

### EDITORIAL

#### From the classroom to the world at large

By *Mohammed Hassim*

ELT has known tremendous changes during the last 30 years (which is almost the same age of our association). This has affected ELT in Morocco, teachers professional qualities as well as the activities of our association. During the 80s and 90s, the main interest of teachers was generally focused on skills, activities, techniques, approaches and methods. During the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, focus has shifted to big issues such as competencies, multiple intelligences, civic education, leadership, using ICT, lifelong learning, job market skills, project work, alternative assessment, etc.

The standards-based education (SBE) adopted by Moroccan ELT is but a reflection of the change known worldwide in the role of education in general and ELT in particular. SBE does not dictate a rigid methodology in ELT but it states the standards to be achieved by all learners. It does not matter much which method, approach or technique you follow as long as you and your students meet the standards. Of course some broad choices are to be adhered to such as focus on the learner, authenticity of materials and activities, lifelong and study skills acquisition, preparing students for the job market, etc.

Likewise, the abundance of materials with multimedia through ICT, though a blessing in itself, has presented a big challenge to teachers. New skills are required of teachers in order to effectively make use of available materials and cope with the changes taking place. Consequently, teacher development and in-service training has become a key factor. However, the reality in Morocco is that it has been one of the most neglected areas despite the stress of the reform on its importance. Still the role of the teacher and his/her responsibility in his/her own professional development is part of his/her professional qualities that needs enhancement. Therefore, collaboration among teachers has become a must.

MATE, being aware of its vital role in responding to the needs of Moroccan teachers of English, has been working hard to cope with the changes and challenges. During the one year and a half of the life of this board, many major events and services have been launched in addition to the usual services and events. Among these, we can mention the following:

- launching an annual seminar for middle school teachers
- launching an annual civic education seminar
- involving local branches in the organization of some national events
- expanding the experience of MATE summer camps
- participating as a provider of Access program offered by RELO
- working in close collaboration with the National Ministry of Education especially after the signature of a partnership agreement
- going back to paper-based publication of MATE annual conference proceedings

- creating more local and regional MATE branches
- creating more mailing lists (yahoogroups) according to teachers' interests
- uploading all MATE production and publications on MATE website
- consolidating relationship with all partners (Ministry of education, academies, delegations, RELO, the British Council, national and international English books publishers and distributors, language centers, universities, etc.).

The achievements that the current MATE board has managed to bring to Moroccan ELT community could not be possible without the help and support we have received from our active members and collaborative partners. To all of them, we say thanks a lot. We are all bound to work together as long as we share the same interests and concerns. These concerns and interests are no more confined to the four walls of the classroom. We are affecting and being affected by what is happening in the world at large.

*Published with this issue,  
A Booklet containing 14  
Activities for Civic Education*

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Edited by:  
M. Hassim, E. Fahmi & N. Bendouqi

### Report on Summer Camps meeting, June 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2007

Reported by: E. Fahmi & M. Hassim

A meeting was held during the 4<sup>th</sup> ICT national conference in Agadir on the 3<sup>rd</sup> June, 2007. The meeting was about summer camps (SC) and related issues.

**Attendees:** Mr. Hassim, Mr. Fahmi, Mr. Bendouqi, Ms. Sehli, Mr. Fathi, Mr. Tighoula.

#### Agenda:

1. Venues, timing and sessions of SCs
2. Local organising committees
3. Programme and books
4. Teachers
5. Students
6. Fees.

After evaluating the previous summer camps (SC) in Casablanca and Marrakech, the following decisions were made to allow for a unified structure of all MATE SCs. The national MATE SCs coordinator is Mr. Fahmi.

#### 1. Venues, timing and sessions

- 4<sup>th</sup> July to 17<sup>th</sup> July, 2007
- Saturdays and Sundays are off
- Classes from 9 o'clock to 12 o'clock: 2 sessions
  - Session 1: from 9:00 to 10:45
  - Break: from 10:45 to 11:00
  - Session 2: from 11:00 to 12:00. This session should be devoted to light and groupwork activities.
- Venues agreed on are:
  - a. Marrakech: ENS
  - b. Casablanca: CPR (another SC in Casa is possible).
  - c. Agadir: Lycée Technique or Reda Slaoui.

An official letter will be sent to the directors of these institutions to agree on the projects.

#### 2. Local organising committees

- a. Each SC should have: a local coordinator and 3 assistants.
- b. Organising committees will be remunerated on a fixed rate that will be agreed on by the national board.
- c. Financial and moral reports should be sent as soon as the SC is over.

#### 3. Programme and books

- a. Levels to be taught:
  - Children
  - Total and false beginners
  - Pre-intermediate
  - Intermediate.
- b. Textbooks: Hassim and Fahmi will contact Mr H. Ouakhchachi to decide on a good but low price textbook.
- c. A placement test should be administered to decide on the appropriate level for the students. The local organising committee can add a level if needed.

#### 4. Teachers

- a. It was agreed that each teacher will teach one group during the whole period of the SC.
- b. Teachers will be trainees from CPRs or ENS or voluntary teachers where there are no CPR or ENS centres.
- c. Teachers will be given transportation expenses.
- d. Teachers from outside the city where the SC is held will be hosted in boarding schools.
- e. Teacher training sessions: During the SC, there will be training sessions for the teachers (workshops, presentations and class observation). These training sessions will be conducted by MATE trainers. The training sessions will be held between 12:00 and 1:30, twice a week, during the SC.
- f. A list of involved teachers should be sent including: their name and institutions, the groups they teach, their phone number and email addresses.

#### 5. Students

- a. The number of students per class should not exceed 20.
- b. The students' certificates will be issued by the national board. They will be signed by the president then sent to the local coordinators to sign too.
- c. The students' lists should be sent via email to the national coordinator after the 4<sup>th</sup> day. The final list should be sent at the end of the first week. The list should include: students' names, age, institution, email. This will help us inform students about the coming SCs.
- d. Information about SS insurance should be sought the soonest possible.

### Meeting with MNE, RELO and BC Report

Reported by Said Berdouz

On Thursday, October 4<sup>th</sup>, 2007, Mr. Hassim and I went on a business trip to Rabat. As it was announced earlier, this trip was a response to the invitations he got from the Ms. Ruth, RELO Directress, and from Mr. A. Ladbury, Director of the BC. As the aim was to discuss various MATE issues with these institutions, and to present them with our action plan for the academic year 2007–2008, Mr. Hassim arranged another meeting with the Director of The department of the Curricula at the Ministry of National Education.

#### Meeting with RELO

The first meeting was with Ms Ruth Petzold, the RELO, her assistant Mr. Abdellatif Khadra and a newly appointed EL Fellow, Randy. The Agenda prepared by Mr Hassim and which included MATE events, MATE's publications, MATE Learners' Activities, served as a basis for the discussion and it was an opportunity to ask many questions. Other points, such

as the Summer Institute, the TESOL Conference and the programme 'ACCESS' were added to the agenda during the discussion because they were important issues for our interlocutors.

All throughout the meeting, Ms Petzold kept reiterating her willingness to collaborate with MATE as far as the major events planned for this year are concerned. Thus, besides her financial contribution to the first two events, she promised to bring in specialists whose work would respond to the needs of the Moroccan ELT community. In this respect, we suggested the following fields: SBE, Assessment, ESP and ELT for young learners. Mr Hassim also presented her with FACE (Festival of Acting Contest in English), the drama project about which she expressed her interest and said that she would read it and give us her answer in due time.

Concerning the last points, after we gave her MATE's point of view and the whole story relating to the Summer Institute, she expressed her wish to see it revived with the help of MATE. After we made it clear that the role of the MNE is of a paramount importance for the success of this event, we promised to do our best and suggested to work on that with the general inspectorate of the MNE, and the BC. As for the TESOL point, Ms. Petzold said that the TESOL people have always shown interest in MATE and that she would be glad to send a MATE member to attend the 2008 TESOL conference provided that MATE nominates somebody. She also expressed her desire to give some presentations which are related to the ELT field whenever and wherever we think they would fit.

Mr. Khadra, who is responsible for the programme called "ACCESS", a programme meant to support financially the learning of English in poor areas of Morocco, told us that he is working with the view of bringing in some change in the way the programme has been organized. In the past, the budget allotted to the implementation of "ACCESS" used to go to the ALCs. This year, Mr Khadra is seeking to involve NGOs and said he would be glad if MATE accepted to help. We proposed to ask local branches to organize those sessions as a kind of summer camps bearing in mind that teachers who take part in the programme will be remunerated.

