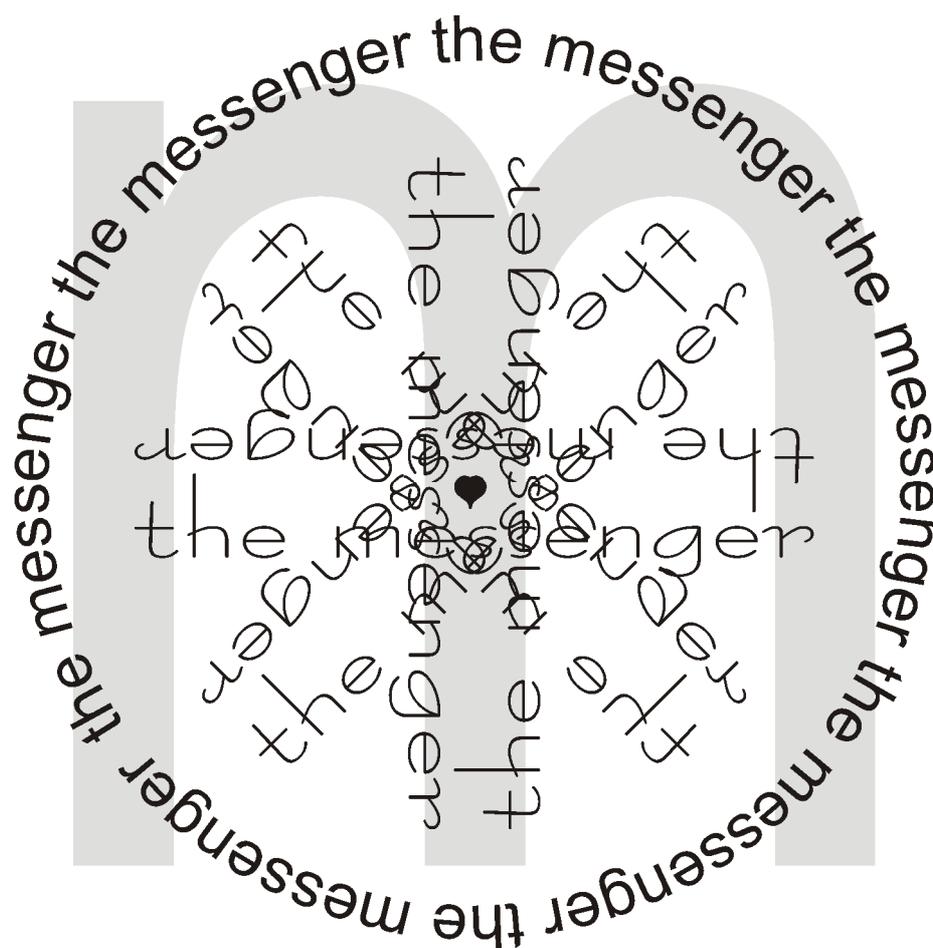




CZK 20

volume 9, number I, spring '09



editorial

Dear readers,

*I hope you will enjoy this issue, as ever.
If you feel inspired by any of our articles, or whatever else,
please feel free to contact us.*

*You might like to send us your comments or suggestions for articles,
or, indeed, the articles themselves.*

With thanks

Your editor

Gabriela Oaklandová

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Founding Editor: Jeremy Garlick

Managing Editor: Gabriela Oaklandová

Editor: Andrew Oakland

Graphics: Petr Aaron Collier, Rita Collins, Helena Havlíčková, Martin Němec, Lucie Podroužková, Jaroslav Suchý, Hana Waisserová

Contributors: Viktória Kobelová, Irena Kučerová

the messenger

volume 9

number 1

published semi-annually; *spring '09*

published by *PdF MU Department of English* address *Poříčí 7/9, Brno, 603 00, CZ*

ISSN 1214-6676

e-mail: gabriela.oaklandova@gmail.com

interview

Czech Eyes in Washington

Lucie Podroužková interviews Veronika Lukášová (35), a photographer based in Washington, D.C.

She and I became friends at university, driven together by a feeling of difference from the other, docile girls, who abhorred sports and never dared to cook without a recipe. Little did we know then that one day she'd become a photographer, but her creativity was evident in everything she did.

Today, Veronika's work has been published widely throughout the world, and she is a regular contributor to The Washington Post Magazine and The New York Times. Her work was also selected for the 2007 exhibit and book project "A Day in the Life of the Czech Republic". She has been awarded numerous honors, including awards from Women in Photography International, the Prix de la photographie Paris and the International Photography Awards; she was nominated for the World Press Photo Joop Swart Master Class.

You never studied to become a photographer. When and how did your interest in photography develop?

My fascination with capturing images started in my teens on family trips; I would kidnap the family camera (which could have been a Russian Ljubitel) and

shoot a whole roll of film of ... seagulls. Later on, when we looked at the projected slides (which was fairly popular when I was a kid - getting slides processed was much cheaper than getting prints), everyone was really bored by my photos. We had two family friends that were avid amateur photographers and as I spent lot of time with them while we went on trips, I was very curious about their equipment and admired their work. I taught myself the shutter and aperture basics on all mechanical Zenith (taking photos of my sister's sculptures) and later used a Praktika for street photography. I kept taking photos, kept looking at photography books and gradually worked on developing my skills.

When was it that you realized you might become a professional photographer?

When I started assisting and learning more about documentary photography and photography in general. That's when I guided my eye to find certain moments and became able to capture them in fleeting seconds. I had experimented with macro photography and street photography before and even had few shows (in the USA and Czech too) - but the documentary genre was really something I wanted to become very serious about. This brought me to a 7-week program at the Maine Photographic Workshops, the prestigious Eddie Adams Workshop (where the participants are only able to attend if selected based on their portfolio) and the Center for Photography workshop in Woodstock in

upstate New York and Santa Fe in New Mexico.

