

EDITORIAL

If Not, Give Us Another DVD!

By Said BERDOUZ

Last November, the Moroccan Ministry in charge of Modernizing Public Sectors released a report which contains an analysis of the results yielded by the operation Moroccans have been referring to as the "DVD" though it has nothing to do with the world of videos. Without reading between the lines of that report, one could learn that the VPL ("Voluntary Planned Leaving") or VERIP (Voluntary Early Retirement with an Incentive Plan), or whatever you call it, will have a very positive impact on the Moroccan society*. The report confirms, with the support of figures, to a great extent the beneficial effects of the operation on all public administrative sectors stating the fact that it will lead to reducing the level of state charges as it will create an opportunity for rejuvenating the administration according to criteria that take into account the applicants' competencies, and work abilities more than anything else. Moreover, it informs on how these effects will give a push to the economy of the country as it is expected that a part of the redundancy pay, the financial incentives received by the concerned beneficiaries and which reached the amount of 10.483 Millions in local currency, will be invested in various economical sectors. 59% of the interviewed recipients expressed their intentions of investing in economic projects, which means that jobs will be created and more gains generated. Can we dream of a better and interesting citizen way of sharing this cake? The report goes further and states, using percentage tables and figures again as a proof, that there will be no negative upshots on the sectors concerned with the "DVD".

For the Ministry of Education, it says that less than 5%, exactly 4.76%, of the global number of the public education employees (13,047 employees), all categories merged, have been allowed to depart and, according to that report, this would not impinge on the schooling of Moroccan children, nor would it affect the educational administrative work in any way. What is more, the expected beneficial backwash of the program on the system is described with extreme eloquence with emphasis on the fact that all arrangements required to ensure a successful 2005-2006 academic year have been taken by the concerned Ministry. However, the experience our schools have gone through since last September shows, in my point of view, that not all the highlighted promises have been achieved: most schools, be they primary or secondary have suffered from shortage of teachers, of headmasters, of deans of students, and all kinds of administrative staff. I have the impression that what matters more in the educational authorities' point of view is boasting the "successful outcomes" of the change being implemented in our system of education; outcomes which neither parents nor pupils seem to be convinced of. I could not either (though I have been working in the field for more than 40 years).

Lucky were not the inspectors who did not apply to go on the "DVD" and those whose applications were rejected, although some people highly positioned in the hierarchy of the ministry would think we had more "chiefs than Indians". With the departure of almost one third of the ELT supervision corps, some inspectorates are left with only one inspector to provide "quality" supervision for a number of teachers that has tripled

and in some areas has quadrupled. What makes things worse is that they are not given the required means to do their job effectively.

Despite all the problems we, teachers and educational administrative staff alike, encountered this year, there is no room to say that our educational system has gone bankrupt; we are all aware of the fact that "Education" must be our major concern and accordingly, most of us are doing their best to make the services provided by our schools as efficient as we would like them to be. We have great professional potentialities and the educational authorities should be proud of them. To take more profit from them, let us recognize them as such; let us give them the tools they need to do their job correctly; let us encourage and incite them to give more! If meeting these elementary needs is beyond our reach, then let us give them another "DVD"!

* See: <http://www.mmmp.gov.ma/>

*Published with this issue,
a supplement containing
8 projects for the secondary
school level of English*

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Edited by:

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REPORTS ON MATE ACTIVITIES

General Council meeting

Date: September 25th, 2005
From 9.00 a.m to 3.00 p.m
Site: CPR, Marrakech

Attendance : Said Berdouz, Ayoub Ait Ali, Mohammed Hassim, Abdelkrim Reddadi, Ahmed Atlagh, Rachida Kerkech, Amal Elmhiouli, Abdelmjid Bouziane, Abderrahim Ghaiti, Mostapha Blibil, Mohammed Mekhfi and Nezha Belkachla.

Agenda:

1. Reports on previous events
2. Evaluation of last year events.
3. Preparation of the 2005-06 action plan with task distribution
4. MATE Annual Conference
5. Sponsoring
6. Miscellanies

1. Mustapha Blibil and Amal presented short oral reports on the Marrakech and Casablanca summer camps (SC) respectively. Detailed written reports by Mustapha Blibil and Fatima Mouhib will be submitted to the board later. The board congratulated the Casablanca and Marrakech teams for the great efforts they invested in making the SC a success. The president will address personal letters of thanks and gratitude to all the members of the teams. To avoid problems of misbehaviour on the part of participants and better control SC management, it was suggested that probably the number of centers and participants should be determined and limited in future similar events.

2. It was noted that some of the events, such as ESP, NGO management and other important MATE days, which featured in last year's program were not held because of objective constraints.

3. Following is a list of the most significant activities that were accomplished by MATE:

- **University day:** MATE has become one of the important partners of the Inter-university network created among the 13 departments of English and is being actualized by the university presidency and the Ministry. The creation of a SIG in MATE is very likely.
- **Inspectors' seminar**
- **Summer camps**
- **ICT colloquia** in Agadir and Beni Mellal
- **Translation seminar**
- **MATE ICT National Conference**
- **MATE days** (Marrakech, Casablanca, Rabat, Agadir, Ouarzazate, Beni Mellal and Gulmim).

A local branch of MATE was created in Gulmim.

4. The following events for the year 2005-06 are agreed on:

- **A one day-NGO management colloquium** is scheduled on the second Friday of December 2005. Abdelkrim Reddadi and Ayoub Ait Ali are assigned the task of organizing it.
- **ESP colloquium:** Fahmi, who could not make it for the meeting for personal reasons, submitted a proposal concerning an ESP conference that could be held in Agadir. The board considered the suggestion and recommended Fahmi should dispatch the board an action plan to be reviewed and discussed. However, the board may keep in view a one day-ESP colloquium in Rabat or Casablanca as an alternative for practical considerations.
- **ICT colloquium:** M. Hassim and his team will work on the project and submit the title in due time.
- **Inspectors' seminar:** It should be organized in cooperation with the ministry. The president will deposit the project file at the ministry for consideration.
- A number of **MATE days** are planned for the remaining period of the current board's mandate. It is suggested that some of these MATE days be organized in cooperation with the British Council. MATE may actively contribute to the BC eventual regional networking among Tunisia, Syria, Lebanon and Morocco. The BC, in partnership with the ministry, plans to involve Moroccan English teachers in the coming workshops. The issue that the Moroccan SIG is working on is: Teaching Reading and pronunciation. The president participated in the first workshop. He will write a letter to the BC to inquire on MATE's role in these events.

5. **National Conference:** The board agreed on launching the announcement on the conference in MATE website. The 2006 MATE National conference will be held from April 9th through 12th (check in on the 9th and check out on 13th a.m.). The topic is "Teacher Training for Sustainable Development". S. Berdouz, A. Reddadi and N. Belkachla, in coordination with R. Senhaji will go to Tangiers no later than December for preliminary preparation. The exact date will be announced in MATE board yahoo group and people who think can be useful and available at the time may join the team.

6. **Sponsoring:** Ayoub is requested to attach the sponsoring file in yahoo group. The president will print it and submit it to MATE eventual partners.