#### **Meeting with the Ministry of National Education (MNE)**

Mr Bendouqui joined us for the following meeting which took place in the Curricula Department. The Director, Mrs Zakia Laraki, and Mr. Rachid Lamrani, listened to Mr Hassim's presentation concerning MATE programme. Mr. Bendouqui intervened many times to answer some of Ms. Laraki's questions concerning some of the events programmed. Mr. Lamrani told us that while preparing the department's budget which they presented to the general secretary of the Ministry, they included in their action plan some of the themes, namely textbook evaluation and Civic Education. They know that these make some of the fields of interest of MATE and they hope to get some funding for them. They promised to work in collaboration with MATE and when we informed them about the latest evolution concerning the Summer Institute, they expressed their agreement with our point of view and promised to help. In relation with the inspectors' seminar, they accepted

to take charge of some of the administrative work and they engaged to find some decent site for the event.

#### **Meeting with The British Council (BC)**

On Friday, October 5<sup>th</sup>, 2007, we met Mr. Adam Ladbury, the Director of the British Council at 10:00. Mr. Ian Winter, Mr. Michael Little and the recently appointed regional coordinator of the NENA Project, Ms Fiona Pape, attended the meeting, too. Mr Hassim went through the programme and whenever there was a need for some clarifications, he or Mr. Blibil, who joined us that morning, answered the questions of our interlocutors.

Mr Ladbury, told us that the BC, as usual, will support MATE in its action plans and will contribute financially whenever it is possible. He also promised that they will take part in the inspectors' seminar and in the management colloquium by providing somebody to give presentations on supervision, report writing, and presentation skills. For the ESP, he suggested to provide a speaker who will talk on how to exploit authentic resources and he also promised to help us find some suitable sites for Rabat Summer camp, in case there is one this year.

As far as the ICT event is concerned, Mr. Ladbury expressed his interest in the On-line Course project Mr. Hassim told them about and which could be launched by MATE in the near future. We agreed to send him a draft of the project as soon as possible. By the same, he proposed to advertise MATE's events and to have a page for MATE on the BC website.

The summer institute point will be discussed some time later, but for the contribution of the BC teachers in MATE local events (MATE days), we were told that the BC need to be informed at least a month earlier to guarantee their participation.

The last point that was discussed was the one related to 'Learners' Activities'. Special importance was showed towards 'FACE' provided it is introduced as a MATE project for young learners especially since it goes along with the BC's interest in drama as a means of learning English. 'Reading for young learners' was also suggested as another activity in this respect.

The meeting ended at 12:15.

## **MATE 4<sup>th</sup> ICT4ELT National Conference: Agadir, June 02-04, 2007**

### **Theme: ICT for teaching & teacher development**

#### **VENUE & DATE**

Centre d'accueil CNSS and Kastalani School, Agadir, Morocco, June 02-04, 2007.

#### **RATIONALE & OBJECTIVES**

MATE, jointly with the Ministry of National Education, Directorate of Curricula, Souss-Massa-Daraa Academy and MATE-Agadir, organized the 4<sup>th</sup> National ICT (information and communication technology) Conference, on June 2-4, 2007 in Agadir. The theme of the conference was: **ICT for teaching and teacher development.**

The conference came as a follow-up to previous similar five events (1. MATE 2-day ICT workshop, Agadir, 5-6 January 2002, 2. MATE 1<sup>st</sup> National ICT workshop, Agadir, 21-22-23 March 2003, 3. MATE regional workshop, Agadir 18-19-20-21 March 2004, 4. MATE 2<sup>nd</sup> National Conference, Agadir 20-21-22-23 February 2005, and 5. MATE 3<sup>rd</sup> National Conference, Agadir May 30-31 and June 01, 2006). Similar to the last four events, this conference focussed mainly on ICT supported teaching and training activities and projects. Therefore, the conference aimed to

1. focus on pedagogy and teacher professional development;
2. work on ready to use activities and materials;
3. provide the necessary technical skills and tools that would enable the participants to carry out the activities and projects;
4. share materials and experiences; and
5. compile activities and projects in CD-ROMs for participants to use after the conference.

A CD-ROM was distributed to the participants containing some ready to use ICT-supported teaching, learning and training activities and projects. By sharing the acquired skills and using the materials in the CD-ROMs with their colleagues, students and trainees, the conference would have a significant duplicating effect.

#### **PARTICIPANTS**

There were about 60 participants including tertiary level teachers, teacher trainers, inspectors, and upper and lower secondary school teachers. The Participants were selected according to the following criteria:

- having basic skills in ICT materials use and production

- willing to actively participate in a productive project during and after the workshop
- being ready to cascade information and similar work with colleagues in their area
- first come, first served.

The participants were required to

1. participate actively and productively during the conference;
2. use the materials shared during the conference with their students/trainees and send a report about them;
3. share the materials with colleagues in their areas and send a report about them; and hopefully
4. produce similar activities and projects and send a report about them.

#### OUR PARTNERS

- the Ministry of National Education, Directorate of Curricula
- the Regional Academy of Sous Massa Daraa
- the Agadir Academy regional Inspectorate
- the British Council
- Al-kastalany school.

#### SPEAKERS & TRAINERS

1. Abdellatif Zoubair, Delegation Agadir Idaoutanane
2. Ali Boumoussa, teacher and teacher trainer, Rabat
3. Youssef Najah, Inspector in the academies of Guelmim, Layoune, Dakhla

4. Mohammed Hassim, Zagora Delegation
5. Ahmed Atlagh, Lycée Albakkali, Ait Melloul
6. Mohammed Assabbane, Lycée Omar Alkhayyam, Inzeggane
7. Mohammed Hammani, Casablanca Delegation
8. Mohamed 1 Elasi, Lycée Ibn Alhaitham, Ouarzazate
9. Elmadani Fahmi, CPGE, Reda Slaoui, Agadir
10. Aicha Barakat, Rabat
11. Lahsen Tighoula, Lycée Essadaka, Guelmim
12. Abdesalam Zouita, Lycée Mohammed V, Laayoune
13. Abdelkarim Benyahya, Lycée Cadi Ayyad, Tetouan
14. Bouchaib Zahawi, Casablanca.

#### ORGANIZERS

1. Elmadani Fahmi, CPGE, Reda Slaoui, Agadir
2. Ahmed Atlagh, Lycée Albakkali, Ait Melloul
3. Mohammed Assabbane, Lycée Omar Alkhayyam, Inzeggane
4. Mohammed Hassim, Zagora Delegation
5. Mohamed Bouchakka, Lycée Omar Alkhayyam, Inzeggane
6. Adil Bentahar, Lycée Al-Maarifa, Ait Melloul
7. Hassane Fathi, Lycée Al Khawarizmi, Ait Amira, Chtouka Ait Baha
8. Abdellatif Zoubair, Delegation Agadir
9. Mohamed Messaoudi, Othmane Ben Affane, Ouled Dahou
10. Mohamed Chana, Lycée Yassamine, Ait Melloul
11. Abdelkader Assafir, CPR, Inzeggane.

#### PROGRAMME

<b>Saturday, June 2nd, 2007</b>	
14:30 - 16:30	<b>Registration and check-in</b>
17:00 – 17:30	<b>Opening Ceremony</b> Representative of the Academy, MATE president
17:30 – 18:00	<b>Reception</b>
18:00 – 19:00	<b>1. Opening Paper: Ali Boumoussa</b> <b>Feet on the Ground... Finger on the Pulse:</b> <b>Reflections on ICT in Teacher Development</b>
19:00 – 19:45	<b>2. Mohamed Hammani</b> <b>An introduction to Moodle platform</b>
<b>Sunday, June 3rd, 2007</b>	
08:30 - 08:45	<b>Orientation &amp; announcements</b>
08:45 – 9:30	<b>3. Abdellatif Zoubair</b> <b>Codes of behaviour on online forums</b>
09:30 – 10:15	<b>4. Abdelkrim Benyahya</b> <b>Do you blog?</b>
10:15 – 10:45	Break
10:45 – 11:15	<b>5. Youssef Najah: ICT systems</b>
11:15 – 12:00	<b>6. Lahcen Tighoula</b> <b>Managing student video projects:</b> <b>Benefits, constraints, and practical considerations</b>
12:30	<b>Lunch</b>
14:00 – 14:45	<b>7. Aicha Barakat</b> <b>Criteria for selecting online reading or listening activities</b>
14:45 – 15:30	<b>8. Mohammed Assabbane</b> <b>Ready-made Flash templates for busy teachers</b>
15:30 – 16:00	Break
16:00 – 16:45	<b>9. Adessalam Zouita</b> <b>Getting ICT down to earth: Classroom practices</b>

