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FIELD NOTES

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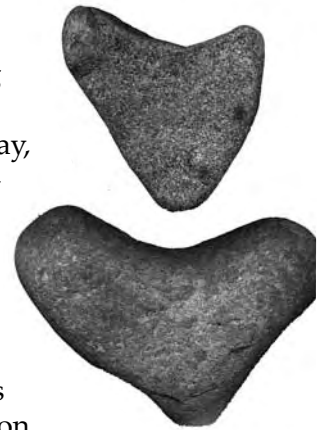
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Moving Toward Heaven

By JANET KAPLAN-BUCCIARELLI

In a novel I am reading, the author is living in Bali, where she is healing from a divorce and spending hours with a traditional medicine man. One day, they talk about heaven and hell. To provide some background for the Western reader, the author shares her *Cliff Notes* version of the Hindu concept of karma: "Take care of the problem now, or else you'll just have to suffer again later. That repetition of suffering — that's hell. Moving out of that endless repetition to a new level of understand-ing — there's where you'll find heaven." *



I fold back the corner of this page and close the book. Something makes me think about my teaching and about the adults in my literacy classes at Read/Write/Now in Springfield. My students and I come from different cultures. They live in the city; I live in the country. Most of them are Black; I am White. They believe Jesus is God or the son of God; I believe Jesus was an enlightened teacher, an inspirational leader, and a carpenter. They usually struggle to read and write; I usually don't. Yet it is our similarities, the universal human experiences of delight and depression and everything in between, that I so love about our time together in class. More than anything, it is our mutual effort to come to "a new level of understanding" that inspires and nourishes me most. I see now in my mind one of my learners who thrives on writing. She produces pages and pages — beautifully hand-written and heartfelt — that she often turns over to me. When I was new as her teacher, I would begin to read, then look up — absolutely stumped — after trying for several minutes

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FOREWORD

Beneath, behind, alongside the data collection, the countable outcomes reporting, the lesson planning, the credentialing, the meetings, the initiatives, the staff development activities—all designed to improve and professionalize the field of ABE, the mysterious process of teaching and learning takes place. As much as we depend on our cognitive capabilities to teach well—to stay on top of research, theory, and classroom approaches—the most memorable educational experiences take place among people who share bits of their lives on a day-to-day basis. We all know what it feels like to walk out of one of those classes where something outstanding happened among a group of adults who have learned something new together as the result of a teachable moment, when something took place so unexpected and glorious it seemed like an epiphany. Those moments are rarely translated into countable outcomes, but they can be told in stories. That was what I was hoping would happen in this issue of *Field Notes*. I wanted us to take a little breath from the big initiatives and look to the inside of the classroom where heartfelt experiences often take place. It's hard not to be hokey with this idea. But expect no smiley face stickers or I Heart Huckabees (I mean ABE) slogans. Just dip in and read stories of teachers talking from their hearts. Recently I came across a quote from a book *The Courage to Teach: Exploring the Inner Landscape of a Teachers Life*, It seems so appropriate to the theme of this issue, I wanted to include it here.

In our rush to reform education, we have forgotten a simple truth: reform will never be achieved by renewing appropriations, restructuring schools, rewriting curricula, and revising texts if we continue to demean and dishearten the human resource called the teacher on whom so much depends. Teachers must be better compensated, freed from bureaucratic harassment, given a role in academic governance, and provided with the best possible methods and materials. But none of that will transform education if we fail to cherish and challenge—the human heart that is the source of good teaching.

— *The Courage to Teach: Exploring the Inner Landscape of a Teacher's Life*, by Parker J. Palmer

Mission Statement and Editorial Policy

Field Notes is an adult basic education (ABE) quarterly, theme-based newsletter. It is designed to share innovative and reliable practices, resources, and information relating to ABE. We attempt to publish a range of voices about important educational issues, and we are especially interested in publishing new writers, writers of color, and writers who represent the full range of diversity of learners and practitioners in the field.

Field Notes is also a place to provide support and encouragement to new and experienced practitioners (ABE, ESOL, GED, ADP, Family Literacy, Correction, Workplace Education, and others) in the process of writing about their ideas and practice. Editorial support is always provided to any writer who requests it. Teachers, administrators, counselors, volunteers, and support staff are welcome to write for *Field Notes*.

Our Funder

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Our Editorial Policy

Unsolicited manuscripts to *Field Notes* are welcome. If you have an idea for an article or wish to submit a letter to the editor, contact Lenore Balliro, editor, by phone at 617-482-9485, by email at <lballiro@worlded.org>, or by mail at 44 Farnsworth Street, Boston, MA 02210. Submission deadlines for upcoming issues are published in each issue of *Field Notes*.

Opinions expressed in *Field Notes* are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the opinion of the editor, SABES, or its funders. We do reserve the right to decline publication. We will not publish material that is sexist, homophobic, or otherwise discriminatory.

Our Reprint Policy

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Moving Toward Heaven

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to decipher what she'd meant. Frequently, within several sentences, I would be confused and feel claustrophobic. I was trained to read first for meaning, and only later for accuracy, but in this case, where the two were all tangled up, I was lost.

The expressions she saw on my face produced on hers something that in no way resembled heaven! It was so clear she'd had years and years and years of that sort of reaction from teachers and other people to whom she'd entrusted her writings. In those moments, it was not about curriculum frameworks or MAPT scores or even about the process writing approach; it was about heaven and hell right there in the classroom. How could I respond to her in a way that offered us both hope?

