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all write news

SHAKESPEARE IN JAIL—PART II

by Martina Jackson

In the September issue of this newsletter, Martina Jackson began her description of the literature course she has been teaching to women at the Suffolk County House of Correction for the past eight years, emphasizing in particular the way she uses videos as a means of introducing students to Shakespeare's plays, such as Romeo and Juliet. In this, the conclusion to her article, she discusses the other plays that her students watch and read, discuss and write about in her course. -Ed.]



Othello

We show the 1995 film version of *Othello*, starring Laurence Fishburne as the Moor. Most students know Laurence Fishburne from his many box office successes and are quite receptive to his performance (which is superb). Kenneth Branagh is suitably sociopathic as the wily, evil Iago, and Irene Jacobs is appealing as the innocent, naive Desdemona. *Othello* has special meaning to this audience because a majority of the women have either been witnesses to spousal abuse or have been its victims. Interestingly, students often express anger with Desdemona for her willingness to suffer Othello's growing hostility.

We set the scene, explaining that, as with Juliet, it was unthinkable for a daughter of a prominent Venetian household to elope with anyone, particularly a former Moorish slave. We reiterate that women were property, first belonging to their fathers, then to their husbands. Sheltered Desdemona is enchanted by Othello's exotic life since her own is so proscribed by her social position and degree of protection. It is hardly surprising that she falls under his spell or that he succumbs to her beauty, gentleness and kindness. His harsh life as a slave as well as his success as a general ignites her compassion and imagination. *Othello* has broken some of the constricting social bonds. In eloping, Desdemona attempts to free herself. Here, as in *Romeo and Juliet*, Othello and Desdemona fall in love with idealized versions of themselves;

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DESIGNING A NEW CURRICULUM

by Sherry Spaulding

The International Institute of Boston is celebrating its 75th birthday. Through the years it has offered a variety of educational programs to refugees and immigrants, along with the opportunity for many talented teachers to develop well-planned, well-written curricula. However, as changes occur in student population, teaching philosophies and methodologies, learners' needs, and our language and culture, so is it necessary for our curricula to continue to evolve, as well.

Currently, IIB offers an intensive day program for refugees and dislocated workers, a hotel industry training program for Boston residents, a citizenship program, structured job search and learn-to-earn programs for welfare recipients, and evening ABE and ESOL programs. DOE funds these two evening programs, which include three ESOL and four ABE classes for immigrants and refugees. Classes are offered two evenings a week with an optional third evening for learning computer skills and for computer-assisted language learning (CALL). Last year, through DOE funding for Curriculum Frameworks, the ABE teachers developed a literacy curriculum for the ABE program. This year, IIB requested DOE funding to develop a curriculum for the ESOL program. The proposal we submitted to DOE outlined three

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with others at your program.
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material for the next issue is:
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they really don't know one another well when they elope.

Iago's jealousy and disappointment serve as an excellent weapon against Othello's feelings of vulnerability and inadequacy as a former slave in a white world. Othello falls easy prey to Iago's insinuations about Desdemona and Michael Cassio because he has had no experience of women and he has very little self-esteem. Since my students are often victims and perpetrators of malicious rumors and gossip, they readily understand Iago's motivation and Othello's vulnerability. At the same time, in class after class, I am fascinated by the resentment—sometimes even anger—that my students have for Desdemona's apparent acquiescence in her own death.



Taming of the Shrew

Taming of the Shrew is a comic look at spousal abuse. We read it after *Othello* to demonstrate that in Tudor times marital discord could be the subject of tragedy or comedy. An angry, dissatisfied scolding wife was an object of derision. The womanly ideal was meek, beautiful, and decorative. Women, even wealthy and well-bred, had few outlets for their talents.