16:45 – 17:30	<b>10. Mohammed 1 Elasi</b> <b>Creating interactive crossword puzzles with hotpotatoes</b>
17:30 – 18:30	<b>11. ICT materials &amp; projects sharing</b>
20:00	<b>Dinner</b>
<b>Monday, June 4th, 2007</b>	
08:30 – 08:45	<b>Announcements</b>
08:45 – 09:15	<b>12. Ali Boumoussa</b> <b>Poetry, ICT, and Webagogy...What's the Connection?</b>
09:15 – 10:00	<b>13. Ahmed Atlagh</b> <b>Free online training tools</b>
10:00 – 10:45	<b>14. Abdelkrim Benyahya</b> <b>Setting up a blog account</b>
10:45 – 11:00	Break
11:00 – 11:30	<b>15. Bouchaib Zahawi</b> <b>Using copyrighted materials in your teaching</b>
11:30 – 12:00	<b>16. Mohammed Assabbane</b> <b>Interact with English: Online learning implemented</b>
12:00 – 12:30	<b>17. Mohammed Hassim</b> <b>A proposal of an online course for MATE</b>
12:30 – 13:00	<b>18. Fahmi Elmadani</b> <b>With online resources, who needs textbooks?</b>
13:00 – 14:00	<b>19. Round table:</b> <b>ICT for teacher development:</b> <b>Experiences from past online courses</b>
14:00 – 14:30	<b>20. Evaluation &amp; Closing</b>
14:30	<b>Lunch</b>

### MATE 5<sup>th</sup> Inspectors' Colloquium: Rabat 01-02-03 November, 2007

#### Theme: Innovations in the New Moroccan Textbooks and Teacher Supervision

#### RATIONALE

MATE organized the 5<sup>th</sup> National Inspectors' Colloquium on Thursday 01, Friday 02 and Saturday 03 November, 2007 jointly with

the Ministry of National Education and the Regional English Language Office (RELO), at the Academy of Rabat. The theme of the colloquium was: *"Innovations in the new Moroccan textbooks"*

**and teacher supervision.”** The choice of the theme goes in line with the current situation and development in ELT in Morocco which is mainly characterized by the completion of the textbooks production cycle in the upper secondary school level and the publication of the final version of ELT pedagogical guidelines. With this in mind, the role of supervisors/inspectors has become crucial to coordinate work of different partners so as to come up with an effective work plan that can be carried out during the school year 2007-2008. The work of supervisors with teachers could focus on the new syllabi, approaches and methodology as embodied in the new textbooks.

### CONTENT

The colloquium dealt with three of the current hot issues inspectors face these days:

1. Introducing the new Moroccan textbooks.
2. Examination of the new approaches and methodology adopted in the new textbooks.
3. Issues in classroom observation and report writing.

### PARTICIPANTS

All the Moroccan English inspectors (about 90) were invited to this colloquium; representing the 16 Moroccan regional academies, hoping that the participants would share the information and skills

introduced during the colloquium and transmit them to the teachers under their supervision. Consequently, the colloquium would have a significant multiplier effect. A CD-ROM was distributed to the participants containing materials used during the colloquium in addition to other useful materials.

### SPONSORS AND PARTNERS

To cover part of the expenses, the organizing committee has sought different partners and sponsors among which the following can be mentioned:

- Ministry of National Education
- US Regional English Language Office (RELO)
- British Council, Rabat
- Other sponsors.

### FEES, BOARD AND LODGING

Lodging was in Hotel Yasmine (Hassan area), Rabat, two nights, bed and breakfast. Check-in was on Thursday and check-out on Saturday. Meals included 2 dinners and 2 lunches. No fees were required for participation in the colloquium.

### PROGRAMME

<b>Thursday, November 1st, 2007</b>	
18:30 – 19:30	<b>Opening speeches</b> - Khadija Chakir, General Inspector of the Ministry of Education - Zakia Liraki, Director of curricula - Director of the CPR - Ruth Petzold, Director of RELO - MATE president
19:30 – 20:15	<b>Reception</b> <b>Keynote speech: Dr Mohamed Mellouk</b>
<b>Friday, November 2nd, 2007</b>	
08:45 - 09:00	<b>Announcements</b>
09:00 – 9:30	<b>1. The role of supervision in teacher development: Helping teachers help themselves</b> , Abdelkader Chaddoudi
09:30 – 10:00	<b>2. Towards a unified, practical and functional approach to supervision</b> , Mohamed Akkouch
10:00 – 10:30	<b>3. Teacher Supervision and Evaluation: A Framework</b> , Fatima Tahir
10:30 – 11:00	<b>Discussion</b>
10:45 – 11:15	<b>Break</b>
11:00 – 11:30	<b>4. Towards a standards-based textbook evaluation: The case of the EFL textbooks in Morocco</b> , Ahmed Chaibi
11:30 – 12:00	<b>5. Evaluating <i>Ticket to English &amp; Gateway (Bac 1)</i> in light of CBI</b> , Abderazzak Essobti
12:00 – 12:30	<b>Discussion</b>
13:00	<b>Lunch</b>
15:00 – 15:45	<b>6. Presentation: Competency based observation, reflective practice and observee/observer co-operation – the British</b>

15:45 – 16:30	<b>Council model</b> , Michael Little
16:30 – 16:45	<b>7. Follow-up Workshop: Competency based observation</b> , Michael Little
16:45 – 17:15	<b>Break</b>
17:15 – 17:45	<b>8. Presenting ‘Shaping the way we teach English’ package</b> , Imane Najjar
17:45 – 18:00	<b>9. Introducing Annenberg training videos</b> , Mohammed Hassim
20:00	<b>Discussion</b> <b>Dinner</b>
<b>Saturday, November 3rd, 2007</b>	
08:45 – 09:00	<b>Announcements</b>
09:00 – 09:30	<b>10. Implementing project work in the classroom</b> , Khalil Zakari
09:30 – 10:00	<b>11. Classroom observation report writing: a suggested new format</b> , Mohammed Hassim & Nouredine Bendouqi
10:00 – 10:30	<b>Discussion</b>
10:30 – 11:00	<b>Break</b>
11:00 – 12:30	<b>12. Introducing new textbooks for 2nd year baccalaureate</b> - <b>Insights into English</b> , Mohamed Najbi - <b>Ticket to English</b> , Mohamed Hammani - <b>Gateway to English</b> , Mustapha Blibil
12:30 – 13:30	<b>13. Round table, evaluation and closing</b> - <b>Central inspectorate speech</b> - <b>ELT supervision in Morocco: reality &amp; prospects</b> - <b>Evaluation of the colloquium and closing.</b>
14:00	<b>Lunch</b>

## **MATE 3rd National Management Seminar: Beni Mellal 12-13-14 November, 2007**

**Theme: *Capacity building: Towards more effective managerial and presentation skills***

MATE organized the 3<sup>rd</sup> national management seminar in collaboration with the Ministry of National Education and the Regional English Language Office (RELO) on Monday 12, Tuesday 13 and Wednesday 14 November, 2007 in Beni Mellal

(Academy of Tadla Azilal). The theme of the seminar was: ***“Capacity building: Towards more effective management and presentation skill”***

## Rationale

MATE current board has always tried to involve local branches and active members of the association in the preparation and implementation of different work plans in order to empower them and enable them with essential managerial skills. By so doing, we strongly believe that the association will be more powerful and more efficient and will therefore provide quality services to the ELT community in different regions of Morocco. For all these reasons, this board has created two new local branches (Laarache and Tiznit) up to now and plans to create five more others (Laayoune, Kenitra, Tangier, Oujda and Fes) this school year (2007-2008).

## Objectives of the seminar

During the last management seminar, MATE worked on bringing the different local branches together to create a unified vision of MATE strategies and work. Thus the theme was: **MATE team building: Working out management issues**. This seminar came as a follow up to the previous one and therefore aimed at:

- training MATE officers both at the national and the local levels on effective management skills
- enabling some active MATE members both from inside and outside MATE boards (national and regional) to acquire effective presentation skills
- preparing work plans to be implemented during the school year 2007-2008.
- working out better ways and channels of collaboration and coordination between the national board and local branches.

## Participants and speakers

There were 60 participants in the seminar including:

- members of the national board
- the president, the secretary general and the treasurer of each local branch (9 local branches: Agadir, Marrakech, Beni Mellal, Ouarzazate/Zagora, Guelmim, Laarache, Tiznit, Essaouira, and Safi)
- some active members of MATE as well as some former presidents
- MATE members in charge of creating new branches (Laayoune, Kenitra, Tangier, Oujda and Fes).