Reading for Meaning

Over time, I realized I did better if I read her work while she was not present. I needed to read it when I was alone and it was quiet—when I could crinkle my brow and squint and frown if I wanted, without feeling any shame, fear, or guilt. Before I start one of her pieces, I now remind myself to read only for the most overarching theme or meaning. I can then glide over the misspellings, the flipped letters and words, and the inconsistencies in the stories. I allow myself just to sense what has rubbed off on me, even if it's just a powdery hint of an idea. When I see her next, I share what I have understood or felt from her piece, and I leave the next steps up to her. Sometimes

she wants to work on her piece more, and I ask her to start just by writing a few clear sentences expressing what we agreed she was getting at. We go from there. Other times, in fact quite often, she's not connected anymore to what she had written, and she is fine about leaving it behind.

I've become more comfort-

that endless repetition of suffering." In those moments when our lives touch, she no longer feels like a hopeless, ineffective writer, and I can no longer see myself as a failure of a teacher. As we learn, we come to a "new level of understanding." And for me, that is heaven.

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able with her style. She loves to write; it's an escape, a support, an outlet for her. I've realized that there's always more where that came from, so she can just let most of it go. It's certainly not necessary for me to help her take each piece through the writing process! I think I've helped her see that writing, for her, is like turning on that familiar hot faucet. You know full well you're going to let the water run for a while until it actually gets hot. All that writing is not a waste; it's her warm-up, and doing it feels good to her.

It's in this way of working—by trusting the process fully—that we help each other toward heaven right there in class. Rather than let the combination of her deep desire to communicate and my powerful need to understand drag us down, we tread more lightly now. Together, we move up and "out of

Notes

Gilbert, Elizabeth (2006). *Eat, pray, love: One woman's search for everything across Italy, India, and Indonesia*. New York: Viking.

Janet Kaplan-Bucciarelli teaches Leadership Development and ABE at the Read/Write/Now Adult Learning Center in Springfield, MA. She recently produced a film with and about adult learners, which is being seen around the state, the country, and the globe. She can be reached at <janet@kaplan-bucciarelli.net>.

Idea for the Classroom

Watch Janet's film with your students at <http://youtube.com/watch?v=_PI2pFw5avc>.

Keeping Your Head above Water While Teaching from the Heart

By ALEXIS JOHNSON

Let's have a heart-to-heart talk. It's in the heart of downtown. I heart my dog's head.

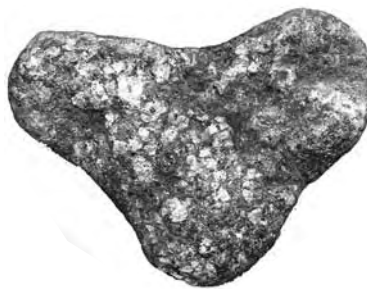
Because of the universal meaning of heart and matters of the heart, the first two sentences will probably be understood by ESOL students, even if different images are used in their own languages. The third, a bumper sticker, will take some explaining. The theme of this month's *Field Notes* led me to think of word usage, probably because I'm teaching a course called Idioms and Culture this spring. An idiom is described in the dictionary as a phrase with a meaning that is not clear from the individual words, such as "a change of heart." Rather than explaining a medical procedure, this idiom simply means to change your mind. Some would say that the expression "a change of heart" has the added meaning of changing your mind because of an emotional incident.

Either way, although this idiom is fairly easy to understand, it may be expressed differently in another language, through another idiom, perhaps. So, for a learner studying English, it may be difficult to actually remember this idiom.

A second meaning of idiom is "the use of particular words in an order that is regarded as standard"—the idiom is "wash up the dishes" but not "wash up your hands." As teachers, we may have theories about this one, but none that the students

will understand. Some things just are.

Advertisements, headlines, comic strips, and cartoons make a newspaper or magazine very difficult to understand for an English learner. You have to contend with idioms, expressions, puns, plays on words, and cultural references. The comic strip "Rhymes with



Orange" had a picture of a man selling a tennis racket to a woman. He says "This one is less flexible and has a big head—it might be a good fit." She says, "It sounds like everyone I've ever dated." Not one student in this intermediate class understood what it means for a person to have a big head, other than being anatomically a bit unusual. And that's the heart of the problem. Form, meaning and use. Go to the head of the class if you got that one.

Presentation, Practice, and Use

So we isolate the form in the presentation, talk about the meaning and play games and do exercises to practice and then use the idioms in picture

descriptions, stories, and role-plays. In my class, we've started with idioms using body parts. This is confusing because you've got "shake your head," which literally describes a gesture (the meaning of the gesture is what you're going for here), and butt heads which is used literally for goats. He rolled his eyes and he's got his eyes on you are two more examples. The first literally describes a gesture and the second has a meaning that is not clear from the individual words.

Students' assignment for the next class is to bring in idioms using body parts that they've collected from people or the media.

It's easy to become head over heels with this stuff. So shake a leg, be nosey, and hand your students a key to unlocking the heart of the puzzle that is American idioms. Students' thanks are heartfelt. You don't have to be from the heartland to wear your heart on your sleeve. Somebody stop me. Head me off at the pass. my heart's racing . . . I believe in this heart and soul . . .

Alexis Johnson, who collects idioms from around the world, is the executive director of the International Language Institute in Northampton, MA. She can be reached at <alexis@languageschoolusa.org>.



A Little Too Much from the Heart? Working Conditions and ABE

BY CATHY COLEMAN

How many of you know what you want to be? Astounding isn't it? That's why adults are always asking little kids what they want to be when they grow up—because they're looking for ideas.

—Paula Poundstone, comedian

How many of you reading this article planned to go into adult education? My guess is not many of you are raising your hands, but many of us do find our way here through various routes, then we find our niche, and this is when the trouble begins.

A Real Job

“When are you going to get a real job?” A friend of mine asked me in 1991. A “real job,” in her estimation, was like the one she had—a job in accounts payable, a perfectly respectable, “normal” job with a desk and a computer, and a larger than average cubicle, a job she went to each day at 9 and left at 5, a job which provided her health benefits, paid vacations, and a retirement plan.