Katherine and Bianca live in Padua with their elderly, wealthy, widowed father, Baptista. Although the younger daughter, Bianca, has many suitors, her father insists that Katherine, the older of the two, must marry first. Regretably, Katherine, who is extremely intelligent and does not suffer fools or anyone else lightly, berates, humiliates, and abuses those around her. Few have the courage to tackle her as a marriage prospect. Bianca, who seems demure and compliant, is actually flirtatious and manipulative, delighting in her popularity. The comparison between the two sisters usually elicits commentary about students' families in which one sibling dominated the home. Bianca's suitors proffer Petruchio, a "gentleman" whose profligacy has left him financially embarrassed and who has come to Padua to seek a rich bride. Baptista is only too willing to pay handsomely to have Katherine off his hands, but he insists that Petruchio win her fancy. (Students are reminded that Lord Capulet was also prepared to pay a large dowry for Count Paris.) Petruchio and Katherine joust verbally and physically, and their meeting in Act II, scene 1, is a good opportunity for students to try their comic skills. Although Shakespeare's verbal surgical strikes challenge them, students enjoy the fun of the words and they throw themselves into the lead roles. *Taming of the Shrew* is typical of the farce genre, with mistaken identities galore. In the end, all is resolved happily.

In class discussion following *Othello* and *Taming of the Shrew*, I ask students to discuss and write about the types of men they prefer. Generally, although many of our students have been in abusive relationships, they prefer men who "challenge" them. They tend to ridicule men who are kind

to them. Through discussion and writing, we explore their low self-esteem. Because abuse is familiar to many, it seems acceptable. Moreover, some women feel that their ability to withstand abuse gives them a sense of control. Following essays and discussions about the kind of men students look for, we address their concerns about the kind of men their daughters will choose. Interestingly, whomever they choose for themselves, my students want their daughters to find kind, considerate, non-abusive men.

The film *War of the Roses* is a comic derivative of *Taming of the Shrew*. (The English War of the Roses takes its name from the bitter fifteenth-century struggle between the noble houses of York and Lancaster for the British throne. The Yorkist emblem contained a white rose, whereas the house of Lancaster was represented by a red rose.) Although its "heroine," Barbara, is not tricked into her marriage to Oliver Rose, she gradually becomes disenchanted and realizes that, as has been the case since time-out-of-mind, he sees her as one of his priceless possessions; she is like one of his precious Staffordshire figurines. While Oliver has been a rising, arrogant star in a high-powered Washington law firm, Barbara has been his handmaiden, raising their twins, negotiating for and decorating the magnificent home that Oliver requires, and becoming his hostess. He is an upwardly mobile, materialistic, image-conscious boor with utter disdain for any of Barbara's independent longings for a career and income. Their lives become increasingly competitive and hostile. Oliver's determination to keep Barbara and his house—at all costs—leads to wild scenes of physical and verbal confrontation not unlike the feistiest scenes of Katherine and Petruchio.

War of the Roses prompts discussion about the range of relationships between the sexes as an ideal and in reality. In *War of the Roses*, neither Barbara nor Oliver surrenders or adjusts their tactics. Hostilities escalate until the horrific climax. Although *War of the Roses* is a comedy, both Oliver and Barbara die. The unexpected ending is a conceit permissible in today's artistic climate, but would not have been tolerated in Shakespeare's day. The Roses' war is as funny to us as Katherine's and Petruchio's was to a Shakespearean audience—although the comedy is admittedly many shades darker today. Just as divorce was not legally possible for Katherine and Petruchio, it was not psychologically possible for Oliver. At the end of the film, students write an essay comparing and contrasting *Taming of the Shrew* with *War of the Roses*, including personal references, either their own or those of someone they know, to sour relationships and possessiveness.



Hamlet

First we watch the Mel Gibson *Hamlet*, since most students are familiar with Mr. Gibson's work and find him quite appealing. Although he is not a brilliant Hamlet, and the

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production is somewhat abbreviated, Mr. Gibson and the film manage to convey the overall themes, while capturing the students' attention. Occasionally, we also view the four-hour-long Kenneth Branagh *Hamlet*, which generally follows Shakespeare's script and omits nothing.