The speakers were:

- ❖ Experts in NGOs matters
- ❖ Experienced people in managing NGOs
- ❖ MATE former presidents.
- ❖ Experienced speakers in presentation skills.

## Content of the seminar

There were presentations, workshops and round tables that will tackle the following issues:

- How to prepare good proposals for ELT projects
- How to manage a yahoo group
- How to write reports of events
- Dealing with partnerships
- Developing new strategies of collaboration and coordination
- Developing effective presentation skills
- Discussing issues related to the management of Teachers Associations
- Round tables to discuss MATE issues (finalising bylaws, programmes, moral reports, financial situation, etc.).

## Sponsors and partners

- Direction of curricula (Ministry of National Education)

- Regional Academy of Tadla Azilal (Ministry of National Education)
- US Regional English Language Office (RELO)
- Other sponsors.

## Program

<i>Monday, November 12, 2007</i>	
15:30 - 16:00	<b>Opening speeches</b> - Mohamed Chouli, Director of academy Tadla-Azilal - Abderrahman Belyazid, délégué of Benimellal - Mohammed Hassim, MATE president - Reception
17:00 - 17:45	<b>Keynote Speech</b> <b>Appropriating management for NGOs</b> Abdellatif Zaki, I.A.V. Rabat
17:45 - 18:00	<b>Programme Presentation</b>
20:00	<b>Dinner</b>
<i>Tuesday, November 13, 2007: Local Project Development</i>	
08:45 - 09:00	<b>Announcements</b>
09:00 - 09:30	<b>Abdellatif Zaki</b> <b>Managing NGOs: Secrets of good governance</b>
09:30 - 10:00	Noureddine BENDOUQI <b>A suggested framework for running the local business</b>
10:00 - 10:30	Mohammed HASSIM <b>Mission statement and MATE national projects</b>
10:30 - 11:00	Discussion
10:45 - 11:15	Break
11:00 - 11:30	Noureddine BENDOUQI <b>The Basics of a MATE day</b>
11:30 - 12:00	Fahmi El Madani <b>Towards a better performance of MATE and its local branches: Are projects enough?</b>
12:00 - 12:30	<b>Plenary Session: Reading reports</b>
13:00	<b>Lunch</b>
15:00 - 15:45	Noureddine BENDOUQI <b>Public speaking or Giving presentations</b>
15:45 - 16:15	Mustapha Blibil <b>Financial issues</b>
16:15 - 17:15	<b>Ali Boumoussa &amp; Mohammed Hassim</b> <b>Managing local branches otherwise</b>
17:15 - 18:00	<b>Discussion of MATE Bylaws</b>
18:00 - 18:30	<b>General Discussion</b>
20:00	<b>Dinner</b>
<i>Wednesday, November 14, 2007: Local Projects presentation</i>	
	<b>Session 1</b>
08:30 - 09:00	<b>Group 1</b>
09:00 - 09:30	<b>Group 2</b>
09:30 - 10:00	<b>Group 3</b>
10:00 - 10:30	<b>Group 4</b>
10:30 - 11:00	<b>Break</b>
	<b>Session 2</b>
11:00 - 11:30	<b>Group 5</b>
11:30 - 12:00	<b>Group 6</b>
12:00 - 12:30	<b>Group 7</b>
12:30 - 13:00	<b>Group 8</b>
13:30 - 14:30	- Reading reports and drawing conclusions - Evaluation of the workshop. - Round table and closing remarks
14:30	<b>Lunch</b>

## MATE 2<sup>nd</sup> Citizenship Colloquium: Casablanca, 11-12-13 January, 2008

**Theme: Promoting civic behaviour in the Moroccan school: Teachers as agents of change**

MATE organized the 2<sup>nd</sup> national colloquium on Citizenship Education in collaboration with the Ministry of National Education (Direction of Curricula), and the Délégation of Ain Sebaa. The theme of the seminar was: "Promoting civic behaviour in the Moroccan school: Teachers as agents of change".

### Date and Venue

Date: From 11<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> January, 2008

Venue: Complexe de Cooperation Oqba bnu Nafii, Delegation Ain Sbaa, Casablanca. (المركب التعاوني عقبة بن نافع - نيابة عين السبع)

### **Rationale**

Promoting citizenship education is one of the major recommendations of the High Council of Education as it is the case in the National Charter for Education and Training (1999) and the White Paper (2002). The first MATE citizenship colloquium stressed the role teachers can play in setting up citizenship culture in our schools. That is why more focus was placed on hands-on tasks and activities in the second colloquium.

The aim of this colloquium was to bring together experts, professionals, and teachers whose concern is to contribute to personal, social and political maturity of the Moroccan learner as an active citizen. Hopefully, participants would transfer and cascade the information and practices they would share in this colloquium.

### **Theme and sub themes of the colloquium**

"Promoting civic behaviour in the Moroccan school: Teachers as agents of change".

### **Sub themes:**

- Preach or practice: Teachers as models

- The place of civic behaviour in the textbook
- The place of civic culture in the curriculum
- Lesson plans for civic behaviour
- Towards sustainable civic behaviour of teachers and students
- Civic behaviour at school
- Civic behaviour in society
- School subjects and civic education.

### **Participation in the seminar**

For financial and organisational constraints, there were about 60 participants from different parts of Morocco: 40 residents and 20 non-residents.

### **Sponsors and partners**

- Direction of curricula (Ministry of National Education)
- Regional Academy of Casablanca (Ministry of National Education)
- Delegation of Ain Sbaa
- Other sponsors.

## **MATE 2<sup>nd</sup> Middle School Seminar : l'école hôtelière, Benslimane, 26-27-28 January, 2008**

### **Theme: Effective Teaching Practices for Active Learning**

MATE organized the 2<sup>nd</sup> national Middle School Seminar in collaboration with the Ministry of National Education (Direction of Curricula), and the Délégation of Benslimane. The theme of the seminar was: "Effective Teaching Practices for Active Learning"

### **Date and Venue:**

This seminar was held on 26-27-28 January, 2008 in Benslimane at l'école hôtelière.

### **Rationale**

After the success of last year's event, the current MATE board has decided that MATE middle school seminar becomes one of the main MATE educational events. A lot of efforts are being made to put more structure into this seminar so that the outcomes will be more efficient for both teachers and learners. The theme of 2008 edition of the middle school seminar was: "**Effective Teaching Practices For Active Learning**". This theme was chosen to explore the most successful practices and competencies of teachers through purposeful hands-on practice activities that would enable middle school teachers to cope with the challenges of teaching through standards and competencies. We also hope that the professional relationships to be established during the seminar and the skills to be gained will have a positive effect on the teachers' future training and development and will therefore pave the way for the creation of a network of sharing and growth. This would undoubtedly lead to more appropriate practice. Last but not least, the presentations and the workshops this year were intended to focus on practical issues. The presenters/workshop leaders dealt with those classroom teaching/ learning situations that could be considered as either difficult or with areas that needed to be improved.

### **Theme and sub themes of the seminar**

**"Effective Teaching Practices For Active Learning"**

### **Sub themes of the seminar**

- Active learning
- Performance-based and formative assessment
- Test Design and construction.
- Teaching the four skills through standards: Interpretive (listening and reading) presentational (writing, and speaking).
- Interpersonal competencies
- Managing Project work.
- Teaching through games and songs.
- Using ICT in teaching and teacher professional development.

### **Speakers**

1. Ahmed Chaibi - 2. Larbi Bounsir - 3. Joan Kang Shin - 4. Caroline Nugent - 5. Mohamed Najbi - 6. Fahmi Elmadani 7. John O'Rourke - 8. Bouchra Arrif - 9. Naima Leghtas - 10. khalil El Assâd - 11. Bouchaib Zahaoui - 12. Mohammed Hassim - 13. Nouredine Bendouqi - 14. Mohamed Elfatihi - 15. Abdelmajid Bouziane - 16. Kamal Hadder - 17.. Bahia Aquesbi - 18. Jamal Slimani.

### **Participation in the seminar**

80 participants took part in the seminar: 60 residents and 20 non-residents coming from different parts of Morocco.

### **Fees of the seminar**

- Residents: 300dh (including: participation fee, 2 nights, 2 breakfasts, 2 lunches, and 2 dinners, reception, tea/coffee breaks)
- Non-residents: 200dh (including: participation fee, reception, tea/coffee breaks)

### **Organising committee**

National coordinators: Mohammed Hassim - Fahmi Elmadani – Mustapha Blibil - Nouredine Bendouqi  
Local coordinators: Elarbi Imad - Ahmed Sebbar

### **Sponsors and partners**

- Direction of curricula (Ministry of National Education)
- Regional Academy of Chawia Wardigha (Ministry of National Education)
- Delegation Benslimane
- The British Council
- RELO
- Other sponsors.