In 1991, I was a long way from that kind of job. I was teaching four classes (one pre-GED, four workplace math) in three different places, coordinating the regional student writing publication for SABES, and participating in various other staff development projects. I had a schedule no one could figure out. “No it’s Monday and Wednesday 9–11 and 1–3 and Monday, Tuesday, Thursday,

6–9.” I essentially ran an ABE program out of my car, carting GED books, graph paper, various pieces of student homework, and a big bucket of Base Ten Cubes all over central Mass.

In 1991, I taught for part of the time in a basement room where it was so cold we wore our coats a good deal of the winter. Our classroom was actually the break room for school

young and learning my craft.

I was happy to have a room to teach in at all and was grateful for times when the heat worked. No big deal. I was taking it all in, and making an OK living for a young woman.

Many years later, I’m still in adult education. As I look back on my 19 years in the field, I realize that I’ve had the great privilege of working from the

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department staff, and it doubled as a meeting space. On a regular basis, my class and I would show up to find that we had been bumped for some type of meeting or I would be in the awkward position of having to explain to tired school department personnel carrying large cups of coffee —“Umm . . . yeah, I’m the GED teacher and this isn’t actually being used as a break room now. I’m really sorry. We’ll be done by noon, I promise.”

In 1991, I had been in the field only a few years. For the most part, it was all good. I was

heart. I sometimes wonder, though, if my decision to remain in this field is a little too much from my heart and not at all from my head . . . or my wallet. I’m not as young as I used to be. After spending many years with no health insurance, I pay \$539 a month for an individual plan, have little saved for retirement, and ask myself every year, “Can I afford to stay in ABE another year?” I am actually considering a career change, and I have watched many, many smart, talented, dedicated people leave

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A Little Too Much . . .

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this field in search of better opportunities, more stable jobs, better money, a more secure future—in short, better working conditions.

Saying Yes

I love my teaching. I love my students. I work with a great group of colleagues and a director who is doing what she can to promote positive working conditions in our field. I've been lucky in many regards. I've spent a career saying yes to every growth opportunity that came my way. I said yes, for example, when asked to join the ABE Math Team in the early 90s. This experience changed the way I viewed teaching and learning; it also gave me the invaluable opportunity to see how the rest of the ABE world lived. Prior to joining a state-wide team, I didn't have much opportunity to meet many other adult educators.

I was too busy running from one part-time job to another. The Math Team allowed me, over an extended period, to get to know teachers from all parts of the state. This experience also showed me that the world in my one program was not the world everyone experienced in this field. I saw that there were progressive directors and programs out there working hard to try to get good teachers to stay in ABE, offering full-time work in some cases, providing teachers with truly collaborative work environments and a real role in decision making. It was wonder-

ful to see, and I felt a real sense of hopefulness about our field.

I still feel hopeful about ABE, largely because of the recently reincarnated Working Conditions Committee of the Massachusetts Coalition for Adult Education (MCAE). This committee, made up of teachers, directors, and staff developers, is working hard to promote working conditions



that will attract and retain quality professionals in ABE. Recently, the committee has finalized a set of standards for working conditions. These standards are intended as a guideline for programs and as a catalyst for discussion about how we can work toward meeting these standards. You can check out the standards at www.mcae.net/ and click on "Updated Standards for Quality Working Conditions in ABE/ESOL Programs."

The Working Conditions Committee is not just a group of people who get together once a month to *kvetch*. It is a group made up mainly of folks who, like me, have been in this

business a long while and who might be called optimistic realists or realistic optimists. We recognize that the changes we envision cannot happen overnight. We also acknowledge that some learning centers are in better positions to make these changes than others. Some directors and program staff have found ways to make their centers places where smart, talented people want to work and want to stay working there. The Working Conditions Committee wants to recognize these programs and share their ideas with others.

The ABE field, like any other, has visitors, passers-by, and residents. All of these have contributions to make. If we can create the conditions that will convince smart, talented, and committed visitors to become residents, maybe someday Paula Poundstone will hear someone in the audience say, speaking from her heart and her head, "Yeah, I want to be an adult educator."

Cathy Coleman has been a teacher, staff developer, curriculum developer, and filmographer in ABE programs and resource centers across Massachusetts. She can be reached at <catharama@yahoo.com>.

You Can Help!

For more information about how you can help the MCAE Working Conditions Committee, please check out www.mcae.net/.

From Sinking Heart to Uplifted Heart: Teaching in Jail

By MEGHAN DORAN

Sometimes it's hard to have heart in a corrections facility. You might think there'd be a whole lot of love for me, a young woman, working in the men's side of a county jail. Sure, maybe it starts out that way, but give a student a few days in the classroom and the love quickly fades. Pretty soon I stop being a woman and become just a teacher. If there's one thing most of my students have in common, it's distrust of authority. As soon as I enforce the rules of the prison, the honeymoon's over. Fortunately, that's when things get interesting. In my odd position as woman-not-woman, I become a sounding board for a whole host of mysteries and theories about the "fairer sex." In the beginning, when a student would bring up a question off-topic, I would naively consider the question and attempt a reasoned and thoughtful response.

Short and Sweet

However, I have had to change my approach. During one class period, when I intended to explore the effects of colonialism in Africa, I ended up answering too many questions and the class time slipped away. Lately, I rely on my stock answer, in the form of a question, "Don't men do that too?" You'd be surprised how well this works for any question, one about jealousy, cheating, game-playing, or the like. The inquisi-

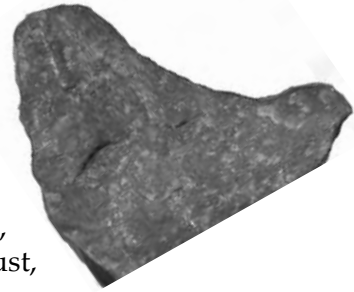
tor generally stops and thinks about this just long enough for me to move the class along.