In what ways is it easier or more difficult to be an artist in the U.S.A.?

From the photographer's perspective, the easier part is that many well-respected editorial, news and art photography organizations, publications, venues and photographers call the United States their home. You can work with editors of word-wide publications, participate in numerous photo competitions, meet living legends, apply for a number of grants. The hard part is the ever-growing amount of competition, which can be really staggering in cities like New York, Washington DC and LA.

In your career, do you distinguish between commercial jobs and art?

Let's talk about an assignment and personal work - the first is a given situation you have to document masterfully, the second is a topic or an issue you choose for reasons that are important to you. But one cannot live without the other; the quality and topic of your personal work is what gets you noticed by a photo editor or curator, which then may result in an assignment or a commission that really suits you. This said, all work should be "personal".

How has your "eye" progressed or changed since you started your career as a photographer?

The more you make yourself see through the viewfinder, the more photographers

you study, the more books you look at, the more attention you pay to the way photos are used in the media, the more sophisticated your eye gets. Your critical thinking has to keep up as the topics you decide to lay your eye on are as important as how refined your eye gets.

The sophistication of the eye and mind has to control every part of the frame. I recently came across an apt observation by Georgia O'Keefe: "Nothing is less real than realism. Details are confusing. It is only by selection, by elimination, by emphasis, that we get at the real meaning of things."

Which projects do you consider most prestigious, or interesting, or unusual?

Since 2004, I have been focusing on the issue of aging - I have followed American seniors at the Ms. Senior America Pageant contest and at the National Senior Olympics, which are both unique enterprises for American seniors. I have been able to get a few publications interested in this project and with their backing to continue in 2009 also get the work published.

An assignment for the Atlantic Monthly magazine took me to Libya for two weeks in 2006. I was documenting the "new Libya" as economic changes helped to start up a modest market economy. I was able to meet many Libyans, visit their homes and learn about their life in a country that was (and still is to a degree) so hermetically sealed from the rest of the world. The parallels with the

Communist regime in Czech were very apparent. This was just few weeks before the country was taken off the list of terrorist countries (in the USA).

Who would you name as your chief influences and inspirations?

The playful eye of Jacques-Henri Lartigue, Henri Cartier Bresson, Andre Kertezs, Bill Owens, Lee Friedlander, Gary Winogrand, Martin Parr, Guy Bourdin, the powerful documentary work of Carl de Kayzer, Josef Koudelka, Alex Webb, Dana Kyndrová, Antonín Kratochvíl, Nan Goldin, Donna Ferrato, Larry Towell and the fascinating projects of Hiroshi Sugimoto.

How many cameras have you got? What types are they?

Three professional Canon film cameras (1-N), joined by two digital Canons (model 5D) with many Canon prime lenses. Being a fan of the panoramic format, I love shooting with the Hasselblad x-pan (which uses 35mm film). I have been experimenting with plastic cameras for a while as well - the Holga, a medium-format camera made entirely from plastic, including the lens (I used a Holga for my Occurrences series, which will be exhibited in the Bohemian Hall of the Czech Center in New York in May). I also use Lomo cameras (which use 35mm film). My newest addition is the East German-made medium-format Pentakon film camera with amazing Zeiss lenses, which I got in the Czech Republic on my last visit.

What are you working on now?

I am finishing a series about light pollution, which, in a very abstract way, speaks about how we have created our own artificial universe of fake stars and artificially-lit landscapes, while the real darkness of the night is rapidly disappearing.

More information and Veronika's work can be viewed at www.veronikalukasova.com.

linguistics pages

Obama Enters ELT

Helena Havlíčková

The new United States President Barack Obama has become very popular all over the world. Millions of people believe he is the person to heal the world and do wonders. Barack Obama's message of change is being well received by many people, and they suppose he can perform miracles. In a way he can, and in a way he has already started to do so. Thanks to his speeches and pep talks many people are less depressed and hopeful of a better future. People search in his speeches for seeds of optimism and future security. It is the new president's personality first of all, but also the way he speaks that makes him so charming. His words are said to hold a particular appeal. His English does not suffer from a lack of rhythm, and his language is not difficult to understand. His pronunciation is clear and higher pitches, which can be irritating, do not characterize the colour of his voice.

People have found hope in and taken courage from his inaugural address:

Today I say to you that the challenges we face are real. They are serious and they are many. They will not be met easily or in a short span of time. But know this, America - they will be met. On this day, we gather because we have chosen hope over fear, unity of purpose over conflict and discord. (US Capitol in Washington, D.C. Jan. 20, 2009)

Listeners hear words of encouragement and the expression of belief in improvement. Teachers and learners of English can find the typical use of "will" to express decisions and vision. They can also discover that the preposition "to" is used very frequently to express purpose, and other language phenomena besides:

For everywhere we look, there is work to be done. The state of the economy calls for action, bold and swift, and we will act - not only to create new jobs, but to lay a new foundation for growth. We will build the roads and bridges, the electric grids and digital lines that feed our commerce and bind us together. We will restore science to its rightful place, and wield technology's wonders to raise health care's quality and lower its cost. We will harness the sun and the winds and the soil to fuel our cars and run our factories. And we will transform our schools and colleges and universities to meet the demands of a new age. All this we can do. And all this we will do. (US Capitol in Washington, D.C. Jan. 20, 2009)

Obama's words of encouragement have even made pop singers express their feelings in song. Will.I.Am with his group Black Eyed Peas is a typical example. His song "Yes We Can" is inspired by one of Barack Obama's speeches. The lyrics are made up entirely of quotations from a speech delivered by Obama in New Hampshire during the 2008 campaign. The chorus echoes Obama's words in hip-hop style while Obama's voice plays in the background. Here is an example of the lyrics:

*We know the battle ahead will be long,
but always remember that no matter what
obstacles stand in our way, nothing can
stand in the way of the power of millions of
voices calling for change.*

We want change!

and:

*The hopes of the little girl who goes to a
crumbling school in Dillon are the same as
the dreams of the boy who learns on the
streets of LA; we will remember that there
is something happening in America; that we
are not as divided as our politics suggests;
that we are one people; we are one nation;
and together, we will begin the next great
chapter in America's story with three words
that will ring from coast to coast; from sea
to shining sea*

Yes. We. Can.