7. **Miscellanies:**

- **Newsletter:** The summer issue should be out in October. M. Hassim and A. Bouziane will be in charge of it. Contributions are required for the newsletter and the supervisors and trainers' workshop publication.

- It was noted that MATE was not officially invited and represented in Ifrane Summer Institute.
- Librairie National and Hassan Ouakhchachi through new institution have both expressed their willingness to cooperate with MATE.
- For practical reasons, the secretary General and the

treasurer are both allowed to sign and seal the official letters that are directed to different partners and institutions in the absence of the president and with his approval.

Reported by Nezha Belkachla

MATE-Guelmim Study Day: 18th December 2005

Reported by Lahcen Tighoula

Theme of the study day : « standards-based teaching and testing »

Date: Sunday 18th December 2005

Venue: Regional Academy of Education –Guelmim

Objectives of the study day:

- To update teachers on the standards movement.
- To raise issues of assessment and testing practice within SBT
- To establish a community of teaches for joint work professional development.
- To give more credibility to MATE in the area.

The speakers:

Mohamed Hassim (Inspector of English, Zagora, MATE NB member)

Lahcen Aberwil (Inspector of English, Guelmim)

Lahcen Tighoula (teacher, Assadaka high school, Guelmim, MATE-Guelmim President)

The programme:

Opening:

- 09:30 – Welcome speech by Lahcen Tighoula, MATE-Guelmim president
- Academy speech by Deputy Head of Guelmim Academy
- MATE Board message, by M. Hassim

The total number of participants was 30.

The first presentation, by Mr. Tighoula

The presentation focused on the paradigm shift in the notion of test validity as reflected in the theory of Samuel Messick (1989). It elaborated on the new competency-based, outcome-oriented trends in testing.

The second presentation by Mr. Hassim

The presentation was about formative assessment, being an interactive process, and its many benefits. Mr Hassim raised important issues often neglected in our teaching practice, like encouraging self-assessment and taking constant student feedback on the effectiveness of the teaching method or style.

The third presentation, by Mr. Aberwil

It was an interesting presentation on the standards-based movement in teaching. The speaker briefly talked about the 5 Cs and focused on the use of “learning scenarios” as an effective way of integrating the theory into practice.

A very rich discussion followed the presentations and focused on relating the theory to the practical needs of teachers. On the whole, the study day was successful. We got very positive feedback from teachers. There were no organization problems and teachers were very satisfied as far as the content of the study day was concerned. We hope we will be able to involve more teachers in the coming events.

MATE Agadir Regional Branch : General assembly & Board Renewal

Agadir, November 22nd, 2005

MATE Agadir in coordination with the English inspectorate and in collaboration with CRDAPP of the Regional Academy for education and training of Souss Massa Draa region organised a MATE afternoon on Tuesday 22nd, 2005 at 14:30 at the conference room of the Academy. The program was as follows:

1. The opening & Al Fatihah on the soul of Mr Bammou Mohamed, a teacher of English at Omar Alkhaïm high school.

2. The note speech of the President of MATE Agadir, Mr Atlagh. He focused on the following points:

- The role of MATE as a provider of services for ELT English language teaching locally and nationally.
- The many events organised by the Regional branch of Agadir this year. (MATE afternoons, ICT for ELT workshops, Souss Pens magazine, Students’ Talent Show in May, etc.)

3. Workshop: Pronunciation by Louise Bennington of the British Council, which highlighted the importance of pronunciation in communication (fruitful discussion took place about syllables, pitch, intonation stress etc.). We thank her very much for that.

4. Moral and financial report:

Moral report:

The secretary general, M. Bouchakka highlighted the different cultural and pedagogical activities done during the last two years. He extended his thanks to every one who contributed to the success of this regional branch, to the head of the Academy, of Souss Massa Draa, to the CRDAPP, to the inspectorate, to ENSA, to Kastalani school, to Macmillan, to the American Language Center, to RELO, to the British council, and to the Agadir and Ait Melloul Municipalities for their continuous help and encouragement.

He also thanked the active members of the previous board, the inspectors and all the teachers of English in the region for their incessant collaboration.

Financial report:

The treasurer Mr Assabane, presented his financial report and gave details about the financial situation of the board.

After the two reports, Mr Hassim Mohamed, member of the national board and the national Coordinator of the national conference of Information Communication technology took the responsibility of managing the elections of the new board .

The new board is as follows:

- **President:** Mr Mohamed Bouchakka, Lycée Omar Alkham, Dcheira.

- **Vice President:** Mr Brahim Ameziane, Ben Lycée Tashfine, Agadir.

- **Secretary General :** Mr Lahcen El Hassany, Drarga

- **Vice Secretary General:** Mr Mustapha Kharouaa, ALC Agadir.

- **Treasurer:** Mr Hassan Fathi, El khawarizmi, Chtouka Ait Baha

Counsellors:

- Mohamed Chana, Lycée Al-Yassamine lycee, Ait Melloul.

- Adil Bentaher, Lycée Al-Maarifa lycee, Ait Melloul.

- Mohamed Elguarani, Lycée Omar Al farouk , Inezgane .

- Med El Massaoudi, lower sec- school Othman ben Afan, Ait Melloul.

MATE Afternoon : December 27th 2005

Academy of Agadir Souss Messa Draa

MATE Agadir organized its second MATE afternoon this year at the Academy of Education and Training of SMD region. More than 80 teachers, of English attended the event coming from different delegations of the region (Taroudant – Ouarzazate - Tiznit – Chtouka Ait Baha –Inezgane -Agadir). The event started as follows:

1. The director's speech:

Mr. Mbark Hanoun, Director of the Academy, welcomed MATE and expressed his readiness to work collaboratively with the association. He also stressed the fact that MATE brings people together and enables them to develop professionally through sharing and training.

2. MATE Agadir president's speech:

Mr. Bouchakka wished a happy return to every individual teacher and expressed his pride for having a successful year full of varied events for teachers and students from all the delegations belonging to the Academy of SMD.

3-The first workshop:

Mr Fathi Hassan, a teacher at El Yasmine High school and the Agadir board treasurer animated a workshop about: **Effective**

second Language Acquisition, based on a recent video by Dr Stephen Krashen.

4. The second workshop:

Mr M. Hassim, a supervisor at Zagora delegation addressed the issue of: **Formative Assessment in Moroccan ELT classes.**

The objectives of the workshop were to:

a. raise teachers, awareness to the importance of FA.

b. clear some inappropriate practices in FA.

c. see ways of making FA more beneficial in Moroccan classes.

d. use two video programmes to highlight the theoretical and practical issues related to FA.

The workshops were very successful and the interaction with the teachers was very positive and fruitful. Membership renewal took place at end of the event. Many thanks should go to the speakers, Agadir Academy, the British Council and the participants.

Mr. Bouchakka Mohamed
bouchakka2000@yahoo.com

Essaouira MATE Day : November 12th, 2005

MATE held a MATE day in Essaouira on Saturday, November 12th, 2005. About 25 teachers attended the meeting. The event was also attended by Mr. Steve McNulty, the British Council Director. The MATE day started with the speech of the délégué who congratulated MATE for the role it plays in teacher training and ELT, and thanked both MATE and the British Council for creating such events in Essaouira. Then, Mr. McNulty expressed his pride in working with a reliable partner such as MATE, and also collaborating with the Ministry and the délégation of Essaouira. The academic programme included two papers delivered by Mr. Said Berdouz on **Standards in ELT**, and Mr. Blibil on **Teaching Vocabulary**, followed by two workshops.

