump some completely.

There is a CD Rom that is included in the book, with listening material. Is this an important part of the book?

HBH : Yes, because this offers the learners the listening skills they need; on the other hand, the texts are read by people from different nationalities and, hence, the students can experience different accents and intonations.

MA : Yes, the CD adds an important listening component to the course. Since class time is so limited, having their own CDs enables the students to explore the listening texts on their own. They are presented with readings in different accents, a way to introduce Global English, and also a way to show the students that their own accent should not stop them from communicating.

CH : And we know that it's unfortunate that university English classes in many countries often have 60 or 70 students. That makes personal attention almost impossible. The CD-Rom provides dedicated students with a chance to improve their language and to focus on the text in a self-access setting. In that respect, this component is very important.

What is the next step? Will or should an outside ELT consultant be involved in future projects of this kind?

CH : I hope that the Tunisian authors will consider making this text just the first in a series. Of course, I would love to continue working with them as an outside consultant, but if that is not possible for financial reasons, I have no doubt that they will create follow-up works that exceed this one in scope, quality, and interest. I've worked in many countries and with many groups of teachers but I've never before seen a group with such a sense of total commitment to their work and their students. They were incredible!

MA : Of course I would love to continue working on the rest of our materials to make them more «professional» especially if Charles is part of the project! Seriously, the participation of an ELT-consultant obviously is a great asset and does much for the credibility of the final product. And, it is so much more motivating to work with someone who brings new ideas and sees things from a different perspective. You, Bridget and Charles, added so much to this book project!

HBH : Why not? It has been such a productive experience to work with Charles that we would be happy to start the 2nd year book with him; but, as far as I am concerned I'd rather wait some time to get enough feedback from other colleagues and from our students. That's why my next step would be another evaluation by the different «actors».

What is the next step? Will there be more books of this kind? How would they be the same, or different?

MA : Well, the very first step from now will be to improve certain technical details in this book (There are some problems related to the printing). Then it would be wonderful if we could continue the «series» that Charles referred to earlier. But to be reasonable, we will start by tackling the second-year materials. They focus on writing—especially for business.

HBH : Of course, we would like to build on this experience and write another textbook. It will be the same, because we will keep in mind our students' needs, and we will try to improve it, since we will by that time have learned from our errors and from our students'. So far, I can only say that the choice of the texts has to be more selective: that the activities must incite the learners to expand their writing abilities. Finally, I think that the CDROM would play a more important role in the learning process.

CH : I would hope that the authors will continue to write texts. They are so talented. The next books might concentrate on other business topics such as finance, banking, or management.

Please add anything else you'd like to add about the book, the project, or the process of writing it.

MA : Writing this book was a great experience. It sometimes seemed long, tedious and repetitive (oh, those proofreading sessions!), but all in all it was interesting and extremely rewarding. The participation of the ELT consultant at practically all stages of the process was particularly encouraging. He acted as a referee in language matters and as our data specialist, but also as a grassroots participant finding texts or devising grammar exercises. We are very thankful to him, to the RELO, and to the American Cultural Center for granting us this wonderful opportunity.

CH : This project was a complete delight for me. It allowed me to meet and to work with exceptionally wonderful people in Tunisia. I am really grateful to all the authors and the staff of the American Center in Tunis for making me feel so welcome and at home in Tunis.

Thank you and mabrouk to all the ISG and IHEC teachers who made this book come true.



Using English Spontaneously in the Classroom: COMMUNICATIVE ACTIVITIES

Mr. Atmane Bedjou, Technicum Ahmed Kendil School, Boudouaou & INPED, Boumerdes, Algeria



In a country where English is a foreign language, students seldom use the language in authentic situations, namely with native speakers. This is particularly the case in Algeria where Arabic, Berber, and French dominate. The only place where students can practice the language they learn is the classroom. And teachers of English here face the challenge of creating or devising authentic situations where the students use English to communicate. The following activities have proved to be very efficient with my students, and I would like to share them with colleagues.