The chunks, phrases and sentences of encouragement from the song make English more attractive worldwide - and in ELT, too, of course.

There is sometimes a flavour of grace and politeness in Obama's sentences, and this has an effect on the audience. A good example of this is: '*On behalf of the great state of Illinois let me express my deepest gratitude for the privilege of addressing this convention.*' (the beginning of one of the speeches during the campaign). Obama is making English popular; information from Japan suggests that people consider his English something they want to learn from. A special compilation based on his speeches has gone on sale, quickly becoming a national bestseller and a fixture on bookshelves as well as newsstands. Japan is not the only place where Obama has meteoric popularity. News from Africa suggests that every businessman would be keen to issue such a compilation.

The open syllables of Obama's name are easy for many languages to accept. With their traditional humour, which does not disappear in the bad times (think of *bankster* from *banker* + *gangster* in the days of world crisis now), people mould the sounds of his name like Plasticine and create new words.

Obamania is not the only result of today's language creativity. People want to be up-to-date and new expressions,

most of them blends of slang, constantly arise. Have you heard of the *obamachine*? This was the name given to Obama's election campaign. There is even *obamassacre*, meaning presidential elections. Popular magazines turned into *obamagazines* for the period when Obama was the main topic. The *obamafia* is the White House administration. Language creativity is immense, knowing no barriers. People who believe that Obama can change the world by tomorrow are known as *obamartians*. As soon as they realize this cannot be done they can sink into *obamarasmus*. *Obamartyrdom* has fallen upon American Republicans, as they have to keep their promises from the times of the *obamachine*. There will be opportunity and time enough to create more words based on *Obama* if the *obamarathon* - Obama's re-election - comes into play and Obama continues to work his *obamagic*.

It seems that the name Obama lends itself to blending, much in the way that *brunch* came into existence thanks to *breakfast* and *lunch*. Obama blends offer a bit more, though. They allow funny overlaps where one can't tell whether the syllable "ma" belongs to the name which comes first or the word after it.

Well, teachers, "make hay while the sun shines," this popularity may not last forever. Let's exploit *obamania* while it still exists. Obama can be a useful topic

for theme-based teaching. The clear language of Obama's speeches makes them an obvious choice for teaching material. Let's use parts of his speeches, words belonging to his idiolect, words that were born thanks to Obama's existence. He and his English may prove stimulating and motivating in our lessons. We should ignore the suspicion that his speeches are probably products of the *obamachine* and his idiolect might be somebody else's typical way of communication. By the way, do you know that Barack Hussein Obama was a teacher at the beginning of his career? He taught constitutional law at the University of Chicago Law School from 1992 to 2004. And as for students, the question of whether we can be successful in our English studies can be answered in Obama's words - 'Yes we can'.

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 Barack Obama, Wikipedia, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Barack_Obama
<http://www.metrolyrics.com/yes-we-can-lyrics-will-i-am.html>

culture pages

On Women in Contemporary India

Hana Waisserová

In contemporary India, to define or describe the portrayal of the Indian Woman is not easy, since one must consider a multiplicity of female identities which differ by community, caste, ethnicity, or religion. During the three terms I spent at Delhi University I got to learn bits and pieces about what Indian womanhood means. In such an intricate web of female identities, I can't attempt to capture the complexity of South Asian womanhood, merely to perform an examination of female images.

Complex South Asian womanhood is actually characterized by its contradictions and inner paradoxes. Certainly, it is not desirable to create an archetypal definition of a woman-victim especially in fractured and often polarized society! The traditional society is conservative but paradoxically also vigo-

rous and progressive; while it is praised for being peaceful by nature there is a high level of communal involvement which leads to clashes and tensions; it has a history of conquests and democracy, a history of Islam-ruling-and-shaping-Hinduism and Hinduism-ruling-and-shaping Islam. Thereafter, why isn't Indian womanhood as proud as this boasting-greatest-democracy in the world!? Could violent traditions be easily denounced within the surviving context of strong traditions? Are women truly mostly victimized? Could this be a stereotype of Monolithic Indian Womanhood? Are western women born to monolithic Christianity, agnosticism or atheism able to relate well to South Asian womanhood and its victimizations and powers?

The Schizophrenia of an Ancient/Modern Conundrum

Womanhood must be considered from within the context of India's diversity. Even though it coexists with Islam, Jainism, Parsee, Buddhism, Christianity and Judaism, India's major religion is Hinduism. Its traditional caste-hierarchy affects everyday life. The Hindu women of India are born into castes often bound to the practising of their ancient caste beliefs and the respecting of the communal, institutionalized practices of women of the *Brahmins*, *Kshatriyas*,

Vaishyas, Sudras or Dalits. In one of her articles Arundhati Roy claims that India lives in several centuries all together; this means it lives in the past and present at once - it means India is timeless! And I tend to agree with this activist and writer when she explains: *I don't mean to put a simplistic value judgement on this peculiar form of progress by suggesting that Modern is good and Traditional is bad or vice versa.* Roy continues her impassioned explanation by mentioning how hard it is to grasp the *schizophrenic nature* of such a complex and intricate society and culture which poses an *ancient/modern conundrum* and disparities of this magnitude. *India, she tells us, lives in several centuries at the same time, and manages to progress and regress simultaneously.*