### **PROGRAMME**

<b>Saturday, 26 January, 2008</b>	
<b>14:00 –15:30</b>	<b>Registration and Check-in</b>
<b>16:00 –17:30</b>	<b>Opening Ceremony</b> - Benslimane Delegee speech - MATE President speech - Ministry Representative speech
<b>17:30– 08:00</b>	<b>Reception</b>
<b>18:00– 19:00</b>	<b>Keynote Speech: Rethinking Active Learning</b> Joan Kang Shin, University of Maryland, Baltimore County, USA
<b>20:00</b>	<b>Dinner</b>

<b>Sunday, 27 January, 2008</b>	
07:45 - 08:45	Breakfast
09:00- 09:05	Announcements
09:05- 09:30	Paper 1: Redistributing power in the Moroccan EFL classroom: The role of the teacher, the role of the learner, Ahmed Chaibi
09:30- 10:55	Paper 2: Active, Passive or Competency based Learning, Nouredine Bendouqi
09:55- 10:20	Paper 3: Process Writing, John O'Rourke
10:20- 10:40	Discussion
10:40- 11:00	Break
11:00- 12:00	Concurrent workshops
Workshop 1: Using songs in the classroom, John O'Rourke	
Workshop 2: Drama in the Classroom, Caroline Nugent	
12:00- 13:00	Concurrent workshops
Workshop 3: Fun writing activities, khalil El Assàd	
Workshop 4: Project based learning in ELT, Kamal Hadder	
Workshop 5: ELT through Jazz chants, Naima Leghtas	
13:15	Lunch
15:00- 15:25	Paper 4: Information literacy, Abdelmajid Bouziane
15:25- 15:50	Paper 5: Using ICT in the classroom, Jamal Slimani
15:50- 16:15	Paper 6: Project based multimedia learning, Bouchra Arrif
16:15- 16:40	Discussion
16:40- 17:00	Break
17:00- 18:00	Concurrent workshops

Workshop 6: Applying information literacy criteria to two websites, Abdelmajid Bouziane	
Workshop 7: Performance-based assessment, Mohammed Hassim	
Workshop 8: Using the Blackboard, Bouchaib Zahawi	
18:00- 18:30	Reading reports
20:00	Dinner

<b>Monday, 28 January, 2008</b>	
07:45- 08:45	Breakfast
09:00- 09:05	Announcements
09:05- 09:30	Paper 7: The teacher as a learning facilitator/ a textbook evaluator, Mohamed Najbi
09:30- 9:55	Paper 8: Benchmarking in teaching, Fahmi El Madani
	Paper 9: Differentiated Instruction, Mohamed Elfatihi
09:55- 10:15	Discussion
10:15- 10:30	Break
10:30- 11:30	Concurrent workshops
Workshop 9: Increasing Classroom Interaction, Joan Kang Shin	
Workshop 10: Critical Thinking and Active Learning Strategies Learning, Bahia Aquesbi	
Workshop 11: Using language games for vocabulary presentation and revision, Larbi Bounsir	
11:30- 12:30	Reading reports
12:30- 13:30	Live songs and language activities <i>Universes</i>
13:30- 14:00	Round up session, evaluation and closing ceremony
14:00	Lunch

### Book Review: by Mohamed Najbi

#### Requisition of Arab and Islamic Thought: An Assessment of Relevance, By Abdellatif Zaki, 2007, LangCom Editions, Rabat

This is yet another academic book by Abdellatif Zaki that digs deeply into a topic of historical and ideological interest. It is of historical interest as it invites the reader to surf through the discourse of political Islamism and its tenets over decades of Islam itself, outlining in greater detail what this discourse has, either consciously or unconsciously, overlooked. It is of ideological interest, on the other hand, as it explains that ideologies re-shaping Islamic politics and political reform. Zaki's core ideas about political and religious reform can be extrapolated through the answers to the set of questions he elaborates on (p. 19). The book consists of an introduction, where he outlines the focal issues; namely, (i) *the effects of the politicization and "ideologization" of Islam on the shaping of the mind, the culture, the state and the other socio-political institutions in the Arab-Islamic societies and in Morocco in particular* and (ii) *ways in which attitudes as well as the political, cultural and religious practices of the West and of the Arabs and Moslems are influenced by how they perceive themselves and each other* (pp. 9-10), nineteen chapters and a conclusion. In each chapter, all the arguments Zaki sets forth are corroborated by persuasive evidence from a variety of sources. This constitutes one of the strengths of this book. In the Conclusion, which I would have thought could be read first as a sort of academic appetizer; he outlines pertinent ways of reading and interpreting *history*. Implicit in this conclusion is the necessity for researching the origins of stereotyping and casting it aside.

Zaki is particularly astute in providing deeper insights into citizenship education and values education. Of a particular interest to educationalists are Chapters Fifteen, Sixteen and Seventeen. In Chapter Fifteen, 'Values and value-systems in the Moroccan curriculum', the author provides an in-depth investigation into values which are, from his own perspectives, (i) *the powerful mechanisms that accommodate the lenses through which individuals and communities perceive,*

*judge and determine their action.*, (ii) *the ideological stabilizers that are in constant state of transformation to cope with internal and external pressures* and (ii) *the expressions of absolute truths the community holds.* The central argument throughout is that introducing values education in our educational system requires (i) identifying the values and value-systems to be focused upon and (ii) adopting a reflective approach (p.156). In Chapter Sixteen, 'Citizenship for the integration in Morocco', the author posits sixty pertinent questions, explicitly suggesting that (i) the consciousness as to the issues they raise is as important as the answers to these questions and (ii) one of the aims of citizenship education is *'to empower learners socially, culturally and politically.'* (p. 166). In Chapter Seventeen, 'Citizenship education: One role for the language classes', the author plunges us into how to effectively implement citizenship education in our educational system. I find the checklist whereby Moroccan ELT professionals can gauge for themselves whether their school environment is citizenship-friendly or not extremely interesting.

This is a book worth reading to all, particularly those involved in citizenship education and interfaith/ intercultural dialogue.

Requisition of the Arab & Islamic Mind  
*An assessment of relevance*



Abdellatif Zaki

LangCom Editions, Rabat

### **Abstract**

Recent L2 research suggests that teacher response strategies have a direct bearing on the quality of student revision. In this study, the author examined over 2,000 marginal and end comments written on a set of first drafts of papers by 147 intermediate to advanced EFL students at Ibn Zohr University. The comments were analyzed in terms of their linguistic features as well as their intended pragmatic goals. The author then looked at revised drafts of each paper to observe the impact (or lack of it) of the first-draft commentary on the students' revisions and assess the extent to which the papers have improved as a result of response to teacher's feedback. The findings indicate that a disproportionate amount of form-based compared to content-based commentary was used and led to substantive structural changes, but did not have a significant impact on overall essay quality. Some suggestions are outlined here on ways teachers can help their students revise more successfully.

### **Background**

Over the past two decades, L2 writing instruction has seen an increase in the use of process-oriented pedagogy (study of the methods and activities of teaching). Students are encouraged to write multiple drafts of their papers and teachers make sure to provide feedback to help them revise. There are many ways students can be provided with feedback: peer response groups, teacher-student conferences, audiotaped commentary, reformulation, and computer-based commentary (on students' compact disks or via e-mail). Handwritten commentary on student drafts, however, remains the primary method used by teachers.

One of the most comprehensive reviews of research on the effects on revision was carried out by Beason (1993) who notes that "feedback and revision are valuable pedagogical tools. ... the research typically indicates that high school and college students improve their drafts upon receiving feedback." Beason worked with 20 university students from Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) classes and examined the influence of feedback (from both teachers and peers) on revision. In this study, Beason compared his subjects (teachers and students in WAC classes) with subjects in composition classes, and came to the conclusion that, unlike students, teachers are less likely to make positive comments and tend to be more directive and more focused on form. Concerning revision, Beason's findings indicate that although students usually effect changes in response to teacher's feedback, they did so selectively.

Most studies on L2 revision have focused on the types of revisions made by students (e.g. Belcher, 1989; Chandrasegeran, 1986; Chenoweth, 1987; Gaskill, 1987; Hall, 1987, 1990; Sato, 1990; Tagong, 1992) or on pedagogical techniques (such as reformulation or topical structure analysis) for helping students to revise (Allright, 1988; Cerniglia, Medsker, & Connor, 1990; Cohen, 1983, 1990; Connor & Farmer, 1990; Johns, 1986a, 1986b).