Discussing the importance of communicative competence and the need to encourage spontaneous communication, Savignon says: « Most important to the learner's progress in developing communicative competence is a variety of activities in which the student can use the second [or foreign] language in unrehearsed, novel situations requiring on his part, inventiveness, resourcefulness, and a good bit of aplomb» (1). This is the aim of the following activities and, in both, the students are put in situations where they are encouraged to use English as in the real world: spontaneously and unconsciously.

At the National Institute of Productivity and Development (INPED) in Boumerdes, Algeria, we teach English mainly to adult learners who are staff and executives of national companies. So generally the problem of motivation does not arise. Moreover, the classrooms are not crowded (12 to 15 Intermediate students); all of them are mature and have had a good deal of instruction. To make these aspects beneficial to the students' progress in their learning, we always attempt to create an appropriate environment to foster communication in English. I used the following activities with several groups and each time the outcome was satisfactory.

Activity 1: Opinion Exchange:

Divide the class into 3 small groups (sub-groups) of 4 or 5 students. Give each group a different paragraph, generally the introduction of a longer essay about various topics that are widely debated over the world today. These include such topics as global warming, nuclear and biological weapons, biotechnology, or international relations.

Ask students to read and discuss their paragraphs and add any information they know about their topics. It

helps to provide them with new lexis when necessary. After about 15 minutes, ask each group to choose a representative to explain to the whole classroom what their topic is about. I typically ask the audience if they have a clear idea about the topic and, if not, the representative is required to make further clarifications. Next, ask students to ask questions about the topic to members of the sub-group. Long and spontaneous debates ensue as all the topics raise controversial question (ethics, religion science, the future...), which make the use of English most authentic. I generally don't correct the students' grammatical mistakes, but sometimes when an error is recurrent I intervene by repeating the students' idea using the appropriate structure. The teacher thus becomes a member of the group, with opinions that may or may not be shared by the other members.

Activity 2: Interviews

Interviews often offer a good opportunity for the students to practice the target language. In order to involve the students in authentic interviews, I introduce the following task. I ask students which people they would interview if they were journalists and what questions they would ask them. As the students have different interests and beliefs, the list of would be interviewees is varied (e.g., residents, ministers, musicians, athletes, movie actors, etc). After that, I ask students to imagine they were journalists and to write some questions they would ask a person of their choice. Then I tell individual students to choose a classmate as an interviewee. The interviewer tells his/her partner the role she/he is supposed to play. She/he then asks the questions she/he prepared and the interviewee answers spontaneously since she/he is not given a lot of time to think. I manage the interviews in such a way that every student is given an opportunity to answer. Sometimes other students contribute questions and group discussions follow which are most welcome as long as they are carried out in English.

Conclusion:

I have noticed that whenever the students are given an opportunity to communicate in English to convey meaning unconsciously, a lively environment is automatically created. These activities encourage even weak students to engage in the discussions to give their opinions and assert themselves.

(1): Sandra J. Savignon, «Teaching English for Communication» (1980). TEFL Anthology, Selected articles from the English Teaching Forum, 1973-78. Donald L. Bouchard and Louis J. Spaventa, editors.

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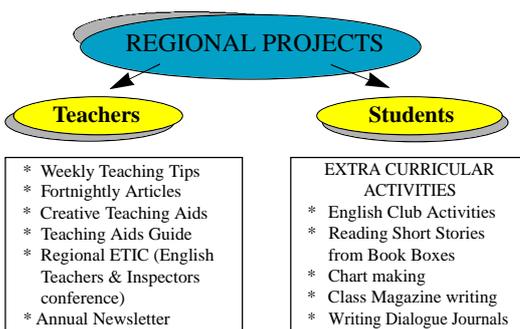
CREATIVE PROJECTS TO ENHANCE ENGLISH TEACHING

By Effat Awadalla Abdulrahim, Regional Inspector, Sharqiya North Region
Ministry of Education, Sultanate of Oman



Professional development of teachers ultimately leads to improve the quality of teaching, which is our target. Raising teachers' awareness of the need to develop and vary traditional methods in the changeable and challengeable world of modern technology led us to set a project for enhancing English teaching in our region by motivating teachers as well as students. Our initial role was to convince teachers of the worthiness of the idea. Hence it was felt that some effective and well thought out plan was needed to elevate teachers' abilities to cater for their pupils' increasing needs. A multifaceted plan was designed depending on our belief that most teachers, if not all, have some experience to share with others, though these might seem to be temporarily forgotten or neglected in the warehouse of experience. All what we needed was a spark to rekindle their interest and enthusiasm.