Roy's words are backed up by contemporary Indian magazines, which repeatedly claim that the ideal woman should live in accordance with the ancient *Laws of Manu*! These can't be the clues to modern Indian womanhood, or are they?! The *Laws of Manu* - this can't be a text which respects feminist ideas as reflected in recent Laws, over which particular groups have fought numerous and lengthy struggles! If not a clue, however, it may be a stepping stone to an understanding of varieties of South Asian womanhood. The *Laws of Manu* offer the ideal picture of do-

mestic, social, and religious life in India under the ancient Brahman influence. This codex is still widely respected. But despite its indisputable moral and other values we can read that a proper and virtuous wife should serve her husband and respect him as a God, even if he expresses his desires towards her freely, mistreats and abuses her, or has no positive qualities. Clearly, the institution of marriage as depicted by the codex may raise a modern person's doubts. In the *Laws of Manu* the dignity of a man is confirmed by the self-sacrifice, self-devotion and obedience of his wife. So women were to be held in strict subjection to the end of their lives. It seems to be guidance dictating women's duties of conscience and an obedience to traditional customs; in imposing numerous restrictions on women it might appear rather superstitious and absurd. Yet these social norms of the *Laws of Manu* continue to exemplify the highest moral Hindu code today.

(end of part one)

methodology pages

Examining Values in a Teacher Training Program: A Query

Rita Collins

Introduction

The word “query” is used by Quakers to refer to a question used for reflection. Often when a query is given to a group in a Quaker meeting, one does not expect an easy answer. Rather it is the first step in reflecting and discussing the question. Usually the ideas and additional questions that arise out of one query will be pondered over a period of time. The starting point for this article came out of a query given to the teachers in the Department of English Language and Literature in the Faculty of Education. They were asked to identify the values they have in the classroom. And, as is true with most queries, it required serious thought, raised more questions and indicated a need to go further into the subject. Identifying one’s values is never easy. Identifying how those values are manifested in a profession is even trickier as there are potentially conflicting values of colleagues and the

institution to contend with; hopefully a balance can be found. And as teachers, it is critical to understand how the values we take into our classrooms impact on learners. Thus although this article does not offer any easy, ready-made methods to apply immediately in a classroom, it will hopefully encourage teachers and potential teachers to consider their values when planning lessons or facing a room full of students.

The Impact of Values in Teaching

Everyone has values that affect the choices they make and the perception of events in their lives. If asked what our values are, we are usually able to express those that are most important to us. Yet often we do not take the time to identify what values influence our daily actions, cause our reactions to problems or guide us in making decisions. As teachers, it is especially important to be aware of personal and professional values as these are reflected in our teaching. In an interview with Amitai Etzioni, Berreth & Scherer (1993) pointed out

there is no way of teaching subjects without teaching values. So let's be upfront about that and have explicit curriculum. If we don't, we are going to teach values only in hidden and almost devious ways. Let's have discussions about the values we want to transmit.

Whether a teacher, a student who is in the process of becoming a teacher, or a parent who will send a child to school, it is necessary to think about those values found in educational institutions and in classroom instruction. What values are reflected in the way curricula are designed, in how classes are taught, in how learners are treated and in how progress is measured? Which textbooks are chosen, which authors are assigned in literature courses and how are behavioral problems handled? These are just a few examples of how values affect education. Especially as teachers, it is vital that we know what our values are and the impact of these values on those we are teaching. As Prevedel (2003) explained,

everyone who chooses or creates curriculum needs to develop a personal philosophy of teaching and learning, examine the values and beliefs behind that philosophy, and design or select a curriculum that reflects those beliefs and values. In doing so, they must also recognize that they exercise a lot of power: their choices will convey to students a particular worldview.

Perhaps as a teacher, you feel that you have no choice about the particular textbook you are required to use in a course or the curriculum you are given. Still your values are manifested in how you set up your classroom, how you respond to students' questions, and what supplementary materials are used (or

not used). You may consider fairness to all your students as an important value. Yet are you able to describe what fairness looks like in your classroom? Is it treating all students the same or is it differentiating lessons and materials to meet individual learner's needs? (Lake & Pappamihiel, 2003).

Yero (2002) gives an example of how even when someone has attempted to identify his or her professional values, there still may be conflicts. In Yero's example Sheila, a teacher,

says she values higher-level thinking skills. Yet her tests rarely require students to do anything more than simple recall or recognition - skills that machine-graded multiple-choice questions can easily test. This doesn't mean that Sheila is lying. She simply has another value of which she is unaware - perhaps time to spend with her family. Taking the time to grade essay tests that assess higher-level thinking would cut into her family time.

Thus it is clear that as teachers whether in a primary school or at university, we need to be aware of our values and how these impact on our learners. A teacher's values significantly influence what is taught, how it is taught and the teacher's relationship with students and colleagues. If we begin by acknowledging this, then what is the next step for those individuals involved in a teacher-training program?

Developing Awareness of Values

As the students in a teacher-training program complete their coursework and do practice teaching in preparation for entering the field, it is essential that they identify what values they bring to the profession and how these values will be reflected in their work.

Lim, Ieridou and Goodwin (2006) did a study with pre-service teachers to identify what values these students had concerning the profession. Students were asked to write their autobiographies focusing on what brought them to the idea of teaching as a career. Analysis of these writings indicated that most of the pre-teachers had very idealistic views and unrealistic values concerning teaching, which would not necessarily be applicable in the classrooms where they would eventually work. The authors described these as “rosy images ... very much disconnected from the sociopolitical realities within which many schools operate.” They therefore urged that student

teachers need to grow in learning communities, so as to develop a vision for their practice, deepen their understanding, develop dispositions about ‘teaching children and the role of the teacher’ as well as develop tools and practices.

These findings from Lim, Ieridou and Goodwin suggest that in teacher-training programs, students and teachers need to find ample opportunities to explore what

values and dispositions are applicable in real classrooms and discuss what these values mean for them as individuals and for the learning community.