The first workshop was conducted by Rosetta from the British council, who familiarized the participants with the **BC websites** and exposed them to the different web pages; and the second one, entitled "**Make your students enjoy learning**", was presented by Nezha Belkachla. The participants also received CDs with the BC websites and catalogs and some flashcards to

use in classes from Macmillan. After the workshops, the election of the local branch of MATE gave birth to the following board:

President: Hamid Kebbal

Vice president: Hanane Hanifa

General Secretary: Kamal El Alaoui Faten

Deputy General Secretary: Mustapha Seghir

Treasurer: Mustapha Abali

Deputy treasurer: Sabah El Mahmoudi

The General Council:

Mohammed El Fechtali, Kamal Siidani, Safia Rayli, Malika Amejjat, Lhsen El Koulali

We would like to thank Macmillan and Susan Thornhill for her promise to sponsor the Essaouira Mate day entirely and to cover one rubric in the coming events. We are also grateful to the Wali of Essaouira who kindly offered lunch in a gorgeous restaurant to the British Council team and to the representatives of MATE.

Nezha Belkachla, MATE General Secretary

Safi MATE day: December 17th, 2005

A hundred people attended the MATE day convened at the CPR of Safi, in coordination with the délégation and the CPR, on Saturday, December 17th, 2005. The plenary session was chaired by **Nezha Belkachla** who expressed MATE gratefulness to the **délégué**, to **Mr. Aboussaid**, an inspector of English in Safi, and **Mr. Benhaddouch**, a teacher trainer at the CPR for facilitating communication with the teachers in Safi. The MATE day was opened by the **délégué** who thanked MATE warmly for having organized such a pedagogical event in the city, and highlighted the important role of English in today's world. **Mr. Said Berdouz**, in his turn, thanked the audience for their participation, invited them to join the local branch and presented a paper on "**Standards in the Moroccan EFL classroom**", in which he discussed with the audience the different concepts and manifestations of the new approach in the light of the literature and the ministerial guidelines. **Mr. Mustapha Blibil**, in his presentation on "**Vocabulary teaching: the lexical approach**", probed and discussed with the audience the concept of lexis, the principles of the lexical approach and classroom implementation. The discussion mainly disclosed the teachers' discomfort with the implementation of "the standards" because the approach still eludes their grasp, and displayed the need for more training.

The three workshops were run simultaneously in three different rooms. The first workshop on "**Competency-based teaching**",

led by **Mr. Aboussaid**, allowed the participants to experience the development of competencies through task-based activities. The second workshop on the "**The Standards in ELT**", which was presented by **Mr. Benhaddouch**, offered the opportunity to examine the standards from a practical point of view. The third workshop, "**Give multiple intelligences and learning styles a room in your classroom**", which was moderated by **N. Belkachla**, explored multiple intelligences and learning styles through hands-on activities. After the workshops, the general assembly elected the following board:

Redouane Belkhadir: **President**
Manal Hilali: **Vice-president**
Abdelhak Loughribi: **General Secretary**
Abdessalam Majidi: **Deputy General Secretary**
Adil Ouzlou: **Treasurer**

Counsellors:

Omar Belkadi, Abderrahim Chafii, Brahim Idbendri, Hicham Mostahssane

There was a book exhibition by Macmillan during the break, in which booklets and brochures were handed out to the participants. We would like to thank all the people who made the happening of the event possible.

Report on Marrakech MATE day: December 10th, 2005

MATE national board held a MATE day in Marrakech, in coordination with the Regional Academy of Education and training, on December 10th, 2005, at lycée Ibn Abbad. In spite of some administrative and organisational constraints that the organizers faced, the MATE day turned out to be a great success. About 200 participants joined the morning session, among whom 35 were CPR trainees; and around 80 participated in the plenary session and the workshops on a sunny Saturday afternoon.

Mr. Abdellatif Zaki chaired the morning plenary session. He welcomed the audience and urged the teachers to join the local branch, which is an act of solidarity with MATE. **Mr. Berdouz** in his turn thanked the audience for their trust and support to MATE, highlighted the role of MATE in teacher training and development, and announced MATE upcoming conference in Tangiers. Then, **Mr. Ayoub Ait Ali**, **Mr. Abdelmjid Bouziane** and **Mr. Abdelkrim Reddadi** dealt with the following topics respectively: "Seeking classroom efficiency through motivation and learning", "Teaching young learners in Morocco: future challenges", and "Mapping innovative teaching through different roads". The papers raised interesting questions about language learning and teaching, and aroused reflective thinking on issues like classroom efficiency, learning and teaching objectives, motivation, the particularity of teaching young learners, mixed ability classes, the role of the teacher, and the challenges of meeting both the syllabus requirements and the learners' needs for an innovative teacher. The discussion revealed problems related to mixed ability classes, the gap between the textbooks and students' needs and to the margin of innovation allotted to the teacher, **Mr. Zaki** wrapped up the discussion by stressing the role of stakeholders like the Ministry and MATE in equipping the teacher with the necessary skills to be innovative. The morning session was closed with the election

of the Marrakech local branch that gave birth to the following board, which included both high and middle school teachers:

- Abdelwahid Mansouri: **President**
- Hafida Lahnoud: **Vice President**
- Abdessamad Elmouatamid: **Vice President**
- Abdel Ilah Maâloum: **General Secretary**
- Hassania Tiana: **Deputy General Secretary**
- Abdellatif Ait Heddane: **Treasurer**
- Nourddine Kehlaoui: **Deputy Treasurer**

Counsellors:

Ghita Zouiten, Hayat Aarab, Hicham Beddari, Said Mesbah, Mohammed Kamal El Mouhtakir, Abdel Ilah Al Anzali

The afternoon plenary session was chaired by **Mr. Abdelmjid Bouziane**. **Mr. Said Berdouz** and **Mr. Nourddine Bondouqi** tackled the issue of "Standards", in their papers "Bringing the standards into the EFL Classroom" and "The standards movement: changes in the curriculum, in the TB, or in the school culture", from different perspectives, from planning to evaluation. The discussion session focussed more on questions. This was followed by three simultaneous workshops on "Investigating communication and cultural issues in the Moroccan ELT classroom", by **Mr. Abdellatif Zaki**, "Using stories in the classroom and the art of teaching", by **Mr. Abderrahim Ghaiti**, and "Revision activities", by **Ms. Louise Bennington**.

Thanks are due to our speakers, our partners, the British Council in particular for sponsoring a speaker, the director of the Academy and the **délégué** for allowing the teachers to attend the conference, and to all the people who contributed to the success of this remunerative MATE day.

The pedagogical events organized jointly by MATE and Rabat- Salé, and Skhirat-Témara Inspectorate

One of MATE's numerous and important objectives has always been to reach out for the Moroccan ELT community wherever it is and provide opportunities for professional exchange of knowledge and experience. MATE's pedagogical and cultural activities are also valuable opportunities for Moroccan teachers of English to share ideas and learn about the new trends in education. This would imply that MATE, in collaboration with other educational institutions, offers and provides in-service teacher training in order to favour teacher development and promote the teaching profession in our country.