With *Hamlet*, we move into more complex Shakespearean work, dealing with multiple layers of betrayal. The student prince, Hamlet, is transformed by successive tragedies from melancholy student to decisive man of action. As his predictable, secure world disintegrates, he relinquishes the pleasures of his youth to assume the grave responsibilities of manhood and defender of his father's crown. Prince Hamlet is betrayed by his uncle, who kills his father; by his mother, who leaps into marriage with her brother-in-law six weeks into her widowhood; by his friends, Rosenkrantz and Guildenstern, who conspire with the new king against Hamlet; by Ophelia, who allows herself to be used to divine Hamlet's purpose; and, for all he knows, by the ghost of his father, who may be luring him to hell. (Hamlet's consternation at his mother's hasty marriage to her brother-in-law raises a familiar issue to an Elizabethan audience and its queen. Her father, Henry VIII, married his brother's young widow, Katherine of Aragon, and later appealed to the Pope to invalidate that marriage because under Canon law brother-in-law and sister-in-law are considered siblings and their marriage, incestuous. If Henry VIII had not been legally married to Katherine of Aragon, Elizabeth's mother, Anne Boleyn, would be considered the king's first wife and there would have been no question of Elizabeth's own legitimacy.)

To protect himself from his uncle, Hamlet feigns insanity, while Ophelia, who has suffered the loss of her lover, Hamlet, and the death of her father at Hamlet's unwitting hands, becomes literally unbalanced, serving as a foil for the prince. Shakespeare commonly underscores a theme by presenting it in two strands within the play. At the end, Hamlet's play-within-a-play unleashes the tragic course of events in which he kills Polonius; Ophelia becomes deranged and commits suicide; Claudius attempts to have Rosenkrantz and Guildenstern deliver Hamlet to his death, but he has them killed instead. In the last act, everyone is betrayed as Gertrude, Claudius, Laertes and Hamlet die. As the bodies mounted on stage, one of my students inquired, "Would you consider Hamlet a serial killer?" We ask students to write about the many levels of betrayal in *Hamlet*, drawing upon personal reflections. Since many come from fragmented families and have suffered multiple betrayals, *Hamlet* speaks to them in a familiar idiom.

Richard III

At the end of the period of great civil unrest which gave rise to *Richard III*, Henry Tudor became Henry VII, founding the

Royal House of Tudor, and a period of great economic, political and artistic achievement began. As the Tudor era was waning because its last monarch, Queen Elizabeth, never married, William Shakespeare was flourishing as one of the Queen's favorites. We learn from *Richard III* that artists were hardly immune from the politics of the day. Richard, the Duke of Gloucester, later Richard III, is one of the most shocking sociopaths in Shakespeare's army of miscreants. He joins Iago, Edmund, Goneril and Regan in unfettered villainy. Shakespeare's portrayal of the dark, malformed, evil Richard is so potent that it has become history's dominant portrait of this son of York. The Bard's portrayal owes something to Sir Thomas Moore's biography, based on the earlier work by Holinshead, both of which were drawn to find favor with Henry VIII, the son of Richard's vanquisher, Henry Tudor. Shakespeare's Richard commits crimes never attributed to the real king, although his actual offenses were hardly insignificant, particularly as regards his nephews. By the time Shakespeare wrote *Richard III*, he was an accomplished dramatist who understood how very much the public loved a thorough-going rogue, and he pulled out all the dramatic stops to give them one. It was Shakespeare who created Richard's hunchback. Whatever the truth about Richard's character, he was by no means the only ruthless royal and he lived on an island of intrigue.