The first concrete step to implement was to build bridges of mutual trust among teachers and the English Department and to promote the feeling of belonging to the English Department. Circulars were sent out regularly to teachers explaining the proposed projects one at a time. We stressed the importance of their contribution as well as their precious comments and feedback. We kept on inviting them to share opinions, ideas and materials by sending them to the Senior Inspector to be checked, duplicated and circulated. We also informed them of the prominent English language events and activities in different schools. It was pleasant to see that many teachers have taken the initiative to organise visits to these schools. Initially we managed to achieve the desired effect.



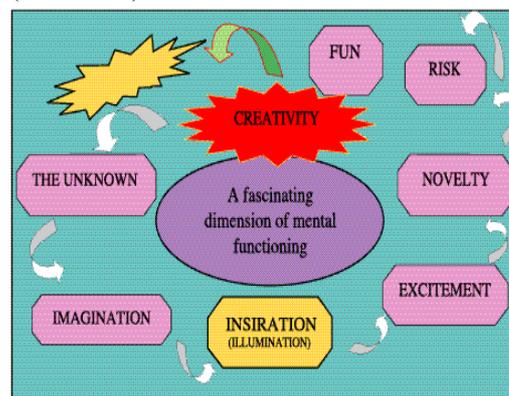
* **Weekly Teaching Tips** mainly aimed at creating permanent professional *written* discussion few involving all English language teachers. Many of them had expressed their thirst for sources of information related to the field, i.e. research, articles, new experiments, and lectures. Moreover very few of them have access to libraries, educational magazines or the Internet. Initially these tips were regularly issued by the department and sent to all teachers. All teachers and inspectors were cordially invited to contribute, elaborate, or provide feedback on them. Target material

was collected from international sources without any adaptation. However, teachers were requested to adapt the material wherever appropriate according to the situation. Appropriate length was also maintained so that teachers do not lose interest. It was pleasant to see that the majority of the teachers were careful to retain their copies regularly.

* **Fortnightly Articles** were also sent to teachers. The articles selected were mainly related to some diagnosed teaching problems in the field and meant to help teachers overcome these. We invited them to provide us with their favourite articles to circulate among teachers.

* **Producing Teaching Aids** was another project as the majority of the teachers were dependent on the ones provided by the Ministry of Education. They were informed to use their imagination and produce only one teaching aid each, making sure these are practical, applicable and relevant to the material being taught. They should not be costly, either. We managed to stimulate teachers' creativity and interest by adopting what we believed to be «**The Creativity Cycle**».

Our role was mainly to get them to consider the *puzzling* or '**the unknown**', leading them gradually to explore their expertise and their abilities to reach the (**illumination**) stage, or the «*Aha! I found it*». The majority were (**excited**) seeking (**novelty**), taking the (**risk**) to start work, finding (**fun**) in sharing ideas, collecting suitable materials, involving their pupils or competing with others. The outcome was a (**SURPRISE**).



Most of these teaching aids were far beyond our expectations. Some teachers built models of factories, miniature structures of towns & villages, games, computer disks, and other fascinating things. Some secondary schools were zealous enough to produce numerous effective, neat teaching aids. An exhibition was held to get teachers exposed to others' ideas and for inspiration or at least imitation. The event was a success by all measures. More than one teacher commented: «I never knew that I possessed this ability».

* **A Teaching Aids Guide** was also planned to keep a record of all these aids in a guidebook for teachers to refer to for inspiration or imitation. A form was filled in



Teachers in the Sharqiya North Region with some creative projects



along with an illustration or a photograph of the aid informing teachers of the materials needed, tips on making it, level suitability as well as some hints on using them.

*** The first Regional ETIC (English Teachers & Inspectors Conference)**

The event took place in December 2001. The theme of the proposed ETIC is «Teaching English in the Modern World». It is meant to motivate teachers to start their own projects in their schools, some pedagogical research, to develop the ability of sensing a problem, searching for possible solutions, drawing hypotheses, testing and evaluating, and communicating the results to others. These items include original ideas, a different point of view, breaking out of the mould, recombining ideas or seeing new relationships among ideas. etc...