It is for that reason that MATE, under the supervision of its successive presidents, has been organizing MATE days in different regions in Morocco in order to enable teachers who live in remote areas as well as in big cities to benefit from MATE's pedagogical events and its services.

It is in this spirit that Mr. A. Zaki, three times MATE president, active MATE member, and university teacher, has taken, once more, the initiative to set up a committee at the level of Rabat that would organize and hold ELT colloquia and/or pedagogical events.

Rabat committee members:

A. Zaki, M. Nejbi, N. Bendouqi, A. Chaibi, R. Kerkech, R. Zerqali, Y. Elyoussoufi, F-Z Ajjoul, and Echchafi.

Rabat, Salé, and Skhirat-Témara Inspectors:

R. Guelzim, regional coordinator, O. Ouakkarouch, A. Oulbouch, A. Chaddoudi

The organizing committee and the inspectors closely collaborated in a spirit of professional coordination and mutual help in order to achieve previously set objectives like reaching out for teachers practicing in the Rabat area and raising and debating current ELT issues. Up to date, three ELT pedagogical events have been held. Venue, date, and topics follow:

1. Rabat: Friday, January 20th

"Humanistic Trends in Education" by **R. Kerkech**, teacher trainer

"A Standards-based Approach to English Language Teaching in Morocco" by **M. Nejbi**, teacher trainer

2. Témara: Friday, February 10th

"A Humanistic Approach to Education" by **R. Kerkech**,

"A Standards-based Approach to English Language Teaching in Morocco" by **M. Nejbi**

3. Salé: Friday, March 3rd

- "Distributing Power in the Moroccan ELT classroom" by

A. Chaibi, inspector

- "Competency-based education and the standards movement" by **N. Bendouqi**, inspector

Owing to the professional competence and experience of the guest speakers and the participants, vital educational issues have been raised and debated. Our colleague, N. Bendouqi was right when he said that the Moroccan ELT teachers can and are able to function as agents of change and innovation in the Moroccan educational system. Moroccan teachers of English are able and ready to introduce and initiate a new and positive spirit in our schools and classrooms where cooperative learning, creativity, initiative, and healthy class atmosphere would prevail.

The fact that many teachers expressed their wish that such activities should be organized more often is an indication that these MATE days have been successful, and that there is a need for and an interest in such pedagogical activities.

On behalf of MATE board and the Rabat committee supervised by Mr. Zaki, I'd like to congratulate our colleagues on their professional efficiency; they have deployed efforts and sacrificed time and energy in order to serve and service the ELT community in Rabat area.

Reported by: Rachida Kerkech, Coordinator

MATE-Guelmim Study Day: 12th February 2006

Reported by Lahcen Tighoula

For the first time in Guelmim area, the British Council was invited by MATE national board to give a workshop and interact with teachers here as part of a MATE day organized on 12th February 2006.

The event featured three main components:

Tanya Cotter's workshop: «Making writing communicative and motivating».

This hands-on workshop was very interactive and practical. Being an experienced teacher trainer, Tanya Cotter focused on practical issues that worry teachers most. She addressed teaching writing to large classes with limited resources. She provided teachers with ideas to make writing enjoyable through stimulating tasks. The teachers also got a free CD for each from the British Council entitled "Teaching English".

Mr. Fahmi's paper: "I dare do all that may become a teacher; who dares do more is a loser". Fahmi focused on teaching principles regarding textbook use, professional awareness and growth. Drawing on his own experience and readings on the field, the speaker shared very interesting insights on what being a language teacher really means. Mr

Fahmi also suggested learning from other "businesses" in order to do a good job.

* The last activity was a presentation by two middle school teachers (Koukou & Hadi).

The two speakers gave a brief review of the literature on reciprocal teaching. They discussed issues related to classroom dynamics, managing turn-taking and making communication in the classroom cyclical (student-teacher-student) rather than linear (teacher-student). Being young teachers in their second year of teaching, they received encouragement and remarks of admiration from the audience.

This event was a real success: 28 teachers attended and the post sessions discussion was extremely rich. MATE Guelmim has once again demonstrated that it has potentials to grow further. This event has also demonstrated the commitment of MATE national board to make of MATE a body for all teachers of English in Morocco. The regional branch of MATE in Guelmim would like to thank Mr. Fahmi for all the efforts he has invested to make this event successful. We would also like to thank the British Council and MATE for supporting and contributing to the workplan of Guelmim MATE local branch.

Abstracts of unpublished Ph. D. Theses

Haoucha, Malika. 2005. The Effects of Feedback-based Instruction Programme on Developing EFL Writing and Revision Skills of First Year Moroccan University Students. Unpublished Ph. D. Thesis. Centre for English Language Teacher Education: University of Warwick.

ABSTRACT (1)

This investigation was triggered by the problems I encountered in my teaching of academic writing to first year undergraduates majoring in English at a Moroccan university. Their problems ranged from sentence, to paragraph to essay levels. Added to that is my realization that the teaching of writing is mainly product-oriented and that common practice needs substantial refinements to become in line with the state-of-the art of theory. Students are usually expected to produce good writing, but the means available for helping them attain the required writing standards are not clearly identified or explained to them. Focus on narrative writing seems not to serve the purpose of training students to make their voices heard through writing. Reliance on lecturing as a means of teaching writing robs the writing class of its appealing social aura. These problems, together with my conviction that as a teacher I should seek to improve my teaching practices with reference to the insights of theory, stimulated me to undertake the present research study.

This project is based on the teaching of an original writing programme based on my previous experience as a writing teacher and also on students' needs. This writing programme is designed within a process approach framework; however, the product is no less important. Students are exposed to three types of feedback: self-monitored feedback using annotations; peer feedback; and teacher written feedback and taped commentary on multiple-draft writing. The aim is to encourage them to experience writing as an interactive process, from the pre-writing activities through the actual writing and revising to the writing of a final draft, rather than as a monotonous solitary activity performed under exam pressure.

Using a case study approach this qualitative/quantitative inquiry looks into the extent to which students make use of the different types of feedback in their revisions, their attitudes to the feedback procedures, and whether text quality improves across the drafts over the course period. For this purpose

various data collection tools have been used. These include questionnaires, in-depth interviews, students' written products, audio-taped recordings of student peer feedback sessions, teacher written and taped comments, and students' diaries.

In line with previous research, the present study has shown that self-monitored feedback using annotations can help identify students' problematic areas in writing, but it has also added that annotations can unveil students' perceptions of what constitutes good writing. Moreover, the study has demonstrated that peer feedback activities are not only helpful in terms of encouraging revision but that they have other cognitive, linguistic and affective benefits. Finally, there is strong evidence that teacher written feedback is still considered by students to be a major source of help and that they do take it into consideration in their revisions. In addition, teacher taped commentary, a type of feedback which has received little attention in the literature, is an effective means of commenting on content and organisation and focusing student revision on these areas. Students have also appreciated it and acknowledged its cognitive, linguistic, affective, and practical benefits. Furthermore, the study has shown that although students' writings have not systematically, and regularly, improved from first to second drafts, i.e. after revision following peer feedback, there is a tendency for improvement from second to third drafts, i.e. after revision following teacher feedback. On the whole, improvement in text quality varied from one student to another and also from one draft to another in drafts produced by the same student.