Since our students are unfamiliar with the intricacies of the War of the Roses (1455-1487) and the complexities of royal succession, we prefer to use the 1995 film version of *Richard III*, starring Ian McKellen, Annette Benning and Robert Downey, Jr., among others. Although this version is set in a 1930s pro-fascist-era Britain, and the production takes a number of liberties with the original text, it absolutely captures the essence of Shakespeare's perspective. Surpris-

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ingly, our students, mostly women under forty, find the material accessible and have no trouble understanding the plot and the language. By way of relating the concept of royal succession to the present, we explain that the current House of Windsor is not directly descended from any of Tudor English monarchs. The present Queen Elizabeth is a direct descendent of several German royal families because, over time, the direct British royal line died out. (Princess Diana was, in fact, more English than her in-laws.) It is their German heritage which likely inspired the 1930s pro-fascist setting for this *Richard III*. In this version Ian McKellen portrays the Yorkist king as a Hitler clone—ruthless, diabolical, destroying everything and everyone in his way, particularly his nearest relations. Richard’s eldest brother, Edward, succeeded to the throne as the result of one of the battles in the War of the Roses. Edward and his wife, Queen Elizabeth, have three sons, all of whom take precedence over Richard in the event of Edward’s death; they also have a daughter, Princess Elizabeth, who would become Queen if her brothers die. In addition, Richard’s other older brother, George, Duke of Clarence, would become king if anything happened to King Edward’s children. Clearly, Richard-the-would-be-king has his work cut out for him. The film begins by showing Richard leading the Battle of Towton, killing Lady’s Anne’s husband and father-in-law, King Henry VI (which actually did not happen). Thereafter, Shakespeare’s Richard plots to discredit his brother, the Duke of Clarence, reminding us and presumably the king that there is a prophecy that the king will die through the actions of someone whose name begins with “G;” the Duke of Clarence’s given name is “George.” (Of course, Richard is the Duke of Gloucester, which also begins with the letter “G.”) As the plot unfolds, we watch in shocked fascination as Richard lures people into helping him to commit unspeakable crimes. At the same time, we are incredulous at the people who trust Richard; in this way he is very like Iago.

Early on, we have a chance to appreciate Richard’s apparently irresistible charm, when he woos Lady Anne, whose father-in-law and husband he has just killed. Unbelievably, he tells her that he killed them because he loves her, and although she knows him to be a monster, she falls under his spell. Luring potential supporters by promises of property and power when he becomes king, Richard manipulates Edward’s council into backing his claim to the throne and killing those who oppose him. We hear the townspeople speak of him in dread. Richard himself is beset by horrible dreams in which he appears as a boar. Shakespeare’s plays are full of omens and dreams foretelling disaster. Ultimately, as in all good morality plays, Richard’s evil deeds catch up with him. Richmond kills Richard and marries Princess Elizabeth, for whom Richard has killed his wife, so that he may marry his niece and have a stronger claim to the throne. Richmond replaces Richard on the English throne, becom-

ing the first Tudor king, Henry VII.

We ask students to write an essay analyzing Richard’s character, including whether they agree with Shakespeare that his physical disabilities were a manifestation of his psychological predilections. Students are asked to comment on his approach to women and whether they know people like Richard and Iago.



King Lear

We complete the course with the most complex work, *King Lear*, which is to this course what the last set of fireworks is to the Fourth of July—it’s got everything! *King Lear* tells multiple parallel stories. The king’s wish to abdicate all responsibility as a monarch and parent, while retaining the trappings of the throne, gives us some idea of his narcissism and hints at his growing mental deterioration. In Shakespeare’s day, it would have been unimaginable for Queen Elizabeth I to ever willingly relinquish any morsel of her hard-won power. At the same time, Shakespeare includes the Earl of Gloucester’s fall from grace at the hands of his illegitimate son, Edmund. Edmund, Richard III and Iago have many similarities, and throughout the *King Lear* section we refer to them. We also explore Shakespeare’s reasons for including the Gloucester plotline in the play.