L2 studies of feedback and revision have examined differences in students' ability to process feedback and revise successfully (Barnes, 1984; Cohen & Cavalcanti, 1987), the effects of teacher versus peer feedback (Chaudron, 1983, 1984; Connor & Asenavage, 1994; Hedgcock & Lefkowitz, 1992, and the impact

of content- versus form-based feedback (Cohen & Cavalcanti, 1990; Fathman and Whaley, 1990; Kepner, 1991; Russikoff & Koogan, 1996), instructor versus student preferences (Diab 2006), and the influence of teacher commentary on student revision (Brannon & Knoblauch, 1982; Sommers, 1982; Connor & Lunsford, 1993, Ferris 1997).

This abundance of the literature on the subject shows the importance given to feedback and revision. A wide range of studies have been carried out in this area, but none, to my knowledge, have addressed this issue in the Moroccan context.

### **Research Questions and limitations**

In this study I address the following basic research question:  
How helpful are teacher comments to students as they revised?

Only handwritten comments in the margins or at the end of students' papers have been examined. Other sources of feedback (e.g. classmates, friends, tutors, and the writers themselves) that may be available to students have not been considered.

### **Method**

#### **The sample**

Two stages were involved in the process of collecting the sample: First, I have asked a colleague to provide me with copies of the students' drafts with teacher comments on them. I gathered first drafts of papers by 153 intermediate to advanced Business English students in the Department of English Studies at Ibn Zohr. These first drafts contained handwritten commentary (both marginal notes and endnotes) by the teacher. Second, I obtained copies of the second draft (i.e. copies revised by students) to compare with the first drafts. A number of revised copies (6 in total) were missing, which meant that the corresponding first drafts were 'unusable' and were therefore discarded, leaving me with 147 copies. In all, 294 copies (147 pairs) were collected for this study.

#### **The content-based course**

The content-based course from which the sample was collected represents the second of a two-semester sequence designed to bridge learners' transition from earlier language courses that focus on the development of general communicative ability to an advanced course in ESP (English for Tourism). Although the English for tourism course is aimed at improving the students' written interpretive and expressive skills on the subject-matter, students' language skills are not evaluated separately from their content knowledge. The written assignments for the course aim at testing students' content knowledge as well as their command of business-related language. The course requirements specify that students complete at least two formal writing tasks.<sup>1</sup> For this study, they were given an assignment which consisted of writing an expository essay and were required to write a minimum of 1600 words.

#### **Subjects**

In addition to several years of university-level teaching experience in other language courses, the teacher involved in this study had already taught this particular content-based course at least twice before the present sample of student copies was collected.

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<sup>1</sup> Students are also required to give an in-class oral presentation, and their everyday in-class participation accounts for 20 percent of their final grade.

## Data analysis

A rating scale was used to assess the impact of the teacher's commentary on student's revised drafts. The scale considers both the degree to which the student addressed each first-draft comment in revising — by making “no attempt”, “a minimal attempt”, or “a substantive attempt”, and the extent of improvement as a result of the changes made by the student in

**Table 1: Comment characteristics\***

### A. Total comments:

2012 with an average of 13.6 comments per paper.

A symbol (e.g. question mark, exclamation, underline) counts as a comment.

### B. Comment length (number of words)

1. Short (1-5 words) 48%
2. Average (6-15 words) 39%
3. Long (16-25 words) 12%
4. Very long (26 or more words) 4%

### C. Use of hedges

1. No hedge included (64%)
2. Hedge included:  
Lexical hedges (e.g., *maybe, please, might*) (15%)

response to the teacher's feedback: “improved the paper”, “had mixed effects”, or “had negligible/ negative effect”.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Characteristics of teacher commentary

Syntactic hedges (e.g. *Can you add an example here*) (14%)

Positive softeners (e.g. *You've raised some good points, but..*) (07%)

### D. Use of symbols

Example: Question mark [?], Exclamation mark [!]

Underline, ~~Strike-out~~ (45%)

### E. Text-specific comment

1. Generic comment (could have been written on any paper!)

Example: *Nice intro* (10%)

2. Text-specific comment

Example: *Why is the Moroccan tourism sector not creating enough jobs, in your opinion?* (24%)

*\*Analytic model adapted from Ferris 1997 - Sections A&D did not feature in Ferris' original model: they were added on by this author for purposes of this study.*

Table 1 shows some general characteristics of the sum of comments examined in this study. Some 2012 comments written on 147 papers have been considered with an average of 13.6 comments per paper.

In general, the length of a comment had an effect on student revision: the longer the comment, the more feedback given, and the better the student's response. It is probably not surprising that end comments tended to be longer than marginal comments, given the more summative nature of the end comments. The majority (87%) of the comments were rated *short* and *average* (48% & 39%, respectively).

A large number of the comments (64%) did not include any hedges. Only 15% of the hedges used by the teacher in this study were of the type 'lexical' (*may be, please, might, etc.*), 14% were 'syntactic' (*can you add an example here*) and a mere 7% were positive softeners such as “*You've raised some good points, but ...*”

Nearly half the comments (45%) were in the form of symbols (question mark, exclamation mark, etc.). Generic comments (e.g. 'ok', 'good', 'nice intro') constituted 10% of the total comments and tended to be rather redundant since they were not specific to a particular paper and did not lead to any significant changes. However, 24% of the comments were specific to the text and led to an improvement in the quality of the paper.

**Table2. Comment focus areas (by font size) from least- to most focused-upon**

### Content

thesis statement  
related ideas  
development of ideas through personal experience, illustration,  
facts, opinions  
use of description, cause/effect, comparison/contrast  
consistent focus

### Organization

effectiveness of introduction  
logical sequence of ideas  
conclusion  
appropriate length

### Discourse

topic sentences  
paragraph unity

transitions  
discourse markers  
cohesion  
rhetorical conventions  
reference  
fluency  
economy  
variation

### Syntax

### Vocabulary

### Mechanics

Spelling  
Punctuation  
citation of references (if applicable)  
neatness and appearance

*\* List of categories adapted from J. D. Brown 1991*

Table 2 displays a list of evaluation categories from the least-focused-upon to the most focused-upon. Not all experts agree on a single system for weighting each of the six categories, i.e.

which of the categories should be considered most important, which comes next, and so on and so forth. The order in which the six are listed in Brown (1991) clearly indicates that *content*,

for example, should be given priority over the more traditionally valued *syntax & vocabulary*. Comment focus by the teacher in this study corresponds exactly to the way in which the categories are listed in Table 2. Only, in reverse order. *Syntax &*

*vocabulary* received the main focus, followed by *organization & discourse*, and then comes *content* (ideas and how they relate to one another) which received the least focus.

**Table 3: Relationship Between Comment Types and Revision Ratings\*:**

	%	Revision rating	
		Change	Effect
<b>B. Comment Types</b>			
1. Ask for information/question Example: "What did you mean by 'intellectual tourist'?"	(04%)	<i>substantive</i>	<i>positive</i>
2. Make a request/question Example: "Can you provide a thesis statement here --- what did you learn from this?"	(03%)	<i>substantive</i>	<i>positive</i>
3. Make a request/statement Example: "This paragraph might be better earlier in the essay."	(05%)	<i>substantive</i>	<i>positive</i>
4. Make a request/imperative Example: "Mention what the author says about mass tourism."	(01%)	<i>substantive</i>	<i>positive</i>
5. Give information/question Example: "Most tour operators use non-official tour guides --- do you feel that all such hires are wrong and should be banned?"	(03%)	<i>minimal</i>	<i>mixed</i>
6. Give information/statement Example: "Fez and Marrakech use their traditional heritage to attract tourists. Agadir makes the best of its natural beauty (sun, sea, sand)."	(05%)	<i>minimal</i>	<i>mixed</i>
7. Make a positive comment/statement or exclamation Example: "A very nice start to your essay!" "You've done a good job of finding facts and quotes to support your arguments."	(02%)	<i>minimal</i>	<i>mixed</i>
8. Make a grammar/mechanics comment/question, statement, & imperative. Example: "Subject-verb concords!" "Your verb tenses are confusing me in this paragraph." "Don't forget to spell-check."	(77%)	<i>substantive</i>	<i>negative</i>

\*Analytic model adapted from Feris 1997

Table 3 shows the relationship between comment type (request, imperative, question, general, etc.) and student revision ratings. The majority (77%) of the comments were form-based and came in the form of questions, statements and imperatives. A mere 2% of the comments were given in the form of positive comment, statement or exclamation.