In another research study Zanting, Verloop and Vermunt (2001) examined methods for how students and mentor teachers’ beliefs and values could be made explicit while the students were completing their study program and practice teaching. The authors began from the premise that often students in these programs have not identified and reflected on their own beliefs and values concerning teaching. Usually while completing practice teaching, they have contact with experienced teachers who serve as mentors. The mentors should provide practical knowledge defined by Zanting, Verloop and Vermunt as “an amalgam of all teachers’ cognitions, such as declarative and procedural knowledge, beliefs, and values, which influence their pre-active, interactive and post-active teaching activities.” If only observing these mentors, the students may not recognize the “mentor’s knowledge, beliefs and reasons that may clarify their actions and decisions.” Therefore it is imperative for teacher-trainers and mentor teachers to be explicit about why they do what they do when planning and teaching.

From these research studies and others it is clear that in a teacher-training program, it is necessary for teachers and students to discuss values. This allows students to see what values

guide their teachers when selecting materials, teaching lessons and in learner assessment. Teacher-trainers also need to be aware of what values they are modeling in their classes. As in Yero's (2002) example, if a teacher talks about the necessity of helping learners use higher-level thinking skills and then only offers multiple choice tests, the message is that this type of assessment is acceptable and thus learners only really need to acquire this level of understanding in the subject matter. It is necessary, though, to consider the larger context as most teachers are not working in isolation. While the teacher in Yero's example would prefer to use essay tests, the course load or school requirements may require her to use multiple-choice assessment. This causes a conflict of values between the teacher and the school which would need to be resolved.

Applying Values at the Department Level

Another significant aspect of the initial query that began this article is the English department's own mission statement. This document states that

the Department of English Language and Literature at the Faculty of Education aims to provide high quality, liberal education for future teachers of English in an inspiring, challenging, and productive environment. Emphasis is equally placed on: the development of professional

competencies and appropriate subject and pedagogical content knowledge; the ability to apply them in diverse settings; and the adoption of values essential in forming an active, responsible, and independent member of the community.

Although it is certainly outside of the scope of this paper to explain how department members understand the "values essential in forming an active, responsible and independent member of the community," it must be hoped that each department member does consider these ideas when designing courses, selecting materials and facilitating a class. But, as mentioned above, are the thinking and considerations that the teacher-trainers use in this process explicit to the students who are studying in the department? Or are their values hidden in such a way that students are not able to see the reasoning behind curricular choices and teaching methods?

The query to the teachers in our department asked them to identify what values they bring to the classroom. This initial query has led to discussions and follow-up activities by the teachers which gives those involved opportunities to examine their own values and how these values are modeled in their own teaching and, if they support the department's mission. Just as for student teachers, it is vital for all of us working in the education profession to remember that

excellent teachers do not emerge full blown at graduation; nor are they just "born teachers." Instead, teachers are always in the process of "becoming." Given the dynamics of their work, they need to continually rediscover who they are and what they stand for through dialogue and collaboration with peers, through ongoing and consistent study, and through deep reflection about their craft. (Neito, 2003)

As this article began with a query and thus did not promise to give ready-made classroom activities, it concludes with additional questions for teachers and those learners who are preparing to be teachers. Will we take the time necessary to identify our values and think about how they are reflected in our teaching? As a department (or school), can we examine those values stated in the mission statement to see if these are reflected in classes and by staff? Answering "yes" to both questions may assist us in the "process of becoming".

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**Playing with
Rhyming words**

Teacher and student in class

Teacher: You are going to sit a test.

Student: We can have a rest!

Teacher: No, take a paper!

Student: OK, see you later.

Teacher: No! You need to write a revision!

Student: Nice, we can watch television!

Teacher: Oh, you make me crazy!

Student: We are just very lazy.

Jana Svobodová and Marcela Létalová

A: Excuse me, but you're standing on my foot.

B: Sorry I have no food for you.

A: Would you be so kind and step aside?

B: What do you want to find? Have you lost something?

A: No, I don't have enough space.

B: You don't like my face?

A: You've kicked my dog.

B: You're right. The fog is terrible.

A: And now you're standing on my shoelace.

B: You've got something against my race?

A: And now you've made my sweater dirty.

B: Look, strange person. I'm not going to send you a letter. So goodbye.

Marie Trojanová and Libor Bílek

translation pages

Youth in Revolt: The Journals of Nick Twisp by C.D. Payne (first published in 1995)

In the Translation seminar students deal with many different texts, but diaries of any kind are usually a very popular part of a difficult job. So far the students have translated Bridget Jones and her famous comments on the London life of the nineties and we have dealt with Adrian Mole and his difficulties in the Britain of the seventies and eighties; now we have got to the life of Nick Twisp and his troubles in the USA of the nineties.

Nicholas "Nick" Twisp is a teenager of above-average intelligence who is naturally obsessed with girls and sex but has had little experience of either.

The plot develops in a series of unbelievable events. A short description of Nick's character is enough to show us that we must deal with a distinctive style, colloquial language and many difficulties related to US culture and traditions, plus Nick's peculiarities.

So far we have published Czech translations only, but now we will have a look at a different approach, that of Slovak student Viki Kobelova, who brings to her work quite a new style and several new meanings. Have you ever heard the word "nabaláchat". I hadn't!

Enjoy Payne's original and Viki's great translation.
(edited by MaN, Brno, April 2009)

Thursday, July 19

My mother just left for work. She gives people driver's tests at the Department of Motor Vehicles. As you might expect, she is extremely well informed on all the arcane rules of the road (like who has to back up when two cars meet on a one-lane mountain road). She used to keep Dad up to date as he drove along on all the motor statutes he was violating. That's one of the reasons they got divorced.

Štvrtok, 19. júl

Matka práve odišla do práce. Na dopravnom zadáva ľuďom testy na vodičák. Je jasné, že potom má všetky tie záhadné cestné pravidlá v malíčku (ako napríklad, že kto musí cúvať keď sa stretnú dve autá na úzkej horskej cestičke). Tatka tiež zvykla buzerovať za každý priestupok, ktorého sa dopustil. Jeden z mnohých dôvodov ich rozvodu.