From the first, the king is “blinded” by the belief that all his daughters hold him in the high regard to which they attest and to which he believes he is entitled. Rather daringly, Shakespeare makes the point that monarchs are surrounded by sycophants who will tell them what they want to hear and will literally “bow and scrape” because monarchs expect that. *King Lear* offers an opportunity to explore the reality behind the “show.” We look at *Lear* and at situations today and discuss hype—what is the difference between seeming to be loyal and being loyal, and how does power corrupt people? As with Richard, we realize that royal and noble families don’t have the same family relationships as the rest of us, but as we discover in Jane Smiley’s *A Thousand Acres*, which we see and read after *King Lear*, on some level property and personal gain taint every family.

Throughout the play, Shakespeare uses physical blindness and mental illness as foils. As in *Hamlet*, he compares those who use mental illness as protection and those who are genuinely ill. However, in *King Lear*, Gloucester sees the truth about Edgar’s loyalty and Edmund’s evil only after Cornwall blinds him; and Lear learns the true meaning of love and loyalty only after he loses his mind. Edgar protects himself from Edmund and the death sentence by pretending to be a mad beggar, and the Fool is the wise man in the play. Lear’s older daughters, Goneril and Regan, who swear they love him above all else when he is about to apportion his kingdom among them, become the embodiment of everything evil when trying to jettison him, and they turn on one another because of Edmund.

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Another aspect of *King Lear* is that the plain-speaking characters—Cordelia, Edgar, Kent, the Fool, as well as the King of France—are honest and loyal. Shakespeare, the master of the verbal flourish, here equates honesty with simplicity. With a raging storm as a favorite Shakespearean backdrop, Goneril and Regan turn out their father. When Gloucester expresses pity for him, they blind him. The mad king and the blind nobleman discover their true friends while their enemies fall on one another for even greater gain. Edgar rescues Gloucester; Kent, the Fool and Cordelia attempt to rescue King Lear. Fortunately, in *King Lear*, Cordelia and her father are reunited before they die—she by hanging and he by the stress of his torments. Regan poisons Goneril. Gloucester dies reconciled with Edgar. Cornwall is killed by a servant after he blinds Gloucester, and Edgar avenges his father and himself by killing Edmund in a joust.

Having watched the film, we assign an essay dealing with the nature of the parent-child relationship and what parents owe their children. We also ask students to discuss and write about relationships with parents and siblings, with special emphasis on who is the favorite and how everyone reacts to the favorite. Why do parents favor one child over another? Students are asked to consider the nature of power and write about it from the perspective of the plays they have read and seen and their observations of their own world. In addition, students are asked to consider the importance of saving face and self-esteem.

Jane Smiley based her Pulitzer Prize winning novel, *A Thousand Acres*, on *King Lear*, but included several significant twists. Bland, compliant, uncomplaining Ginny, the eldest daughter, is the story-teller and has two younger sisters Rose (Regan) and Caroline (Cordelia). Their father, Larry Cook, a tyrant, is also the most successful farmer in his region of Iowa. He suddenly decides to relinquish his farm to his daughters and their husbands, two of whom already live there. Caroline, a lawyer in Des Moines and not yet married, worries that there might be some legal problems. Her hesitation so enrages her father that he immediately shuts her out. Once the farm is in their hands, Larry loses his focus. Rose and Ginny take turns caring for their father, while their husbands run the farm. Ginny is childless, having had a number of miscarriages, while Rose has had two girls but recently underwent a mastectomy. Their mother died many years before, leaving them to raise Caroline. Into this complex mix a neighbor's son returns from many years of living away. The neighbor, Harold, is the Gloucester figure, and his sons Loren, who lives with him, and Jess, the returnee, are like Edgar and Edmund.