The main implications are that the one-draft writing tendency in the context of the study should give way to multiple-draft writing. The motivating force of revision can be promoted and enhanced through the use of different types of feedback on separate drafts. More importantly, however, the writing class should cater for students' needs by making use of motivational instructional and feedback activities.

ABSTRACT (2)

Jaafari, Taoufik, (2004) Language Learning Strategies Used by English Department Students in Moroccan Universities. Unpublished Ph. D. Thesis. Casablanca: Faculty of Letters Ben M'sik.

The present exploratory research study attempts to investigate the language learning strategies that are employed by English department students in their

learning processes. The concern in this embryonic field, which dates back to the late seventies, has stemmed from the great importance that has been

lately assigned to the learning strategies as determining factors in shaping the students' linguistic performance. To meet this objective, this study has examined a large representative sample, consisting of 644 English department students belonging to five different faculties of letters, to see the kinds of learning strategies they report using and the frequency of such usage. Three main variables, namely language proficiency, gender and learning environment have been analysed to see the probable effect of these variables on students' choice and use of learning strategies.

The main Data elicitation instrument on which this study has relied is Oxford's 7.0 version of the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) meant for second and foreign language learners of English. Actually, the 7.0 version has been slightly adjusted to cater for the Moroccan students' learning particularities. Descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations, and frequencies) were calculated using Statistical Package for Social Sciences version 10.0 to describe students' self reported learning strategies and to have an inter and intra-faculty comparison. In addition one and two-way analyses of variance (ANOVAs) are used to determine the effects of the independent variables mentioned earlier on students' mean strategy use.

The findings reveal that Moroccan university students, like most foreign language learners, do employ a varied repertoire of learning strategies at a medium level according to Oxford's standards. Interestingly, results have shown that most English department students regardless of their language proficiency level, gender and learning environment unanimously report using two strategy categories similarly: metacognitive strategies at a high level and memory strategies at a low level. The other strategy categories are reported to be used differently and with different ranking order of preferences. In addition, it has been found that freshmen report using learning

strategies more frequently than finishing students who spent a minimum of three academic years at an English department. This finding is not consistent with earlier research which postulated that more advanced students use learning strategies more frequently and at a higher level than less proficient ones. In relation to gender, the present research study has found an absence of reported strategies in favour of the female students. Rather it has been revealed that both Moroccan English Department male and female students approach the learning tasks employing approximately the same learning behaviours. This also contradicts the general tenor of the learning strategy theory which maintains that part of the females' superiority in language learning over males could be attributed to their more frequent use of learning strategies.

As for the learning environment, the third variable, although almost all the English department students in Moroccan universities have been consistent on reporting similarities in the use of two strategy categories, results have revealed that the students' ethnic background rather than their learning environment does have an impact on their choice and use of the other strategies especially the social and affective ones.

One of the major implications of this study is that learning strategies, as powerful mental tools, should be integrated in any language learning syllabus so that they enable students to take more responsibility for their learning and teachers to be aware of their students' learning behaviours. To this end, an appropriate model of professional training in learning strategy has been suggested to help teachers implement learning strategies in their teaching practices. Ultimately, it is hoped that the findings of this exploratory study, which have coincided with the implementation of the university reform, be seriously considered when designing the new courses of studies and to be taken as a springboard for further research.

Where do negative attitudes towards Islam come from?

Abdellatif Zaki, I.A.V., Rabat

This chapter is taken from a newly published book written by Mr Abdellatif Zaki:

Zaki, Abdellatif, 2005, *Reflections on the Formation of Western Opinions, Stereotypes and Attitudes about Islam and Arabs; Reports of a cross culture seminar*, LangCom publication, Rabat, Morocco. (132 pages)

The book is composed mainly of reports on a series of seminars organised for Americans communicating with Moroccans in Morocco.

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Where do negative attitudes towards Islam come from? (pp. 91-97)

Answering the question formulated in the title pre-requires answering another question; namely, why is there so much ignorance about Islam anyway? In fact, because Islam and other religions, especially Christianity and Judaism, have been in contact many times and for very long periods of time throughout history since the seventh century, through the medieval ages, the colonial period and the contemporary times, the current ignorance of Islam has to be explained in terms other than chance. It cannot be a historical accident. Churches, Popes, Monarchs, rabbies, Imams, theologians, scholars, intellectuals and politicians have convened many councils and inter-religion conferences and set up many institutions to maintain dialogue and communication going on among Christians, Jews and Muslims, since the dawn of Islam, yet each seems to know so little about each other.

In many cases, therefore, it would seem to be more judicious to talk of purposive misrecognition rather than of popular ignorance which is but a natural consequence of the calculations of the former. In fact, the tendency of associating Islam to the concept of nation, expressed by the word “world”, for instance, underscores a reductionist attitude towards a complex phenomenon. While Islam is spread over the five continents and has been anchored over as diverse cultures as the Chinese, the Eastern European, the Amazigh, the American, the Indian, the Zulu, etc. analysts still insist on reducing Islam and Muslims to one and unique identity¹. Likewise, talking of the Koran while one is referring to faulty translations which are more often interpretations or re-writings of the original by individuals whose command of the Arabic language is as doubtful as their intentions reveals attitudes of hidden agendas. In fact, taking something for what it is not from the start informs not only of the flaws and of the unsoundness of the analytical instruments, of the poor quality of the analysis, of the unreliability of the results but also of interested bias and of uncertain intentions.

¹ In fact, while Islam and Arabism are introduced as strategic blocks, it is interesting to note that there are far less economic relations among Arab countries and Islamic countries than there are among any of them and other non Arab and non Islamic countries. Arabism and Islamism are less binding than other ideological and political choices to which these countries have opted for.

That Islam, or Christianity for that matter, has developed through the centuries and in different places in diverse ways is knowledge which is occulted in leading strategic political analysis. This occultation simplifies the job of creating stereotypes and therefore of validating strategies to make consensus and later on to justify taking political action, which can be violence. Such occultation also serves the purpose of shaping the thinking aptitudes and the abilities to negotiate, to solve problems and to set up meeting grounds. An individual commits an isolated crime somewhere and it is explained in terms of the religion of the perpetrator. A social practice is observed in a country that happens to host Muslims, and the behaviour is said to be Islamic. Describing the dance of a group of Catholic Peruvian Indians as a Christian tradition would be repulsive to any Westerner, but may not inspire any incredulity to a Chinese who has no knowledge of Catholicism. In fact, stereotypes are like viruses or chips through which minds are manipulated. Because they are created and cultivated, they can also be made to change, to say things, to communicate feelings and to trigger behaviour.

In the stereotype of the Muslim, all shared historical affinities and features with Christianity or Judaism are wiped away. Muslims are made not only to stand as separate from the Judaeo-Christian tradition, but opposed to it. The potential of conflict is created and increased by the mere presentation of Islam as an entity that seeks self realisation outside the hegemony of the Judaeo-Christian tradition which is expressed for ideological purposes in terms of democracy, liberalism, Human Rights, etc. Being separate is equated to denying the other's right to existence. While Islam stipulates that it is first and foremost a confirmation of Christianity and Judaism, this truth is concealed and erased from the traits of the stereotype. It took European theology and Churches centuries, for example, before some recognised the affiliation of Islam to their religions.