I'm not speaking to her right now. Last Monday I came back from two miserable days in my dad's custody to find she had painted my bedroom a ghastly pink. She said she had read this color was widely used in hospitals to calm mental patients. I told her I wasn't mentally ill, I was just a teenager. Meanwhile, I am now embarrassed to invite my friends over. When you're a slight, unathletic teen who reads a lot and likes Frank Sinatra, you really don't want the word to get around that you wank your winkie in a room that looks like Dolly Parton's boudoir.

Friday, July 20

I got a headache from reading, so I thought I'd try typing for a while. I'm still using the F3 (help) key a lot. Too bad life doesn't have an F3 key. I'd press it and tell them to send over two chicks—sixteen years old and more than usually horny.

This summer I'm reading Charles Dickens. I've read *David Copperfield*, *Great Expectations*, *Little Dorrit*, and now I'm deep into *A Tale of Two Townies*. Sydney Canon is so cool. If he were alive today I believe he would be endorsing fine scotch on the backs of magazines. I like Chuck a lot, but let's face it, you could read him for years and never come to a dirty part.

Momentálne sa s ňou nebavím. Keď som sa totiž minulý pondelok vrátil domov, po dvoch mizerných dňoch strávených pod väzenským dozorom vlastného otca, zistil som, že matka mi natrela izbu brutálne ružovou farbou. Niekde sa dočítala, že ju používajú v nemocniciach, lebo ukludňuje "momentálne" zaostalých. Tak som ju vyviedol z omylu, že to ja teda nie som, že som len normálny puberták. No a samozrejme sa teraz hanbím pozvať si kamošov. Keď je niekto prťavý puboš a športové nemešlo, čo navyše veľa číta a počúva Franka Sinatru, tak fakt určite netúži po tom, aby kolovali reči, že si honí vtáka v izbe, ktorá vyzerá ako pelech nejakej porno hviezdy.

Piatok, 20. júl

Z čítania mi začalo treštiť v hlave a tak som presedlal na písanie. Ešte furt akosi často používam klávesu pomocníka. Strašná škoda, že aj život takú nemá. Len by som ju stlačil a požiadal by som o dve nadmieru nadržané rajcovné šestnástky.

Toto leto čítam Charlesa Dickensa. Už mám za sebou *Dávída Kopríka*, *Veľké plávajúce*, *Malú Korýtku* a teraz sa sústreďujem na *Príbeh dvoch mešťákov*. Sydney Kanón je úplne kúlový. Keby dneska žil, isto by bol v každučkom časáku v reklame na pravú škótsku whisky. Mám Dikiho strašne rád, no ale povedzme si úprimne, jeden by ho mohol čítať celé roky a neobjavil by žiadne prasačky.

I am boning up (you'll pardon the expression) on Dickens in anticipation of taking Miss Satron's English Literature class next term. I'm going to be in the ninth grade at St. Vitus Academy. This, they tell the parents, is the most elite and rigorous prep school in the entire East Bay. Only 40 scholarly wankers are admitted each year from literally dozens of applications.

Ravishing Miss Satron has wonderful bone structure and wears tight sweaters. She is also said to be extremely well read. Needless to say, she looms like a titan in my masturbatory fantasies.

I am back to talking to my mother (my birthday is coming up soon). She says she will buy new paint for my bedroom, but I have to apply it myself. (Personally. I'd prefer a tasteful decoupage of *Hustler* outtakes.) She's suggesting off-white this time, but I'm insisting on manly khaki.

Práve otročím (pardon za výraz) pri Dickensovi a neviem sa už dočkať školy, hodín anglickej literatúry so slečnou Satronovou. Budem už v devine na Akadémii svätého Víta. Rodičom nabaláchali, že je to tá najprestížnejšia škola s najlepšou prípravou na štúdium na výške, kam len oko dovidí. Z haldy prihlášok vyberú každý rok len 40 onanistických nadšencov.

Božská slečna Satronová je prenádherné stavaná a nosí obtiahnuté svetričky. Tiež sa o nej hovorí, že je neskutočne sčítaná. Snád' už ani netreba prízvukovať že v mojich masturbačných predstavách figuruje ako bohyňa.

Zas sa bavím s matkou (bližia sa moje narodky). Povedala síce, že mi do izby kúpi novú farbu, no nalíčiť si ju budem musieť sám. (Osobne by som dal skôr prednosť vkusnej zbierke plagátov z nejakého plejboja.) Tentokrát sa mi snaží vsugerovať nejakú šedivú, no ja si budem trvať už len a len na chlapskej kaki.

(Translated by Viktória Kobelová, November 2008)

travel pages

My Study Stay in Texas

Irena Kučerová

Thanks to the Department of English at the Faculty of Education, I was able to spend four months in a part of the United States as exotic for Europeans as Texas. I studied at McLennan Community College ('MCC') in Waco from August till December 2008. The city is as large as Brno, but has a population three times smaller.

During my stay, some of my Czech friends asked me if the Southerners just rode a horse and worked on farms. Well, this is a picture of Texas some Czech people have. To tell you the truth, I did not know much about Texas before except a few general ideas, and I was surprised how friendly and easy-going Texans were.

The admission process was a big rush. I was chosen at the end of May and all the paperwork had to be done by the end of June. It was a bit hectic. Due to the great patience shown by my admission assistant at MCC we finally managed. At the end of August, I left my family and friends in the Czech Republic and set off for Texas.

I had my own coordinator at MCC who organized everything, so it was very easy to adjust there. Since there was no other

international student on the same program as me, I had a whole two-bedroom house to myself, which was a big surprise for me. I did not expect it at all! Honestly, this was the biggest challenge for me; not getting used to living in the U.S., but living on my own. Especially at the beginning, I felt quite lonely, but things picked up after a while as I started meeting new people.