Larry Cook's attitude towards his family changes as soon as the land is theirs—he drinks heavily, behaves irrationally and becomes more demanding. Ginny has a brief affair with Jess, who leaves her for Rose; Rose's husband, Pete, who has beaten her on occasion, dies in a truck accident; and Caroline

marries in Des Moines without telling the family. In the course of their new dealings with one another, Rose reminds Ginny that their father repeatedly committed incest with them, a fact which Ginny, who is always resolutely cheerful, has “forgotten.” Although they don't wage a literal war for the land, Larry joins forces with Caroline, who initiates a lawsuit charging Ginny and Rose with mismanagement of the farm. At the end of the day, Ginny and Rose retain the farm but their lives are altered forever. At the peak of her rage against Rose, Ginny makes jars of poisoned pork sausage hoping Rose will come upon them in the basement some day. She needn't have worried because Rose dies of a recurrence of breast cancer, leaving the girls to her.

With the viewing and reading of *A Thousand Acres*, I ask students to write a short story about a family situation which shows the relationship between parents and siblings. They also write an essay about King Lear's destructive demands on his daughters and Larry Cook's demand on his children, considering how each father saw his daughters, how fathers treat daughters, and the reasons fathers commit incest. I also ask students to write about ways to turn negative into positive, including changes they can make in the course of their lives and what they would be if they could be anything.



Conclusion

The “Shakespeare Comes to the Slammer” curriculum relies on the English/Language Arts Curriculum Framework as an organizing tool to develop spoken and written language. Analysis and expression are at the very heart of the program. Combining the exploration of drama, poetry and fiction with creative writing and skill-building, we expand a student's ability to think and communicate. Studying plays invites students to consider character motivation, collaborate with other students, and stretch their linguistic abilities. Acting allows even very quiet students a chance to shine as they attempt to master long, brilliant lines.

Regretably, we do not have access to a good library, nor do the women have computers at their disposal. Word-processors would lubricate the creative muscles and stimulate interest, as would a traditional library. Would that my students might discover the wonders contained in well-stocked, well-catalogued shelves inviting the reader to roam at will in search of a deeply satisfying book. At a minimum, I hope that, once back in the community, they will seek the solace and enchantment awaiting them at their public libraries. Beyond discovering the balm of reading beautiful words, I urge students to explore post-prison educational opportunities at local community colleges or continuing education programs. I want them to know that caged birds can break free and soar to unimagined heights. That is what I wish for each of them.

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Martina Jackson has been a volunteer teacher at the Suffolk County House of Correction for the past eight years.

Designing a New Curriculum

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objectives: (1) to develop an evening ESOL curriculum, (2) to develop sample needs assessment tools, and (3) to incorporate technology into the ESOL curriculum—a very ambitious proposal. Most of the work I did as coordinator of this project was on the first two objectives. The third objective was accomplished by our Technology Coordinator, Joseph Cheng, who trained teachers one-on-one and helped them to develop appropriate CALL activities for their classes.

The curriculum which was being used in the evening ESOL program prior to this project was based primarily on life skills and job skills because it was developed for our intensive day program for newly-arrived refugees and dislocated workers. Because our evening ESOL program serves a greater diversity of learners—refugees, immigrants, employed, unemployed, from many different countries—it was necessary to develop a curriculum which addressed the needs of this diverse population. I wanted to take a bottom-up approach to developing this curriculum by assessing both learners' and teachers' needs and utilizing the knowledge and expertise that our teachers bring to the program to develop a helpful and informative guide. I also worked with the DOE ESOL Curriculum Frameworks consultants during this project.

Because I stepped out of my role as teacher to be the coordinator of this project, I decided to work with the ESOL members of our student council, which consists of two representatives from each of our ABE and ESOL classes. We met for 30-45 minutes prior to class time on three occasions. The meetings were conducted in English. I posed several questions, starting with the obvious "Why are you here? Why do you need to learn English?" The obvious response was "to become self-sufficient," or, in the words of one council member, "I don't like to ask my friends, my family, please help me." Often I used pictures to start a conversation as we discussed three areas: the use of English at home, at work, and in the community. Questions I posed included:

At Home: Why do you need English at home? When the phone rings how do you feel? Who do you need to talk to on the phone in English? What mail do you need to read in English? What do you do when you can't read the mail you receive? Do your children often talk on the phone and translate mail for you? How do you feel about that?