Going back to the questions stated at the beginning of this report, one has to make a methodological reservation on the many comments and observations opposed to Islam and to Islamic traditions. These observations can be summed up in the single principle that one cannot analyse either the Koran or the *Hadith* with conceptual instruments of the twentieth or

twenty first centuries. In other words, Islam, like any other system or set of ideals, ideas, laws, precepts, commandments and taboos can be understood only in reference to the cognitive, conceptual, ideological, sociological, historical, emotional, psychological and attitudinal realities of the people it was addressed to. The universal aspect of religion should not refer to interpretations which freeze the understanding of founding precepts and convictions to particular events or states of knowledge, but to the conviction that any social, economic, cultural or political condition as well as any knowledge are subject to evolution, to change and to transformation under the influence of each other and of the natural environment. The constant precepts remain values relating to justice, equal rights, right, human solidarity and respect of others as well as of the environment. Islam has therefore to be analysed and understood as would a system of ideals and ideas whose constants are the pursuit of social justice, equity, human solidarity irrespective of race, gender, creed or religion and respect of others and of the environment. It has to be understood as a comprehensive alternative way of life that superseded to a social order that had become anachronous.

Islam came to Mecca - a small animistic village with a strong Judeo-Christian tradition. In addition to the Jewish and Christian communities that coexisted in this village, an important community of excommunicated Christians, namely some Nestorians and other religions fared along rather well with each other. Mecca was a village in which the rule of strong tribes over others was total. Slavery was an establishment. One of the worst curses a man could have was to have a daughter whereby the loathsome tradition of burying newly born female babies. Women were the property of men. Virtuous social values included strength and the ability to capture and enslave enemies. Islam came to Mecca as a liberating ideology for all the oppressed of the time. It made it possible for slaves to be freed through a number of procedures, it limited the number of wives a man could take to one, although many men prefer to think the limitation was to four, it enfranchised women who became owners of themselves and gave them the right to choose their husbands, to seek the rule of law for protection from abuse, to seek knowledge and education despite the will of their husbands, to run their businesses, to own property, etc. Islam also installed a legal system by which minorities were protected by law and ensured the right to practice their own religions, to have their own worship shrines and to be judged according to the laws of their own religions in private matters. Islam also protected the poor by abolishing a financial system that often resulted in individuals and whole families losing their freedom and becoming the property of money lenders. Islam instituted many laws that meant to

protect the poor, the marginal and the vulnerable. Because of this, the first followers of Islam were women, slaves, poor men and women and some oppressed minority groups. Historically, Islam was what we could call in modern language a revolutionary and progressive ideology. It was far ahead of its time. Like all other ideals, it came under the attack of political usurpers who saw in it an easy way of satisfying their own aspirations at the expense of those of others. Humanity has known such usurpations when, for instance, the communistic ideal was turned against the freedom and the happiness of those it was supposed to enfranchise and to make happy. Many analysts say the same thing about how the concepts of democracy and liberalism have been – are being – usurped and turned against the populations of many a country. Likewise, there have been recent cases of religious extremist sects which brought doomsday on their followers by ordering collective suicide.

Islam has, therefore, to be approached in a historical perspective and not to be judged or assessed by standards that are fifteen centuries younger nor according to what has been done with it or through it. This does not mean that Islamic principles will not stand the test of modernity, but that the analysis of Islam has to take place within the rational framework of scientific rigour and ethical probity.

Furthermore, as I have already mentioned, Islam did not pretend or seek to create a chasm or a caesura between itself and other monolithic religions. On the contrary, it confirmed them and made being a true Muslim dependent on believing in their prophets and scriptures (Cf. appendix). Mohammed knew the other religions rather well. In fact, he belonged to a noble family that was in charge of the Kaaba, the Holy House of Mecca's religious establishment at the time, and a cousin of his first wife, Khadija, Ouarafa Ibn Naoufal was a respected Christian priest. This knowledge of the religious affairs of his society in addition to his direct social relations with leaders of various religions in Mecca heightened his understanding and tolerance of diversity. One famous Islamic precept which many modern self proclaimed clerics do not evoke as often as they should stipulates that no one can join a religion forcefully '*la ikraha fid dine*'. لا إكراه في الدين.

This precept implies that religion is an individual issue and no one should be made to declare or do something related to religion forcefully. This tolerance does not seem to be related to the frequent and too easily declared apostasy of intellectuals, thinkers and writers of recent years. Many intellectuals such as Nasr Hamed Abou Zeid, Nawal Assaadaoui, Nobel Prize winner Najib Mahfoudh, and others have been declared apostates by some Mullahs which means that killing them has been authorized. In

worst cases, intellectuals were assassinated, Faraj Fouda for example in 1992 and the failed attempt against Najib Mahfoudh.

There is knowledge of Islam in the West. There are even positive attitudes among Western scholars. Bernard Lewis, an authority on Islam, for example once wrote "*Islam is one of the world's great religions. Let me be explicit about what I, as a historian of Islam who is not a Muslim, mean by that. Islam has brought comfort and peace of mind to countless millions of men and women. It has given dignity and meaning to drab and impoverished lives. It has taught people of different races to live in brotherhood and people of different creeds to live side by side in reasonable tolerance. It inspired a great civilization in which others besides Muslims lived creative and useful lives and which, by its achievement, enriched the whole world.*"² Access to sources with positive attitudes towards Islam has often been possible. The question is therefore why a dialogue that would have a lasting and effective impact on Western populations has never been possible.

Dialogue is possible only in the framework of respect of the other, humility, recognition of his rights to his own religion and respect of Human Rights. Dialogue is not possible when a party does not think it has to negotiate because it is all too powerful, which seems to be the case in the current situation bringing Islam and the West face to face.

No discourse, no language, no symbolic which conveys hatred, the seeds of violence, and of anachronistic attitudes, should be ignored, let alone tolerated. One such discourse and symbolic is the one that identifies people, groups and individuals by a conviction they have, an intellectual choice or a religion. In fact, referring to a person as a "communist" in some countries would mean an invitation to exclude them altogether from mainstream political, social and cultural life. Convictions should not be allowed to mark identities.

Not all violence carried out in the name of religion is to be understood as motivated by religious feelings or convictions. In fact, religion which has, in the past, been used to justify the implementation of political models and to give reason for hatred and violence, is once more being called upon to conceal the real motives of new ideologies. The populations of the world enter in contact more often and in more diverse ways nowadays than they have in the past. More religions, more races, more cultural sensitivities are called upon to coexist peacefully than ever in the past. This peaceful coexistence, however, can disturb

² Lewis, Bernard. 2004. **From Babel to Dragomans: Interpreting the Middle East**, OUP.

some political visions and the economic interests of some groups. An easy emotion to play on to set people against each other is still religion. This is why any introduction of religion in the proposition of political models and/or in economic alternatives – nationally or internationally – is to be considered with a lot of caution.