* **An Annual Newsletter** is issued regularly once a year. The content is compiled from different teachers. The last issue dated January 2000 is available on the net.

* **English Club Activities** were compiled from a variety of sources and checked to ensure cultural suitability to the teaching environment in Oman. These

were given to some schools to provide students with extra material to have fun, to widen their scope of the language and to arouse their interest and thirst for knowledge.

* **Reading stories from the Book Boxes** (Graded Readers): these boxes were provided by the Ministry for secondary school students but were not used effectively in former years. Many schools have taken the initiative to motivate pupils to read as many stories as possible.

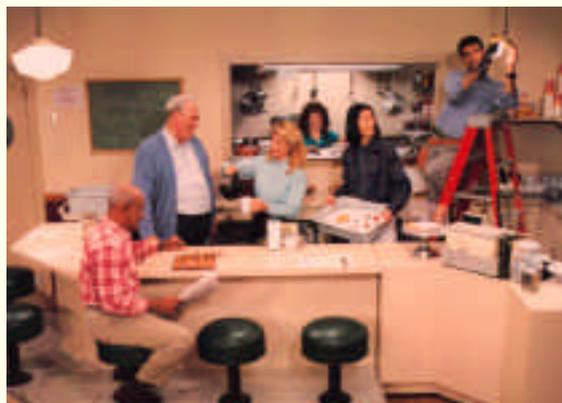
* **Writing** proved to be a difficult area for most of the students. To motivate them, a few schools were selected to see how the teachers could motivate the pupils to write willingly. Writing competitions, *class magazines & dialogue journals* allowed pupils to write freely about their concerns, dreams of the future something that could not be done earlier due to students' confinement to Course Book topics. However, there is still a long way to go. In brief there is a renaissance in the general performance of the English Department due to the efforts of many creative individuals.

[Readers may contact the author at:

effat_awd@hotmail.com]

SEE YOU AT THE CROSSROADS CAFÉ

Crossroads Café is a dynamic television and print series for adult EFL and ESL instruction. Learners who wish to move past «beginning» English can watch and learn from this highly entertaining program that mixes equal portions of entertainment and education, using the 'real' language of modern American society. In Tunisia, this 26 episode series is scheduled to begin airing in January 2002.



Designed as an English-by-Video program for adults, **Crossroads Café** presents a small cast of characters whose lives center around a small diner owned by a Romanian refugee, Victor Brashov. As this captivating series unfolds in the first episodes, Brashov hires staff from varying backgrounds: a divorced mother juggling her children's lives; a strong-willed Mexican-American cook; a Chinese-American high school student who works part-time as a delivery boy; an Egyptian engineer, underemployed as a

handyman; and a retired African-American postal worker. The programs are woven with their day-to-day problems, many of which are very real in American society. There are problems of working couples and estranged family members; teenage love and parental conflicts; cultural adjustments and dreams fulfilled.

Each episode has two enriching video segments: Culture Clip, which focuses on a related cultural issue, and Word Play, a demonstration and explanation of appropriate language use from the episode.

This series is the second of two American English language and culture video series aired by Tunisia's «Channel 21» educational channel in the last year. The first series, **Family Album USA**, was aired in its entirety for 3 seasons. Plan to stop by at the **Crossroads Café** for some entertaining and educational fare.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

January 2002

* 24-26. Bilkent University School of English Language. Conference, «A fresh look at grammar and vocabulary: a quest for alternative teaching approaches?», Bilkent, Turkey. Contact Sule Eser. *E-mail: gramvoc@bilkent.edu.tr*

March 2002

* 15-17. TESOL-SPAIN. 25th National Convention, «Access Europe: Language as a Common Currency», Madrid, Spain. Proposal Deadline October 30, 2001. Contact Holly Vass, Convention Coordinator, CL. San Felipe, 11-2 Ctro. Madrid, Spain. *E-mail: holly.vass@wanadoo.es*; *Web site: http://www.eirelink.com/tesol-sp/*

* 20-22. TESOL Arabia. 8th Annual International Conference, «Critical Reflection and Practice», Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates. Proposal Deadline November 14, 2002.