Recently, however, I've become privy to a whole secret world of my students: the love letter. Somehow or another in the last few months I've been deemed the appropriate source for ensuring the grammatical correctness of letters written to women—mothers, girlfriends, babies' mamas, and so on. Ever searching for a teachable moment, I'll spend the last few minutes of class



tutoring a student on the past tense and using punctuation within a missive rife with clichéd declarations of love and devotion. No matter how many sickeningly sweet pages I read, there's always a moment of speechlessness at the end of my reading. Often I just want to ask "Really? You, who's always giving me so much backtalk in class? You wrote this?" But the best part is not reading into their relationships, but reading into my relationship with them. Sentimentality can be a dangerous

thing in jail (even if many of them have it). To let me into this world, that implies trust, which is much better than love for an educator.



Unexpected Solidarity

Several months ago I was informed that a high-up administrator at the House of Correction would be coming to sit in on my class. My heart sank. Not the afternoon class. For the past several weeks we seemed to be engaged in a constant struggle. What was it my grandmother always said? "Too many personalities spoil the broth?" Sometimes you just get a room full of strong-minded individuals, and it's difficult to get anything going. The result is a quiet classroom struggle. I had grown positive my afternoon students were intent on taking me down, and now they would have the perfect opportunity to do so. The administrator showed up before anyone else, a bad omen because (a) my students were all late and (b) I wouldn't have a chance to plead my case for cooperation (or at least bribe them with a movie the next day). I began to imagine the worst. What happened instead was amazing. One by one they sauntered in, chests puffed,

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From Sinking Heart to Uplifted Heart . . .

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ready to resist. Invariably each student, realizing there was a greater authority than me in the room, quietly came to my desk for a pencil and sat quickly at a desk. They even had good posture! The hour our guest stayed with us progressed without a hitch, each student agreeing to read out loud and answering my discussion questions in a respectful and thoughtful manner. The calmness of it all actually began to feel eerie, as I had become so accustomed to the post lunch chaos. After the administrator left, we had a brief moment of unity. ("You did a great job" several of them proudly informed me.) Within minutes the chaos had resumed, but I hardly noticed. For an hour I had been a part of the "us" rather than a part of the "them." Protecting your teacher from the administration—now that's love.

Meghan Doran has been teaching in the adult literacy field for six years. She is currently an ABE teacher at Suffolk County House of Correction in Boston, MA. She can be reached at meghan.doran@yahoo.com



Idea for the Classroom

Heart Health: Don't Spill the Beans

Object

To introduce beans as a heart healthy food. This lesson can work as a lead-in to healthy eating practices using high fiber and low-fat recipes. Follow up can include lessons on fiber, fats, and recipes for low-fat food preparation.

Process

1. Arrange students into small groups or pairs. Give each group four or five small containers of different kinds of dried beans. Black beans pinto, yellow split pea, navy bean, orange lentils, brown lentils, etc. Keep the colors and sizes varied.
2. Give each group a large piece of newsprint and large markers. Have the group select recorder and write down the questions generated from the group.
3. Ask the group to generate 15–20 questions about the beans and to write the questions down on the newsprint. Allow sufficient time for students to talk about the beans, examine them, and create their questions.
4. Post the newsprint on the wall and ask students to read the questions aloud one by one.
5. Before dealing with content, ask the class if there are any grammatical corrections to the questions. Have students volunteer to come up and make corrections.
6. Select a few questions students are most interested in and set up simple research projects for students to look up the answers to the questions on the Internet.

Variation

For very beginning level, introduce or review color, shape, texture, numbers beforehand. Use the beans to introduce or review comparatives (darker/lighter, smaller/bigger, etc.)

Math Applications

Use the beans to introduce or review concepts such as more than, less than, counting by twos, fives, or tens, etc.

Family Activity

Create bean bags by stitching fabric remnants filled with beans. Use for playing bean toss into a basket.

You Are My Sunflower

BY CAROLYN SHAKTI SADEH

I have been teaching an intermediate ESL class for the Community Education Project in Holyoke for two months now. This heart-warming incident occurred during a class following International Women's Day.

The homework had been for each student to write a paragraph about a woman who was important to him or her, either personally or historically. I paired up students and asked them to take turns reading their paragraphs, to allow for questions and to explore unfamiliar vocabulary. The listener would later be the one to tell the group about his or her partner's report.

Kala, a bright, enthusiastic woman, had read about Florence Nightingale when she was in elementary school in Puerto Rico and had always admired her since then. Kala was reading to Sulema, another student. I heard her read a line in her report about how Florence Nightingale was not a "shrinking violet" in the presence of her disapproving parents, nor with her coworkers at the military hospital where she was the first ever female nurse. I was rather amused by the phrase "shrinking violet." We explored what it means to shrink and we investigated violets. I suggested that Florence Nightingale was more like a big sunflower. Kala agreed and Sulema brightened, even

though she had come into class seeming pensive and preoccupied. Sulema then shared with the class that her husband had just been told that he might have cancer in his neck, and she was of course upset and shaken.



All the students gave their own loving advice to Sulema. "Be strong!" "When trouble comes in the front door, I open the back door." "When a door closes, I

open a window." "I stay focused on love."

Frances then said, "My husband, he always calls me his sunflower." He says I always turn my head to the light when there are problems. I am always positive. When my husband dies I am going to cover his casket with sunflowers." We later found out that Frances's husband does not have cancer, but an infection that is being treated with anti biotics. I was moved to the heart by the generosity of sharing and the attempt by students to express their hearts' feelings in English.