Of all the comment types, three major categories can be distinguished: (a) comments about grammar/mechanics, (b) comments asking the student to provide further information, and (c) positive comments & comments giving information to the student.

**(a) Comments about grammar/mechanics**

The teacher in this study focused primarily on surface-level problems (comment type 8) and made comments mainly on syntax, grammar and mechanics (77%). This strategy led to students attending to this form-based feedback and making substantive structural changes at the expense of content and ideas. The following example illustrates this point.

*Teacher's comment:*

Please rewrite this paragraph — it's very confusing.  
[The teacher has also marked several individual sentences]

*Excerpt from student's first draft:*

the tourism is an efficient industry. Such efficiency is formulated on both the economic and social level. For what concerns the former, the tourism is a constant source to get hard currency. this convenient role is apparent when the state economy is in certain emergencies , in other words, not only the supply of currency establishes a financial balance in case of recessions, but also contribute to solve economic oppressions. to illustrate more, when it comes to external exchanges, the Moroccan currency the "Dirham" is not competent, particularly in foreign markets when compared to such currencies like the "dollar" or the "pound". Even those cynics still advocate the positive side of tourism, I mean here the social advantages of such sector. the tourism absorbs unemployment by offering opportunities to a large porportion of people. More clearly, just a glimpse on the touristical cities, Agadir for instance, one would perceive how reliable this sector is on both the city council or on the people.

*Excerpt from student's revision:* (substantive change, negative effect)

Tourism is a key industry. Its benefits can be witnessed at both the economic and social levels. Concerning the former, tourism is a constant source of hard currency. This convenient role is apparent when the state economy is in certain emergencies. In other words, not only does the supply of currency establish a financial balance in case of recession, but also contributes to solve economic problems. To illustrate more, when it comes to external exchanges, the Moroccan currency, the “Dirham”, is not competitive, particularly in foreign markets when compared to such currencies as the “Dollar” or the “Pound”. Even those cynics still advocate the positive side of tourism, I mean here the social advantages of such sector. Tourism absorbs unemployment by offering job opportunities to a large proportion of people. More clearly, just a glimpse at the tourist cities, Agadir for instance, one would perceive the positive effects of this sector on both the city council and on the residents.

This teacher has marked several individual sentences using isolated symbols such as question mark [?], exclamation mark [!], underline, and ~~strike out~~, but did not provide an indication of the students’ major patterns of error in endnotes. The author has recognized many of these symbols as comments on grammar and mechanics, but in many instances it was not clear whether a symbol was used to draw attention to a grammar point or to make a comment on the content.

Little improvement was made in the overall quality of the essay. The student’s revision was rated ‘substantive’ for changes and ‘negative’ for effect on the overall quality of the paper. Even at surface-level there remain a few lapses. The student begins a sentence with the phrase ‘concerning the former ...’, but forgets to mention anything about ‘the latter’. Notice also the awkward use of illustrative phrases such as “in other words”, “to illustrate more”, “I mean”, and “more clearly”. The paragraph begins well. The first sentence establishes the topic and the second supports it. The 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> sentences lose contact with the topic announced and might be better used in a separate paragraph for clarity.

The sentences of a good expository paragraph should reflect a clear, rational analysis of the topic. Examining whether the sentences of a paragraph correspond with its ideas is a good test of the coherence of the paragraph. In the example above, there is no clear relationship between sentences and ideas which is why the paragraph is confused and confusing.

The teacher’s comment itself was somewhat confusing; it was not clear what the teacher meant: confusing ideas, confusing style or both? Apart from marking several individual sentences, the teacher did not specify the sources of confusion. A list of itemized comments specifying areas to be addressed by the student would have been more helpful.

An expository essay is basically analytical: the student analyzes the topic through such instruments as “illustration”, “cause and effect”, “comparison”, and “definition”. In this instance the student makes a very tentative attempt at illustration, but fails to use any of the other analytical tools throughout the paper.

Although the student has successfully applied structural changes to the text, his ideas remain ‘shaky’: in talking about the social benefits of tourism, the student speaks of ‘the positive side’ of tourism without mentioning any of the negative aspects. The teacher failed to point out such discrepancy and the student was unable to address that shortcoming.

To improve the overall quality of the paper the student needs to address all these important issues. However, in the absence of clear

feedback from the teacher, the student was not able to effect the necessary changes.

The frequency of in-text indications of errors reflects the general feeling that, given the overall drop in standards, fostering greater accuracy has taken precedence over fluency and ideas. How often does one hear a colleague say things like: “Never mind a great idea: all am asking now is a grammatical sentence”.

**(b) Comments asking the student to provide further information (13%)**

As shown in Table 3, questions requesting further information from the student (Types 1, 2, 3 & 4) constituted (13%) of all marginal notes and end notes. The great majority of the changes made in response to such questions were rated ‘substantive’ and generally led to positive changes. In the following example, the student’s revision was rated ‘substantive’ for the changes made in response to teacher’s feedback, and ‘positive’ for the effect it had on the overall quality of the paper.

*Teacher’s comment:*

Explain what you mean by “intellectuals”. Do you really believe that most tourists come to visit historical monuments? How about entertainment and fun? [The teacher has also marked several individual sentences]

*Excerpt from student’s first draft:*

The tourism induces not only the economy, but protries the culture as well. No one would deny that most of the tourists visiting Morocco are intellectuals. Their aims are to learn about the core of our heritage and explore our culture. Thus, it’s no wonder to witness them compile when they visit old schools; take pictures when they visit historical monuments or popular places. In other words, they ardently try to disclose what remain to them abstract and known only on pages of magazines and articles. Last but not least, Those tourist try to compare the two culture on the one hand and endeavour to bridge them on the other one.

*Excerpt from student’s revision:* (minimal change, positive effect)

Tourism does not only enhance the economy, but also helps portray the culture. No one would deny that most of the tourists visiting Morocco are educated people. As well as coming here for fun and entertainment, they would also like to learn about the core of our heritage and explore our culture. Thus, it’s no wonder they flock to visit old schools; take pictures when they visit historical monuments or popular places. In other words, they try hard to understand what, to them, remains abstract and known only on pages of magazines and articles. Those tourists try to compare the two cultures, on the one hand, and endeavour to bridge them on the other.

As well as improving at surface-level, the paragraph has also gained in clarity. The paragraph starts by establishing a link with an earlier paragraph on ‘tourism being good for the economy’. Since the topic sentence has made a promise it must fulfil, which is to develop the idea that tourism helps portray a country’s culture, any idea not directly related to the topic might interfere with paragraph coherence. The visible link, “as well as”, establishes a relationship with the main idea being developed in the paragraph and the new idea “tourists come for entertainment and fun” provided by the teacher. Perhaps the teacher could have suggested that this idea be developed in a separate paragraph. However, since the new sentence/idea did not break

overall paragraph coherence (relevance, effective order, and inclusiveness), the teacher did not make any comment.

**(c) Positive comments & comments giving information to the student**

Only 10% of the teacher's commentary provided advice and suggestions (comment types 5, 6, & 7) and that these types of meaningful comments appeared to lead to substantive student revisions. Positive comments had the least effect on student revision, but may constitute a source of motivation for the student to perform in a similar, if not better, fashion in the next assignment. In the following example, the student's revision was rated 'substantive' for changes effected and 'positive' for effect on quality.

*Teacher's comment:*

Good paragraph linking!

"It is the role of the Ministry of Tourism to portray the country for what it really is by getting involved in the production of such programmes and by trying to correct any misconceptions that may linger as result of people's misunderstanding.

Use this sentence to link the other two in this paragraph."

[The teacher has also marked several individual sentences]

*Excerpt from student's first draft:*

Such attempts are enough to portray our culture and heritage overseas, either through programme radio they report or magazines, books, and articles they publish. For instance, most of the magazines about tourism are result of cooperative work between the foreign agencies and the ministry of tourism.

*Excerpt from student's revision:* (minimal change, mixed effect)

Such attempts are enough to portray our culture and heritage overseas, either through reports on radio programmes, or magazines, books, and articles they publish. It is the role of the Ministry of Tourism to show Morocco for what it really is by getting involved in the production of such programmes and by trying to correct any misconceptions that may linger as result of people's misunderstanding. For instance, most of the magazines about tourism are a result of cooperative work between foreign agencies and the ministry of tourism.

No substantial changes were effected in response to the teacher's comments. The student simply inserted the information provided by the teacher. The missing information made all the difference since it addressed the gap between the two already existing sentences and the paragraph gained in clarity as a result. The student has also been commended for using the repetitive transition (repeating a key word from a previous paragraph) to establish a link between two successive paragraphs.