Quite often, Muslims are asked why they have difficulties separating religion from politics like it is now the case in Europe.

In the West, the separation of religious organisations as well as religious belief from state related affairs and from determining social relations within the community was a result not only of political conflicts with the Church but also of the kind of developments which Europe and later on the USA were undergoing whereby populations had to enter into complex human relations for the success of which neither nationality, nor language, nor race, nor religious conviction was decisive.

When Thomas Jefferson decreed that "Divided we stand, united, we fall.", he was highlighting the political concept that was deeply rooted in Western philosophy and political thinking especially in the writings of Spinoza, Locke, and the philosophers of the European Enlightenment. The philosophical concept found an expression in political reality after many cultural, political and ideological revolutions that involved not only intellectual elites but the masses at various levels of their everyday lives. This being said, the separation which took place in the West was actually between the Church and the State, a situation which should be irrelevant under Islam as there can be no Church or clergy in Islam. However, the debate need not be a scaremonger of Islamic thinkers and politicians. In fact, what needs to be done is a definition of which spheres of human life and human activity will fall under religious rule, which is an individual issue, and which will fall under the rule of politics – of the state, which is the rule of public life. In other words, Muslims need to design a political model which will satisfy their aspirations for a rich and independent private life and a public life that guarantees equity, justice, respect and self government.

To conclude this report, I reiterate the caution that no religion, no text, be it religious or not and no social model should be approached with concepts alien to its own culture, to its own time and to its own conceptual references. This does not mean, however, to deny the universal dimension of religion, but to insist on the fact that universality lies in the principles, the values and the ideals which any human community should aspire to.

I wish to make a modest contribution to MATE Newsletter through writing a series of articles about American culture and diversity. As we cannot disassociate culture from English Language Teaching, I think it is about time we thought of including this crucial component in MATE Newsletter. I am sure if we do, we will reap a lot of benefits and get much insight into the diverse experiences of people who have lived, studied or taught English in different English speaking countries. As you will discover, some writings go beyond superficialities and get to the heart of the land where the experience, 'scene' or event took place.

Artesia

Sometimes a person's plans may be changed or corrupt upon a well informed or else an ill informed and groundless piece of advice. Some twenty eight years ago, I received an invitation to attend a cultural event that was going to take place in Artesia, New Mexico. We were four foreign exchange students stationed, to borrow a military term, in Albuquerque and we used to travel around the state whenever an opportunity presented itself to us. Thus, we had a chance to visit Santa Fe, Los Alamos, Rosewell, Carlsbad, etc. We were very idealist young men and women who came over to the new world to learn as much as possible from and about this world. Traveling was one way to meet new people and see new places and in that manner help ourselves to put into place different bits of the great gig-saw-puzzle which would later make our own vision of the world. Well, I received that invitation and decided to honor it and attend the event. I had no idea whether the other exchange students went or not. What I know for sure is that somehow, I was gently prevented from traveling through a piece of advice which stated that I had better not go given the fact that I was a Muslim. The advice provider went on that if I went there; I would feel very much of a persona non-grata. I was not that sure that people who sent me an invitation would be that intolerant nor was I sure that someone was only trying to prevent me from another trip in the state of New Mexico. I could never verify the veracity and truthfulness of the spirit of intolerance regarding Islam and Muslims reigning in Artesia, but what I can say, for sure, is that I missed an opportunity to meet and talk to people with whom I could have built bridges of tolerance, understanding and possibly mutual cooperation.

1976 - 77

The old Apache Squaw

Some people see Indian reservations as states within a state while others think it is nothing but an elaborate form of 'apartheid'. It is not my duty to say which view is more accurate and which is not nor do I wish to invest myself in the history and geography of the American Indians. Rather, I would relate an interesting experience I had in the White River Apache reservation in Arizona. The word 'Apache' has some magic about it which may stem from our

early readings, as children, of illustrated stories about Indians and cowboys and how ruthless and cruel Indians were portrayed. My stay within an Apache community for a fortnight in 1976 dissipated all pre-established views and stereotypes about these brave people. Apaches are nice and hospitable people who certainly are ready and willing to die for their territory, culture and beliefs but are equally ready to make peace with non threatening strangers. As for their own community policy, they certainly have in store harsh punishment for people who trespass their code of morals. I happened to make an unpleasant discovery in this regard while walking along the alleys of an Indian village with an Apache friend of mine. A woman crossed our way, and I wouldn't have written this piece had I not paid attention to how she looked. She seemed to have a peculiar nose, as a matter of fact it couldn't even be called a nose, as no nostrils were there. They appeared to have been severed with some sharp tool quite a long time ago. I was rather fortunate because I had an Apache friend with me to answer my inquiry about that. Above all, I was fortunate because my friend was honest in supplying a straight forward answer: In the old days, married women who committed adultery were punished in that manner according to the Apache code of honor. Things seemed to have evolved in a better direction in places called "civilized zones", as the modern educational system seemed to contribute to opening new horizons for residents of the Indian reservation.

At White River school, where I studied for a short period of time, Apache students, male and female alike, studied and learned side by side and enjoyed the same rights and had the same duties. There, in that school, in the middle of the beautiful natural environment of White River Apache Reservation, learning was in progress for a better life and a better world where human dignity counts.

1976 - 77

Jemez Pueblo

New Mexico is a land of pueblos where very beautiful and picturesque Indian villages that are scattered all over the state. For me, mere thinking of them brings back lots of beautiful memories. It makes me think of Indian arts and crafts and above all it makes me think

of pottery and a famous name associated with it, Maria. I was very fortunate to visit one of the pueblos I mentioned. I said very fortunate because my visit coincided with an Indian ceremony at Jemez Pueblo. I thoroughly enjoyed and appreciated the ceremony and appreciated even more the openness and the hospitality of the pueblo people. As an exchange student from Morocco, the ceremony had a great spiritual impact on me. The same perspective may not apply to other visitors. The musicians and the dancers performed most beautifully but there was something peculiar about the musicians: They had Indian instruments and strangely enough one of them had a violin which to my knowledge is by no means Indian. Now to my surprise, one of the pieces of music they played sounded, to a great extent, like a famous Moroccan Andalusi piece. Telling that to a lay person would only generate contempt and lack of respect but, there are things that can be logically explained and understood. History readers know that Arabs and Moores, (Moroccans) ruled Andalusia, a part of the Iberian peninsula for over seven hundred years and during all those centuries managed to influence and be influenced by Spanish thought and culture. The Spanish conquistadors later invaded great parts of the new world and transmitted their culture with the embedded Arab and Moorish culture to plenty of dwellers of the new world. That to me can explain this marvelous coincidence of seeing Pueblo Indians perform such fine Andalusi like pieces of music.