Carolyn Shakti Sadeh is an ESL instructor at CEP in Holyoke and at the Ludlow Adult Learning Center as well as a yoga and theater improvisation teacher. She can be reached at <foolplaysadeh@verizon.net>.

Idea for the ESOL Classroom

Bring in images of various flowers and ask students to discuss their symbolic significance. For example, in China, carnations are often a symbol of marriage, and bamboo is symbolic of longevity. In the U. S. anyone standing under mistletoe can be kissed. In Catholic traditions, lilies often symbolize purity. For beginning level students, bring in actual flowers and use them to introduce descriptive vocabulary as well as symbolic value.

Now Two More Can Do Math: A Story of Heart and Numbers

By JANE CAPIELLO, WITH INTRODUCTION BY PATRICIA DONOVAN

Jane Cappiello, a teacher at the Brockton Adult Learning Center, participates in a statewide math staff development team called Teacher to Teacher (T2T). During one T2T meeting, Jane was introduced to Racko, a math game that promotes number recognition and fosters knowledge of number sequencing. Racko is played by placing the ten cards you are dealt on your rack in the order that you receive them. The object is to arrange your cards from lowest to highest through discarding and drawing new cards.

Jane shared Racko with students in her Family Connections ESOL 1 classes, and they loved it. Below is the unexpected tale of what happened in one of her classes as a result of their Racko experience. After hearing the story, a colleague, delighted, exclaimed, "Now, two more can do math!"

Jane's Story

At the Brockton Adult Learning Center, we have an ESOL program called Family Connections. This program is available to ESOL students who have children in the Brockton Public Schools. In these classes we focus on the language and vocabulary necessary to help parents communicate with their children's schools, doctors, and other institutions and services. Usually, before any school breaks, we research any com-

munity events or activities to encourage and foster family fun during the vacations.

They Got Game

At our November T2T workshop, I was introduced to Racko, a math card game. All the participants in the workshop played in teams of two, which fostered communication and



collaboration on which strategies we should use to win. This game seemed perfect for my beginning Family Connections ESOL students. When I tried it in class, the students loved it, and they wanted to know where to buy Racko and how much it cost. After researching online and talking with coworkers, I discovered that Benny's, a discount chain, had the game in stock for \$4.99. The Benny's in Raynham had seven, so I bought them all. During our next class, I mentioned that I had purchased a number of Racko games and asked if anyone would like to buy them from me. To my amazement all nineteen students raised their hands. Now, I had my work cut out for me—where to find more games.

With the help of my husband, also an ESOL teacher, we visited four more Benny's and found the games. When I brought them in to class, the students were eager to purchase them. The classroom was abuzz with how they would surprise their kids with the game as a holiday gift, and how they would spend time playing together as a family. All of the students bought a game except for two who sat quietly looking at their hands. I realized they didn't have \$4.99 to spend on a game. After class I was going to give these two students two of the remaining games. One student, "A," bought three games because he has a big family. As they were leaving class, I asked "A," "Where are the other two games you bought?" Immediately, he denied buying them. However, I insisted that I knew he had bought them. He said, "Miss Jane, I gave them to my 'family' already!" (Of course, he was referring to his "classroom family.") Everyone left happy! Now, I know not only "two more can do math" but also how this activity created a "family" bond in our classroom.

Jane Cappiello teaches at the Adult Learning Center in Brockton. She can be reached at <Janiecap@aol.com>. Patricia Donovan coordinates the SABES math initiative, among other professional development work. She can be reached at <pdonovan@worlded.org>.

Going beyond Grammar

BY YASMINE HUNG

It is my belief that teaching is a noble profession, for educating others is providing them with the tools to lead responsible, full lives and to make valuable contributions to society. But teaching is not only about knowing your subject matter and being able to successfully transmit it to your students. It certainly goes beyond that. In my experience as an ESOL teacher in Caracas, Venezuela, I had the opportunity to work with students of different ages in a variety of settings. My students included a wide range: four-year-old preschoolers enrolled in an after-school program, high school seniors requiring one-on-one tutoring at home, and middle-aged executives honing their language skills at their comfortable offices.

The Influence of Teachers

In each case, I could see how my teaching influenced performance and how it helped students accomplish their own personal goals. I could see the preschoolers growing physically and cognitively; I could see the high school senior passing English so he could graduate with his peers, and I could see the executive becoming more fluent and comfortable using his English to do business with foreign investors and partners. In all these instances, my work and theirs contributed to their success.

I recently came to the United States and found a job as an ESOL teacher at the Somerville

Center for Adult Learning Experiences (SCALE). In this ESOL classroom, I work with a very diverse group of limited English speakers coming from countries in Central America, South America, the Caribbean, Africa, and Asia. Although they come from different backgrounds, they all stand on common ground: they want to learn English so that they can improve their standard of living. They are at SCALE to acquire the language skills needed to have access to training, education, and better job opportunities.

It is now, more than ever, that my role as a teacher acquires a greater significance. I realize that this ESOL class should involve much more than a focus on grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation or the development of reading and writing skills.

At the end of the day, when my students arrive at class, they are sometimes physically exhausted and mentally drained. I see it as our mission in adult basic education to create a caring, supportive environment where students' self-esteem is nurtured and where their individual differences and abilities are acknowledged and respected. I also feel it is important to challenge students enough to engage them in the learning process and to boost their confidence. I want to see students succeed so that they can communicate effectively with their American-born children, talk with their children's teachers, and interact effectively with their bosses. I

want them to understand their duties and their rights as members of this society and to participate actively in the communities where they live.

Learning English for Change

Learning English for my students in the ESOL classroom is a matter of survival. By helping them overcome the language barrier, we are empowering them to connect with a larger community and helping them bring about changes in their lives, their family's lives, and society at large.