MCC offers a great number of programs and subjects. Actually, I could not come up with a program MCC does not offer. There are Medicine, Neurology, Physics, Psychiatrics, Mathematics, Sociology, Theatre, Music etc. MCC is most famous for its Nursing Program. It is a junior college, which means that students usually go there after graduating from their high schools. Having passed all exams, students receive an associate degree, usually after two years of study. As a Bachelor's course lasts four years in the U.S., students have to go to a senior college (university) after MCC for another two years to get a Bachelor's degree.

I chose three subjects from the Interpreter Training Program, because I am very interested in Deaf Studies. (Besides English, I study Special Education.) The subjects were Introduction to the Deaf Community, Introduction to the Interpreting Profession, and American Sign Language 1. They were taught Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays mornings. Also, I decided to study Freshman Composition, which was a subject about writing in English, and

Social Dance to learn more about the local culture through dancing. These subjects were taught Tuesdays and Thursdays mornings.

I was given a job at MCC to support myself. I worked in the Alternative Teacher Certification Department, which deals with people who want to become teachers. The department offers a two-year program for people with a Bachelor's degree. I did administrative work such as working on a PC, filing, delivering etc. I worked every day from 2 pm to 5 pm. I had great colleagues; they were so much fun! One of them, a middle-aged African American, became a close friend of mine. She and her husband showed me around Waco and Texas a lot.

I was involved with the Presidential Scholars' Club, since I got a Presidential Scholarship from MCC. This includes monthly meetings with the President of the college Dr. Dennis Michaelis, a semester trip (we went to Dallas Museum of Art to see the exhibition Tutankhamun and the Golden Age of the Pharaohs, which was recently held in Brno), and at least three volunteer activities. I love how volunteering is common in the U.S. People are used to being involved with their community; they are helpful and useful. I helped in the MCC theatre, at a concert, at a rodeo fair and with some other events organized by MCC.

There is also an International Students' Club ('ISC') at MCC. There were usually meetings every month, plus some parties and other events. I especially liked the event when some members of

ISC spoke about their native countries. It was very interesting to hear about countries including China, Rwanda, Cameroon, Zambia and Iraq. It was also a pleasure for me to prepare a presentation about the Czech Republic! Americans generally do not know where this country is. No wonder Texans don't have a clue: the Czech Republic is about eight times smaller than Texas! When people asked me where I came from and I said the Czech Republic, they usually said 'cool' without any idea. When I added 'Europe', they seemed to know more. □

I liked my classes a lot. They were practical, the instructors were great professionals, and I met some nice people who became my friends. Also, for my Interpreter Training classes, we were supposed to attend some deaf events. We went with my classmates to a Beach Party, Deaf Day where we played mini-golf, a homecoming of the Texas School for the Deaf in Austin, and a Deaf Rodeo. It was my first rodeo ever and I enjoyed it very much. The disciplines changed quickly, the atmosphere was nice, and it was interpreted, so I could see our instructors in action. But when I saw it for the second time, I found some disciplines a bit cruel to the animals.

During my stay, I went for a five-day trip outside of Texas. I flew to New Jersey to visit the lovely British family I was au pair for last summer in Great Britain. They are living in the U.S. for two or three years. It was nice to see them again. However, I had a hard time with the British accent as I was used to

listening to American English. We went for a trip to the Atlantic coast together, and I spent the few days after that in Manhattan. I enjoyed the Statue of Liberty and the views from the Empire State Building and the Rockefeller Center. However, I was exhausted by the Big Apple. I found it unfriendly and hectic. The only peaceful place was Central Park, where I took a lot of time to recover.

Well, and what about American food? To be honest, after the shock of my first real American burger in a restaurant, which had the thickest piece of meat I had ever seen, I got used to it. I went out to eat quite often; it was a social event for me. Texans like eating out. My favorite restaurant became Cheddar's, with its awesome mushroom burger. Burgers in restaurants differ from fast food ones, which I do not like. There are also a lot of Mexican restaurants in Waco. Being close to Mexico, there is a cultural influence and huge Hispanic minority in Texas. What I found interesting was that Americans call 'soda' all sweet drinks with bubbles. At first, it was a matter of common misunderstanding for me. Also, people drink water or a non-sugary drink quite rarely. And they eat chips as a side dish and as a snack very often. As a result of this, I saw some people who were really huge, which is not as common in the Czech Republic. I gained a bit of weight, but it came off on its own after I exchanged my American eating habits for Czech ones.

I was very interested in visiting Texan cities. I love Dallas for its skyscrapers; they are so different from the pictures when you see them with your own eyes. Fort Worth is great for a cultural person; there is a museum district where you can choose according to your taste. We chose the Impressionists and it was a perfect choice. Austin, the capital of Texas, is an administrative city with its beautiful Capitol, but also a great party place with its 6th Street, which is most crowded at night. I love clubbing in the U.S. You can go to some clubs at the age of 18, but most clubs let you in only from the age of 21. Also, the clubs on 6th Street are free, so you can move from one to another as often as you want. I found clubbing in the U.S. better, as clubbers are older than in the Czech Republic.

Before my departure home, I went for a one-week trip to San Antonio, Houston, and the famous New Orleans in Louisiana - the city with an extraordinary jazz atmosphere. It was really difficult for me to return home. I left quite a bunch of nice people behind I'd had the chance to get to know. I met one of my best girlfriends there. I arrived home on the evening of Christmas Eve. Another part of my life finished. I am curious what other experiences life will bring.

technology pages

Characteristics of Good

Distance Teaching

Aaron Collier

Distance education is necessarily different from face-to-face education, and a good distance instructor must know the differences and be able to help learners navigate through new forms of learning. Recognizing what the differences are and how they affect student engagement is key to developing good distance teaching methods.