1976 - 77

Los Alamos

I never thought I would have a chance to visit Los Alamos. For seekers of art and culture, no choice can be better than Santa Fe. It is a place you would keep thinking of and dreaming to get back to some day. Los Alamos, however, is quite something else instead of the painting galleries and the western type of museums with horse drawn carriages and various types of fire arms of Santa Fe, what you get in Los Alamos belongs to a most contemporary era, it is the birth place of the nuclear age. When you get to Los Alamos you hear, read and see things that are mostly related to nuclear energy, nuclear armament and shelters and protection from potential devastating nuclear attacks from the USSR. Remember the visit to Los Alamos was in 1976. People who get to Los Alamos do not, as a general rule, fail to visit its nuclear museum. I went to visit it with a number of other exchange students from various countries around the world. It was for us an opportunity to see a small scale nuclear experiment at the Bradburry Science Hall and had a chance to walk past Einstein's office. It was not open for visitors at the time of our visit. I am writing from what I recall and therefore lots of details may not figure in my writings but what I can say is that my history lessons were quite useful as they helped me situate plenty of historical events

which came back rushing to my mind as my friends and I stopped in front of "Fat Man" and "Small Boy". These are prototypes of nuclear bombs which were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in Japan and caused devastating effects that forced the Japanese to surrender and thus cause the war in the Asian theatre to come to an end. Plenty of historical events were crammed in my mind; Pearl Harbor, Midway, and finally the Japanese surrender to General MacArthur and the turning of a bloody page of history and the beginning of the Marshal plan for the reconstruction of Europe. The nuclear age brought along with it plenty of evils for the whole world coupled with a few blessings that only strong nations enjoyed. In the city of Los Alamos, civil defense shelters reminded us that the nuclear threat was still a pending matter as stages of the cold war were slowly unfolding.

1976 - 77

Anecdotes from Chicago

Why relate simple anecdotes from an architectural giant that has been described as the 'city of big shoulders'? Well, to be fair I would say that when visiting Chicago I was not interested in aspects of its power; financial, political or otherwise. My area of interest was limited to visiting the city in general and its museums in particular. It was just a few days before Easter and my host, his wife and I were driving through the city looking for what seemed a needle in a hay stack. We were, in fact, looking for a certain Lithuanian bakery to get Lithuanian bread and cakes for Easter. This allowed us to drive around for a long time and consequently allowed me to see quite a bit of the city. I have to admit that the internet has taken away from me that first discovery feeling and replaced it by a certain 'déjà vu' impression. Despite that, there were certain little things one ought to experience by himself and not always through the eyes of others. It is strange that in visiting Chicago, I paid more attention to publicity and names of stores and businesses more than anything else. Of all Chicago we managed to cover, two signs of businesses retained my attention. I will tell you about them and you can draw your own conclusions afterwards. I took notice of the first sign while we were heading towards downtown Chicago, coming from the O'Hare airport area. It was an optician's sign. It was nothing like Dr Eckleburg's eyes as depicted in *The Great Gatsby*. This sign featured a short sighted red Indian wearing eye-glasses and above the man, a neon caption said 'Now eye can see!'. The second sign which equally retained my attention was in an area whose name I can't recall. It looked as one of established Hispanic immigrants. The publicity sign this time around was that of a shoe store. The sign at the entrance read 'Athlete's foot'. The connotation was by no means positive! In Morocco, I happened to have taught at a high school called 'Lycee Des Athletes', a special school for

potential future athletes. That might have been reason enough to draw my attention to that particular sign in the first place. Later on, reflecting on the intent of the two signs and the success or failure in transmitting it,

I decided they were interesting cases to report, perhaps some readers would appreciate the attempt.

2004

MATE COMING EVENTS

The 4th Inspectors Colloquium: 17-18 March, 2006

The Moroccan Association of Teachers of English (MATE) is organising the 4th inspectors' Colloquium on Friday 17 and Saturday 18 March, 2006 jointly with the Ministry of National Education and the British Council, at the Academy of Rabat. The theme of the colloquium is:

“Facing the challenges and meeting the requirements”.

It will be dealing with three of the current hot issues inspectors face these days:

- 1. The standards movement.**
- 2. Textbook evaluation.**
- 3. Classroom observation and report writing.**

Rationale

On the basis of the National Charter and the recommendations and guidelines set forth in the White Paper, decision makers and educationalists including NGOs in Morocco are called upon to reconsider a number of issues in the teaching profession, be they related to the supervisor, the learner, the teacher, the materials, or to the evaluation techniques and procedures adopted in the Moroccan school system.

Actually, in the context of EFL in Morocco, abiding only by the principles of the communicative approach and methodology would not help Moroccan citizens of the 21st century be fully integrated in the new world order. As suggested in the White Paper, we do believe that adopting a reflective approach to Competency-Based Education (CBE), as it is the case for many countries all over the world³, would help Moroccan educationalists provide more adequate education, which at the same time fosters local-national values and identity and enhances communication internationally. Moreover, through a CBE framework, specificities of the job market will be taken care of and satisfied to a larger extent. This requires more training opportunities for teachers, and especially supervisors as the project will delineate.

Purpose of this training

The purpose of this training is to help English language supervisors with aspects of the teaching framework and methodology suggested by the White paper, namely through a competency based

framework. More focus is also to be placed on supervision methods and techniques. Supervising teachers of English within this framework requires specific training for the supervisors to meet the requirement/ expectations of their immediate customers so as to perform effectively.

Through the present training, we hope to provide the supervisory body of EFL teachers with the necessary skills, confidence and ability to supervise teachers of young learners to maximum effect. Our aim is to articulate what teachers need to know and be able to do with enough specificity to guide them, their programs and their learners, without mandating how the guidelines are implemented in day-to-day instruction.

Targeted audience and speakers

Sixty inspectors (more than half of the Moroccan English inspectors) are expected to participate in this colloquium; representing the 16 Moroccan regional academies, hoping that the participants will share the information and skills gained during the colloquium with their colleagues in their original academies. Also the inspectors will transmit those skills and knowledge to the teachers they work with. Consequently, the colloquium will have a significant duplicating effect.

Speakers and trainers are requested to send their abstracts to the following email address: matemorocco@yahoo.com

The contributions should be either a presentation (20 minutes) or a workshop (60 minutes). The deadline for receiving abstracts is: 10 March, 2006.

If speakers and participants have any useful documents that they think are worth being included in the file or CD ROM that will be distributed to the participants, they are requested to send them as soon as possible to the email address mentioned above.

The final academic programme of the colloquium will be posted as soon as it is ready.

The organizing committee:

- Said Berdouz,**
- Mohammed Hassim**
- Ahmed Chaibi**
- Nouredine Bendouqi.**

³ USA, UK, New Zealand and Canada among others.



الجمعية المغربية لأساتذة اللغة الإنجليزية

Moroccan Association of Teachers of English

e-mail: matemorocco@yahoo.com website: www.mate.org.ma

MATE 26th Annual National Conference
Tangier, April 9 - 12, 2006

Teacher Education for Sustainable Development

Venue: Hotel Chellah

For more information, please e-mail: matemorocco@yahoo.com

Dispense
Dépôt légal : 84/9
CCP: 212 927 T

du Timbre
N° 920

Destinataire

MOROCCAN ASSOCIATION OF TEACHERS OF ENGLISH
B.P. 6223, Rabat-Instituts, C.C.P 212 927 T

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

Last Name First Name.....
Nationality
Type of membership : Full (Moroccan) Associate (non-Moroccan)
Occupation : Teacher Inspector
Institution
City
Mailing Address
Amount paid
Mode of payment
 CCP (enclose receipt or copy) Check (bank)
 Cash remitted to (Name)

Date:
Signature