To fulfill our mission, we must understand that teaching is a serious commitment because we are giving our students valuable and powerful tools that will greatly impact their lives. So to all my fellow teachers, let us take on the challenge and make a difference. When you walk into the classroom today and every day, teach from your hearts and inspire your students to excel.

Yasmine Hung is an ESOL teacher at Scale (Somerville Center for Adult Learning Experience) She can be reached at <myhung2@gmail.com>.

Idea for the Classroom

from <http://school.discovery.com/lessonplans/>

Here's to Your Healthy Heart

HEART RATE RECORD WORK SHEET



NAME: _____

Resting Heart Rate: This is your heart rate when you are at rest and relaxed. Average resting heart rate is around 70 beats per minute, though yours may be lower or higher.

Maximum Heart Rate: This is the fastest that your heart is designed to beat. You generally do not want to reach your maximum heart rate because that would mean you are working your heart too hard. In healthy children, the maximum heart rate is around 200 beats per minute. When you exercise to strengthen your heart, it is recommended that you aim to achieve 50 to 75 percent of your maximum heart rate.

Pulse: Your pulse is a measure of your heartbeat. Whenever your heart beats, it forces a surge of blood through your arteries. You can feel this surge by placing one or two fingers (not your thumb) on the inside of your wrist - press softly in the indent to the thumb-side of the central tendons. You can also take your pulse on the side of your neck - press softly in the indent on either side of your trachea halfway between your jaw and collarbone.

Test Your Heart Rate: Working in pairs, find your resting heart rate. To do this, take your own pulse for 15 seconds while your partner watches the clock. Then multiply that number by four to determine how many times your heart beats in one minute. Write this number in the "Sitting/Pulse Rate" box on the chart below. Then do each activity described below, taking your heart rate immediately after the activity, then each minute for the next five minutes (or until your heart rate has returned to your resting heart rate). Each time, your partner should watch the clock while you take your own heart rate. Alternate with your partner so you have time to rest between activities.

Activity	Pulse Rate	After 1 Minute	After 2 Minutes	After 3 Minutes	After 4 Minutes	After 5 Minutes
Sitting	—	—	—	—	—	—
Walking in place for 1 minute						
Jumping jacks for 1 minute						
Sprint 100 meters						
Sprint 200 meters						

As a class, discuss your results.

What differences did you observe in how long it took a person's heart rate to return to his or her resting heart rate?

Do boys or girls return to their resting heart rate more quickly?

Do students who play organized sports return to their resting heart rates more quickly?

How do you suppose this test measures the strength of your heart?

Why I Learn English

JIN-YOUNG CHOI

If someone asks me, "Why do you study English?" that answer is one, "I want to speak English very well!"

I have been in the U.S.A. for many years. (I don't want to tell you how many years because that brings shame on me. I know I have some problem with English skills.) My kids are growing up here. They go to school and spend a lot of time on English. My kids speak Korean too, but English is comfortable and easy, more than Korean. When they talk about

some topics in English I don't understand. It makes me sad and lonely and I feel left out.

A few years ago, I spoke English to my kids. That was good practice for me. But my



kids forgot Korean. I thought it was something wrong. I stopped

speaking English to my kids. They came back to Korean. I want them to be able to speak both languages very well. And then, how do I learn English? I want to make American friends.

I learn to speak English and learn North American culture. I think they help me improve my English skills. Second, I am taking a class now. It makes me have a successful life in the U.S.A, when I have to study hard.

Jin-Young Choi is a student at the Norwood Adult ESOL Program. She works very hard on her writing. She can be reached through Mary

Ann Sliwa at <masliwa@comcast.net>. See Mary Ann's poem below.

To My Students

BY MARY ANN SLIWA

to my students you show me heart
on the days when you shine with success, putting out a fire at work, learning CPR
the days when you ache with sadness, a compadre being killed
all the searching of minds that we have shared
teaching me to love family
livefully aliveahora
obrigado
merci
bye

Mary Ann Sliwa teaches at the Norwood Adult ESOL Program. She can be reached at <masliwa@comcast.com>.

What Keeps Us Going

BY RICHARD GOLDBERG

A Bosnian immigrant who was in the process of selling me a car at a local dealership a few years ago started to talk about his background. Not knowing that I have spent years working in ESOL programs, he told me he spoke no English when he came to the United States and that he “owes everything” to his teachers. “ESL teachers are special people,” he told me.

A Polish immigrant, now a district manager for Starbucks, was talking with me recently about bringing a small group of volunteers, including herself, to our agency. She told a story of her new life in a strange place eight years ago and echoed my car salesman’s sentiment. “We always remember our ESL teachers,” she said.

To paraphrase Henry Adams, “Teachers affect eternity. They can never tell where their influence stops.” I have thought about this message often over the past seventeen years. I relive it every December when Christmas cards arrive. “I will graduate from Bunker Hill Community College in June, 2007,” three of them read this past December. “You are still my best teacher,”

said another. “You will always be my teacher,” a third former student wrote. And the best one from early April: “I would like to invite you to my graduation from Wheelock College on May 18.”

Memory Boxes

I keep a box of these cards, letters and emails, now filled to overflowing from the past fourteen years, under my desk at home. When the workload gets too heavy, when frustration, exhaustion and maybe a little anger sets in, I take out some of these papers and realize that we are truly in the life changing business. During a cycle in my first year of teaching at the Asian American Civic Association, a graduating student made this clever analogy: “It’s time we can control the bicycle ourselves to go ahead with more confidence than before! Some of your students will be successful in this country by studying, and I will ‘live up to my full potential’ to be one of them. I promise.”

In recent years, as I became a veteran teacher and later director of four educational programs at our agency, I have come to understand the need to stay

connected to students after they graduate from our classes. Email is a great tool. What began as a few Chinese New Year cards going out several years ago totaled almost ninety (mostly electronic) this year. Many former students happily return the favor. When I see the return address, I feel like a child on Christmas morning, eagerly tearing open the wrapping to see the gift inside.