Web site: http://tesolarabia.org; Contact Zafar Syed. *z.syed@mli.ac.ae* or Miled Hassini (*miled_hassini@hotmail.com*)

* 25-28. The Second Mediterranean ESP Conference, «ESP for Sustainable Development: Prospects for the Mediterranean», Marrakech, Morocco. Proposal deadline. Contact Moroccan Association of Teachers of English (MATE),

E-mail: matemar@hotmail.com; *http://www.mate.org.ma.*

* 24-27. IATEFL. 36th International IATEFL Conference, York, United Kingdom. Contact IATEFL, 3 Kingsdown Chambers, Whitstable, Kent, United Kingdom CT5 2FL.

E-mail: iatefl@compuserve.com; *Web site: http://www.iatefl.org*

* 28-30. The University of Technology of Compiègne. UNTELE 2002 Conference, «Use of New Technologies in Foreign Language Teaching», Compiègne, France. Contact Abdi Kazeroni, The University of Technology of Compiègne, BP 60319, 60203 Compiègne Cedex, France. Tel. +33-3-44-23-52-08. Fax +33-3-44-23-52-12.

E-mail: langues@utc.fr; *Web site: http://www.utc.fr/~untele*

April 2002

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

* 8-12. Moroccan Association of Teachers of English (MATE), 22nd National Conference, «Enhancing ELT Quality through Evaluation and Information Technologies», M'Diq, Morocco (near Tangier). Deadline for papers: March 15, 2002. Further details: Mr Abdellatif Zaki *matemar@hotmail.com* or *www.mate.org.ma*

* 9-13. Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL). Annual conference (including pre- and postconvention

institutes, and publisher and software exhibition), Salt Lake City, Utah. Contact TESOL, 700 South Washington St., Ste. 200, Alexandria, Virginia 22314. Tel. 703-836-0774. Fax 703-836-7864.

E-mail: conventions@tesol.org

Web site: http://www.tesol.org/conv/index-con.html

* 16-18. Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures, University of Bahrain. First International Conference, «Language, Literature, and Translation in the Third Millennium», « Bahrain. Proposal Deadline February 1, 2002. Contact First International Conference, Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures, College of Arts, University of Bahrain, PO Box 32038, Bahrain. Tel. +973-449528 or 449999 x 5223. Fax +973-449114.

E-mail: uobconference2002@arts.uob.bh

Web site: http://www.uob.edu.bh/conference/index.htm

* 25. Saudi Association of Teachers of English (SATE) Annual Conference, «Global English: Current Trends in Teaching and Learning». SAIS-NCS/American School, Jeddah. Proposal deadline is 31 January 2002. Contact Sayed A. Hamid or Syed H. Hashmi: *sts108@hotmail.com*; *syedhash@hotmail.com*

May 2002

* 8-10. Faculty of Education, Eastern Mediterranean University. First International Conference on Education, «Education: Changing Times, Changing Needs», Famagusta, Northern Cyprus. Proposal Deadline November 30, 2001.

Web site: http://www.emu.edu.tr/educationconference

* 28-30. The ESP Centre, The University of Damascus, Syria. «English as a Foreign Language: Towards Better Inter-Cultural Communication.» *E-mail: esp-damasuniv@mail.sy*

* 27-June 2. European Languages Resources Association (ELRA). Third Language Resources and Evaluation Conference (includes workshops), «LREC 2002», Las Palmas, Canary Islands. Contact Khalid Choukri, ELRA CEO, 55-57 Rue Brillat-Savarin, 75013 Paris, France. Tel. +33-1-4313-33-33. Fax +33-1-4313-33-30.

E-mail: choukri@elda.fr; *Web site: http://www.elda.fr/.*

July 2002

* 1-26. Penn State Center for Language Acquisition. Summer Institute for Applied Linguistics, State College, Pennsylvania. Contact James P. Lantolf, Director, Center for Language Acquisition, The Pennsylvania State University, 304 Sparks Building, University Park, Pennsylvania 16802.

E-mail: conferenceinfo1@outreach.psu.edu

Web site: http://app.outreach.psu.edu/AppliedLinguistics/.



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