**CONCLUSION**

The results of this study indicate that comments about grammar & mechanics (whether in the margin or at the end), and regardless of syntactic form, appear to lead to the most substantive structural changes. The overall nature of the teacher's comments (i.e. his focus on form rather than content) meant that students paid a lot more attention to grammar and mechanics. As a result, minimal changes were witnessed at the level of content. Statements that ask the student for information and those providing information to students were more influential and led to minimal but positive changes. Positive comments did not lead to any changes whatsoever and were intended mainly as motivators. Statements asking the student to provide further information had a positive effect on revision: the student made an effort to find new pieces of information or to correct/elaborate on existing ones.

**Implications for L2 Writing Instruction**

The findings of the present study have serious implications for L2 writing instruction at Ibn Zohr. In general, students may either respond effectively to teacher commentary or ignore it altogether and it is up to the teachers themselves to get their students realize the importance of addressing the comments. Teachers should make sure students understand their responding strategies. To be able to respond effectively to feedback, the student first needs to understand the meaning of a particular comment. In my view, there are four basic ways in which teachers' commentary and students' revision can be improved: (a) by limiting the use of symbols, (b) by avoiding teacher corrections, (c) by encouraging peer response, and (c) by adopting a more focused method of scoring.

**(a) Limit the use of symbols**

The teachers' already burdensome role of providing feedback has been compounded by the large number of papers they have to mark. Exceedingly large classes at Ibn Zohr mean that teachers have very little time to spend correcting each copy. As a result, many resort to *marks* (symbols used for giving feedback) instead of written comments. Such paper-marking techniques as proofreading symbols (e.g. underline, question mark [?], exclamation mark [!], underline) can mean different things to different people and may be a source of confusion. For example, a student may wonder what a question mark in the margin with an underlined word in the text mean? Does it mean that the word is in the wrong form and should be replaced? Does it mean that the word is inappropriate in that particular context? Does it mean that the concept is flawed? When marks are used, the teacher needs to make sure the students know exactly what each mark stands for. Otherwise, they should be avoided altogether.

**(b) Avoid teacher corrections**

In a number of instances, the teacher in this study chose to simply give the student the correct form of a word or sentence, rather than write a comment for the student to effect the changes. This practice reflects the general feeling among teachers that students have a tendency to ignore teacher commentary. They argue that writing a comment for the student would simply be a waste of time since the majority will hand you back the paper in its original form and you will have to correct it all over again. This practice (despite it leading to positive changes) will encourage student reliance on teachers and will reflect negatively on their long-term achievement. Teachers should try and provide commentary whenever they can and students should be held accountable for considering the feedback they have received.

**(c) Encourage peer response**

A great number of mistakes may be a result of 'laziness', i.e. student's failure to take time to read through their paper before handing it in. Teachers get frustrated when they have to correct printing mistakes: a sentence which begins with a low case instead of a capital letter (*or a capital letter in the middle of a sentence*) or a comma where there should be a full stop. More than half the papers examined had the teacher's comment: 'Proofread and resubmit!', 'Did you spell-check before handing in your paper?', and 'You could've asked a classmate to read your work'.

Looking at what you have written through the eyes of others will help stamp out a great deal of 'misprints' and 'silly' mistakes. Sharing what the student has created with others will also help him see if what he has written has been successful in conveying the intended meaning. The process is known as peer-editing and is a two-way street: as well as getting feedback, the student also

gives feedback. The student becomes a better writer as well as a better reader. How often do our students exchange essays with their classmates remains a mystery. In any case, the practice should be encouraged.

#### **(d) Adopt more focused scoring**

A key to successful evaluation is to get your students to understand that your grades, scores, and other comments are varied forms of feedback from which they can benefit. The final evaluation on one composition simply creates input to the learner for the next composition. The teacher in this study used a single overall score (*in red and circled* !!) at the end of each paper. In scoring students' papers, it would be much more useful for the student to have a different score for each of the evaluation categories (outlined in Table 2). That way, the student can focus on those aspects of writing to which they need to give special attention. Content should be given priority over the more traditionally valued syntax and vocabulary and the individual scores should reflect the importance given to each of the categories. For example, a score of 12/24 for *content*, 12/20 for *organization*, 08/20 for *discourse*, 14/20 for *syntax*, 07/12 for *vocabulary*, and 07/20 for *mechanics* makes an overall score of 60/100. If the teacher still needs a numerical score for pedagogical or administrative purposes, he can still assign a single grade: all he has to do is add up the six different scores.

#### **Research questions for future Studies**

Future studies may consider a number of lingering questions: How often do our students resort to peer response? What is the influence of self-correction on student revision? Does teacher commentary differ from one specialisation to another (e.g. literature versus linguistics, for example)? What is the correlation between text type (personal narrative, argumentative, etc.) and teacher commentary? What are the characteristics of feedback in spoken English classes? To what extent does teacher commentary improve students' written proficiency over time? In raising these questions, one hopes that studies like this one will help shed more light on such an important topic.

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#### ***From the editors***

***The views expressed in the newsletter are the contributors' own and not necessarily those of the editors.***

## MATE Calendar of Events : Academic Year 2007 – 2008\*

N°	Event	Date	Venue	Themes
<b>National Events</b>				
1	Inspectors Colloquium	1-2-3 Nov., 2007	Rabat	<i>Innovations in the new Moroccan textbooks and teacher supervision</i>
2	Management Seminar	12-13-14 Nov., 2007	Beni Mellal	<i>Capacity building: Towards more effective managerial and presentation skills</i>
3	Citizenship Colloquium	End of December 2007	Casablanca	<i>Themes will be announced in due course.</i>
4	Junior School Teachers Colloq. (+CPR trainees)	28-29-30 Jan., 2008	Benslimane	
5	ESP Colloquium	Feb. 2008	Casablanca	
6	Inter-University Colloq.	March 2008	Mohammadia	
7	Translation Colloquium	Late April, 2008	Rabat/ Tangier??	
8	ICT Workshop	2-3-4 May 2008	Casablanca	
<b>MATE National Conference</b>				
9	MATE National Conference	March 31- April 1-2-3, 2008	Eljadida	<i>"Assessing Quality in Language Education: Focus on Teacher competencies, Educational materials, and Learner performances"</i>
<b>Regional Events</b>				
10	Regional Events 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9.	<i>To be decided on by regional boards (the latter should coordinate among themselves to have different periods at reasonable intervals)</i>	Ouarzazate/Zagora, Beni Mellal, Marrakech, Agadir, Guelmim, Safi, Essaouira, Laarache, Tiznit	<i>Themes will be announced in due course.</i>
<b>Summer Language Camps</b>				
11	Summer Language Camps 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5	02-14 July, 2007	Casablanca, Rabat, Marrakech, Agadir, Fes.	
<b>MATE Days</b>				
12	MATE Days 1-2	<i>To be decided on in coordination with inspectors and regional boards</i>	Eljadida/ Safi	<i>Focus will be more on (but not limited to) the following topics:</i>  - Standards-based education - Competency-based education - New Moroccan textbooks - Assessment: alternative assessment, formative assessment, testing, oral assessment, etc. - Learner training & active learning - Teaching young learners - Using ICT in teaching and teacher development - Teacher development.
13	MATE Day 3		Kenitra	
14	MATE Day 4		Guelmim	
15	MATE Day 5		Beni Mellal	
16	MATE Days 6-7		Houceima/Taza	
17	MATE Days 8-9		Ouejda/Nador	
18	MATE Days 10-11		Meknes/Errachidia	
19	MATE Days 12-13-14		Fes/Taouinate/Sefrou	
20	MATE Days 15-16		Zagora/Ouarzazate	
21	MATE Days 17-18		Rabat/ENS	
22	MATE Day 19		Laarache	
23	MATE Days 20-21		Casablanca/Settat	
24	MATE Days 22-23 -24-25		Inzegane/Taroudant Agadir/Tiznit	
25	MATE Day 26		Laayoune	
26	MATE Days 27-28-29	Marrakech/ Essaouira/ Kalat Essraghna		
27	MATE Day 30	Tangier		
<b>Creation of New Local Branches</b>				
28	1. Fes/2. Kenitra/3.Casa 4. Laayoune/ 5. Ouejda	<i>To be decided on with local committees</i>	Fes, Laayoune, Kenitra, Ouejda, Casablanca	<i>This will be arranged with local committees and inspectors.</i>

\*The list is not exhaustive. Other events will be included later. Themes & speakers will be announced in due time.

\*\*Coordinator(s) and Task description for each event will be announced later.

Dépôt légal : 84/9  
CCP: 212 927 T

Dispense 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