A few years ago, a colleague asked, “Does any of this really matter? Does anything we do really make a difference?” We may not know the answer until well after students leave our programs. As teachers, we need to remember all we do to get students to their next steps. The next time you see a former student on the street, in a supermarket checkout line, or on the T, and she asks, “Do you remember me?” Chances are she certainly remembers you.

Richard Goldberg is director of education at the Asian American Civic Association in Boston and has taught intermediate ESOL there since 1993. He can be reached at Richard@aca-boston.org.

Massachusetts Adult Literacy Hotline



Free information on GED, ESOL, literacy, and citizenship classes for adults offered throughout Massachusetts. Information online at

www.sabes.org/hotline

Call 1-800-447-8844 seven days a week, 6 a.m. to midnight.

New Feature

SABES Questions & Answers

Are there questions about SABES you have always wanted to ask? Now's the time. "SABES Q & A" will become a regular feature in *Field Notes*. We want to give you clear explanations about what SABES does and how it is structured. In this first Q & A, we are offering some basic information. In future issues, we would like to respond to questions you have. Please address your questions to <lbaliro@worlded.org> with a note in the message line that reads: "SABES Q & A." We can print your name, but we don't have to.

Q. What does SABES stand for?

A. SABES stands for the System for Adult Basic Education Support.

Q. What does SABES do?

A. SABES provides staff and program development for ABE practitioners and programs in Massachusetts. We do this in a variety of ways. For example, we offer workshops and short courses on a variety of topics relevant to ABE and ESOL. These topics have included assessment, workforce development, teaching reading, math, and multi level classes. We publish *Field Notes*. We initiate and support multi year special initiatives, like teaching math across

all levels in ABE/ESOL classes. We have a huge library of lending materials for ABE teachers with a catalog on line. This is just a little of what we do.

Q. Where is SABES located?

A. SABES has five regional resource centers. Each region addresses the needs of the teachers and programs in its area. SABES also has a Central Resource Center called the CRC. The CRC coordinates statewide initiatives, oversees the SABES Web site, develops some trainings,

and oversees some publications (*Field Notes*, training manuals, curricula, etc.

Q. How does SABES relate to me as an ABE practitioner?

A. SABES offers resources and staff development opportunities that may relate to your continuing education as a teacher, counselor, or administrator. Our events and activities are free, and you get a chance to connect with other people doing similar work. When you attend a SABES event, serve on its Advisory Board, or contribute an article to

Field Notes, you are connecting your voice to the voices of others in the wider ABE community.

Q. Do you have a Web site?

A. We do, and it has been recently revised and updated. Check it out at <www.sabes.org>. You'll find conference and workshop listings, a searchable library catalog, and links to cool people and resources.

Q. Does SABES have a director?

A. Mina Reddy served as the SABES CRC director for the last five years. She left in April to work at the Community Learning Center in Cambridge. We are in the process of hiring another director. The director oversees the SABES yearly workplan, supervises the CRC, and performs many other administrative duties. Prior to Mina, Sally Waldron served as the SABES CRC director. By the time this issue of *Field Notes* is out in the mail, we may have a new director on board, so check the SABES Web site for updates: <www.sabes.org>.

Please turn to next page for a diagram of the SABES system.

Continued on page 16



SABES Regional Resource Centers

If you go to the SABES Web site at <www.sabes.org>, you can find the email addresses and phone extensions of all the staff members at all the regional sites. You can also find calendar listings of upcoming events, workshops, and activities at each regional site .

SABES Northeast

Northern Essex Community College
45 Franklin St.
Lawrence MA 01840
978-738-7302

SABES Central Resource Center

World Education
44 Farnsworth St.
Boston, MA 02210
617-482-9485

SABES West

Holyoke Community College
303 Homestead Ave.
Holyoke, MA 01040
413-552-2586

SABES Central

Quinsigamond Community College
670 West Boylston St.
Worcester, MA 01606
508-854-4476

SABES Southeast

Bristol Community College
777 Elsbree St., L-107
Fall River, MA 02720
508- 678-2811 x2278

SABES Greater Boston

Adult Literacy Resource
Institute, University of
Massachusetts Boston
Wheatley Bldg. 4th fl, Room 04-167
100 Morrissey Blvd.
Boston, MA 02125-3393
617-287-4070

SABES Library

Adult Literacy Resource
Institute, University of
Massachusetts Boston
Wheatley Bldg. 4th fl, Room 04-167
100 Morrissey Blvd.
Boston, MA 02125-3393
617-287-4070

Idea for the Classroom

Heart Poems for the ESOL or ABE Classroom

The following poems speak from the heart but avoid sentimentality. Find the full text on the Web site listed.

“I Carry Your Heart With Me”

by e.e. cummings

<www.americanpoems.com/poets/eecummings/11913>

“The Heart’s Counting Knows Only One”

by Jane Hirshfield

<www.poetry-chaikhana.com/H/Hirshfieldja/HeartsCounti.htm>

“If I Can Stop One Heart From Breaking”

by Emily Dickenson

Heartfelt Idioms for the ESOL Class

Heartbreak

Heartache

Heartless

Heartburn

Heartland

Heartfelt

Heart attack

Sacred heart

Cold heart

Heavy heart

Broken heart

Bleeding heart

Dear heart

Heart of gold

Child at heart

Have a heart

Young at heart

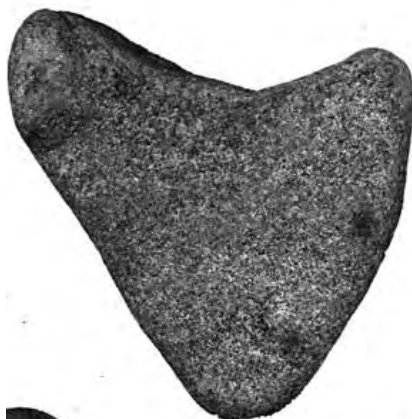
Wild at heart

Know by heart

Play by heart

Full of heart

Light at heart



Follow your heart

Heart as big as all outdoors

Cold hands, warm heart

From the bottom of my heart

Peg o' my heart

Heart-to-heart talk

Wear your heart on your sleeve

Listen to your heart

Get to the heart of the matter

My heart goes out to you

Idea for the Classroom

After discussing heart idioms in English, have students talk about idioms in their countries that contain the word "heart." Compare similarities and differences among idioms.