Penn State University's Faculty Development Course (2005) told distance instructors that "distance education will require more from you as a mediator of instructional interactions - in your pedagogical, social, managerial, and technical capacities - to compensate for the practical limitations of being physically absent from your students" (para. 4). It is important to recognize that students

have certain expectations about the way to learn and, while it might not be necessary to focus on the ideas being "limitations", it is important to recognize the differences.

The first difference that most people notice is that distance education always relies on at least one technology (Moore and Kearsley, 2005, p. 3). However, Berge (1995) stated that "the use of technology is secondary to well-designed learning goals and objectives" (Introduction section, para. 1). While many people focus on the technology as the primary thing about distance education, it is more important to focus on the way the instruction is delivered.

One of the primary ways to measure effective instruction is to measure the engagement of learners. Kuh (2003) stated about education in general (not just distance education) that "to assess the quality of undergraduate education at an institution, we need good information about student engagement" (p. 25). If students are engaged in the process, they are more likely to be learning. Palloff and Pratt claimed that in distance education "there is greater possibility for a sense of loss among learners - loss of contact, loss of connection, and a resultant sense of

isolation" (2007: 31). Due to the physical distance between instructors and learners, it is more difficult to ensure student engagement: students are more likely to feel that the learning is separate from themselves.

The difficulties surrounding the possibility of isolation make the need to counteract it one of the primary goals of the distance educator; an effective way of doing so is by highlighting the student's social presence. Tu (2002) stated that "social presence is a significant factor in improving instructional effectiveness. Therefore, it is one of the most significant factors in distance education" (Literature Review section, para. 1). Gunawardena (2004) found that social presence "was able to predict about 60% of learning satisfaction in learning experiences" (para. 5). If a learner feels that they can be present in a class, if they are able to "portray [themselves] as a 'real' person" (Palloff and Pratt, 2007), then they will feel engaged in the class.

A common connection to the idea of social presence is the building of community among the participants in a distance education course. Moore (2005) noted that "the better the sense of community, the better the quality is likely to be of the knowledge that is generated and the higher the quality of

the learning experience for each of [the participants]" (p. 69). If students are able to know who they are dealing with in a course, they will feel that their presence is acknowledged. Of course, this is not possible in all distance education courses (e.g., a correspondence course with only interaction between instructor and student), but it can be greatly beneficial where possible. Additionally, even course materials that do not involve direct interaction, e.g. a study guide, can be optimized to include a social presence of an instructor, providing "a named and knowable human face, which humanizes the experience from the student's point of view" (Moore and Kearsley, 2005, p. 111).

In addition to facing the challenges of humanizing the potentially isolating world of distance education, instructors must also be aware of the way that communication can be different in distance environments. Berge states there is more discussion among students in this form of education and that "online instructors need to be aware that this can make some students and faculty profoundly uncomfortable and take positive steps to build both confidence and communicative competence in online

instruction" (Summary section, para. 2). Students used to more traditional methods, such as lectures, may find collaborative activities intimidating. Palloff and Pratt (2007) pointed out that we must be more accepting of language use issues (such as grammar and spelling) in distance education settings where the focus is on communication of ideas (p. 215). Similarly, Moore and Kearsley (2005) pointed out that in teleconferencing, instructors must be aware of how to respond on-camera (p.146). We must adapt our way of communicating to the media that we are using.

Although there are, of course, other challenges and differences to be aware of, if a distance educator is able to foster a sense of shared purpose while adapting communications appropriately, the chances of successful learning are roughly equal to those in in-person educational settings.

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poetry pages

Jaroslav Suchý

Fridge Poem

Open, reach your mistress
Grab softly, enjoy her kiss

Squeeze her neck soft
Press her mouth against your lips
Sip her till feeling aloft
Sense her drive drips

Only she, and no other, will never forsake
Only she and no other will always be there
Only she, waiting patiently till you take
Her, only she, and no other, will always care

Taste her, give in, marvel in her fire burn
Allow her cool to enter in and yearn

When she feels empty
Make sure you fill her up
Irresistible and tempting
Delicious, taste her drop by drop

She's the only faithful
Casual, pretty, trendy
Enjoy her just mouthful
Your dear mistress Brendie

Prologue

When I'm down
I sink lower
Lonely clown
A fading flower
Painful frown
And losing power
When I'm down there's no way out
When I'm down there's no entrance
When I'm down I've got my sentence
When I'm down I hear a cloud:
Deny yourself
Take up your cross
And follow me
At 6.50am, 10 or 12
Sure or at a loss
Use your eyes to see

Losers Song De Profundis Epitaph

When the kitchen knife cuts deep
The floor touches the vase
Inside you one more misery
See, it's one of those days
Your world's falling off your palms
Restlessness in you dwells
Even don't feel like party, no,
You wanted something else

You just
Wake up from a nightmare and feel alone
When seeing the mirrored face's just yours
Your right hand seems left and you do give in
An empty day without a pause

Feeling two empty pockets
Tickets'd been left at home
Coming back for them your key breaks
See, it's one of those days

You just
Wake up from a nightmare and feel alone
When seeing the mirrored face's just yours
Your right hand seems left and you do give in
An empty day without a pause

Epilogue

Beautiful spring day dawning
Sunrise, the forest, church towers
Pretty young girl on this sunny morning
Picking a bunch of flowers

Follow her up to the village's outskirts
Sunrise over the hills and the meadow
Follow her gentle steps causing the dirt's
Swirled by this gorgeous young widow

See her lay flowers on this gravestone
Whisper prayers and the amen
Above her birds sing early spring tone
The sign says: "Here lies a man."

Who didn't dare
Take up his cross
And follow Him"

Beware
Just because
This could be anyone's theme.

the messenger

volume 9

number 1

published semi-annually; *spring '09*

deadline for submission for the next issue: *30th September*

published by *PdF MU Department of English* address *Poříčí 719, Brno, 603 00, CZ*

managing editor *Gabriela Oaklandová*, tel *5 4949 5029*

e-mail: gabriela.oaklandova@gmail.com

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ISSN *1214-6676*

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