Resources

Teaching from the Heart: Seasons of Renewal in a Teacher's Life

1998

The Fetzer Institute with Parker J. Palmer
Hoboken, New Jersey: Jossey-Bass publisher
This documentary follows 100 teachers through a two year "courage to Teach" program.

Why I Teach: Inspirational True Stories from Teachers Who Make a Difference

1999

Esther M.A. Wright
Roseville California: Prima Publishing
Esther Wright has compiled a collection of stories about why teachers teach and why they stay despite increasing challenges.

Teaching from the Heart (Professional Practices in Adult Education and Human Resource Development Series)

1966

Jerold W. Apps
Melbourne: FLA: Krieger Publishing
Apps explores a holistic approach to teaching and learning with adults, including the learner's belief system, multidimensional ways of learning, multiples intelligences.

Teaching from the Heart: Reflections, Encouragement, and Inspiration

2000

Sharon M. Draper
Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann
A collection of essays, conversations, encouragement from an award-winning author.

The Courage to Teach: Exploring the Inner Landscape of a Teacher's Life

1997, reissued in 2007

Parker J. Palmer
Hoboken: Jossey-Bass Publisher

Through the Lens of Social Justice: Using the Change Agent in Adult Education

Edited by Andy Nash

This resource selects articles, lesson plans, and other classroom resources for teachers who want to introduce or deepen the theme of social justice in their classrooms. Available from the New England Literacy Resource Center <www.nelrc.org>.

"Adult Literacy Research: Opportunities and Challenges"

John Comings and Lisa Soricone

This occasional paper has two goals that support the building of a stronger research base for the adult literacy field. The first goal is to interest researchers in pursuing rigorous scientific research in this field. Despite the many challenges to research, this field offers researchers some opportunities to have a positive impact on education, increase the research base, and advance their careers. The second goal is to identify these challenges and approaches to overcoming them so that future research could design more successful studies. Addressing these challenges to research is a critical step toward building a larger and stronger foundation of evidence to support practitioner decisions. To download the paper, go to the NCSALL Web site: <www.ncsall.net/?id=26#opps>

"Evaluating and Interpreting Research Syntheses in Adult Learning and Literacy"

Harris Cooper
This occasional paper introduces the methods of research synthesis and meta-analysis to researchers and consumers of research in the field of adult learning and literacy. The first section defines key terms and offers a brief history of how the methodologies developed. The second section provides a conceptualization of research synthesis that views it no differently from other research endeavors in the social sciences. Then, the tasks of research synthesis are presented within the context of a hypothetical example drawn from the literature on adult learning and literacy. To download the paper, go to the NCSALL Web site: <www.ncsall.net/?id=26#syntheses>

Mark Your Calendar

Check the SABES Web site, <www.sabes.org> for local and regional activities. This list was prepped by Lou Wollrab.

July 5–7, 2007

Voice for Adult Literacy United for Education (VALUE)
National Adult Learner Leadership Institute
Literacy & Leadership = Independence
Location: Hartford, CT
Contact: VALUE
Web: www.valueusa.org

August 1–2, 2007

The ABE Directors' Summer Institute
College of the Holy Cross
Worcester, MA
Contact: Tricia Donovan
Email: tdonovan@worlded.org

September 26–27, 2007

ABE Directors' Meeting
Falmouth, MA
Contact: Adult and Community Learning Services
781-338-3850

October 24–25, 2007

Network 2007
Marlborough, MA
Massachusetts Coalition for Adult Education
Contact: Kenny Tamarkin
617-778-7971

October 30–November 2, 2007

American Association of Adult and Continuing Education (AAACE), 2007 Conference
Spirit of New Norfolk: Life and Adult Education
Celebrated Daily
Location: Norfolk VA
Contact: AAACE
Web: www.aaace.org/conferences/index.html

November 8–9, 2007

National College Transition Network
Effective Transitions in Adult Education
Location: Providence, RI
Contact: Priyanka Sharma, 617-482-9485
Web: www.collegetransition.org/novconference.html



*If hands could free you, heart,
Where would you fly?*

—Philip Larkin (1922–1986), British poet.

Spring Cleaning!

From time to time we dust off our *Field Notes* mailing list. We want to make sure every staff person in ABE/ESOL programs around the state receives his or her own copy of *Field Notes*. We also hate to waste postage, so we try to reduce the number of returned copies. Can you help us? Take a minute to add the names of staff who are not receiving *Field Notes* and to delete names of staff who no longer work with you. You can respond through email or snail mail. Use additional paper if necessary.

Please add the following names to your mailing list:

Address:

Please delete the following names from your mailing list:



44 Farnsworth Street
Boston, MA 02210

Return Service Requested

Upcoming Themes for *Field Notes*

Fall 2007

ABE Counseling

Submit by June 15.

Winter 2007

Technology in ABE

Distance learning, use of computers, innovative software, media literacy, and more.

Submit by September 15.

Spring 2008

Learning Disabilities in ABE

Submit by December 15

Summer 2008

Open issue

Anything goes. Well, almost.

Submit by March 15.