At Work: Was it easy to get your job? Why/why not? How did you get your job? Do you like your job? Why/why not? What did you do in your country? Do you need English for your job? Why/why not? Who do you talk to? What do you need to read at work? Write at work? What are your plans for the future?

In the Community: Where do you go alone? Where do you go with someone else? Why do you need someone else to go with you to this place? Are there places you don't go? Why? Do you have problems that you need to solve but you don't know where to go for the right information?

I gathered a lot of input on what systems learners need to navigate when the Coordinator of Adult Education, Marcia Chaffee, and I met with all of the student council members to brainstorm on what kinds of guest speakers we would like to invite to our school. The council gave ideas and shared personal stories, and then we surveyed all of the learners in the ABE and ESOL programs. Rather than asking students directly "what problems do you have?," this more indirect way of simply asking students why they are interested in a guest speaker encourages them to share personal stories without feeling anxious about having to tell their problems. The feedback we got from this particular activity was very informative of our learners' needs.

To get teacher input, I met several times with teachers in staff meetings and one-on-one. I wanted to know how often they referred to the current curriculum guide, what they thought should be included in a curriculum and what was not clear to them about our ESOL program. To tap into their knowledge and skills in teaching, I asked them how they decide what to teach, how they assess their learners, and how they involve students in curriculum planning.

Because there had been some confusion as to when to move students to a higher or lower level, it seemed obvious that our levels needed to be more clearly defined for teachers. To address this need, I asked teachers to list their students' strengths and weaknesses on large pieces of paper in the categories of the five strands of the ESOL Curriculum Frameworks. We discussed how to best set student outcomes and what should be the focus of learning at the three levels.

As a result of many productive meetings and helpful input from active learners and experienced teachers, we have developed a curriculum which includes our program's mission, a description of learners, and how we initially assess and place learners in levels. In order to more clearly define our three levels, we've incorporated a description of each level which includes: the SPLs of learners entering that level, general profiles of learners at that level, expected outcomes, a guide to content areas and language structure and mechanics. To help teachers in planning assessment activities, I've included ways to assess learners' needs and guidelines for cycle-end assessment and for determining students' SPLs and level advancement. We also have a resource binder entitled *Assessing Needs and Goal Setting*, which includes activities used for gathering input from learners on their needs and goals.

This curriculum is still a work-in-progress. It is necessary now to critically evaluate it. Are the levels more clearly defined now? Are the expected outcomes for each level realistic? Do teachers feel that this is a helpful guide? What else would we like to include? It is also a work-in-progress because, as our program continues to change and as expertise grows in the ESOL field, there will be more opportunities for teachers to further develop our curricula.

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Sherry Spaulding is an ESOL teacher at the International Institute of Boston.

SOFTWARE AVAILABLE FOR PREVIEW AT A.L.R.I. LIBRARY

by *Sandra Darling*

The following is a list of computer software currently available for preview in the library/computer lab of the A.L.R.I./SABES Greater Boston Regional Support Center. All software is Windows CD full package unless noted. If you would like to preview something, please call me ahead of time so that the software can be pre-installed and ready to use. Regular scheduled hours for the library are: Tuesday, 12:00–6:00; Wednesday, 10:00–12:00 and 1:00–4:30; and Friday, 1:00–4:30. Additional times can be arranged by calling me at 782-8956, ext. 19.

- 3D Atlas 98 (ABC World Reference)—Social Studies and reference.
- The New Reading Disc (ALBSU-UK)—Learners generate original work. Follow-up activities use the same words and phrases.
- English Mastery: Develop English Skills Essential for Success (American Language Academy)—Alania Series for Beginning-High Intermediate and American Module Intermediate. Sequenced lessons and practice for vocabulary, listening, dictation and grammar.
- Orientation for Teachers New to Adult Education (Capitol Region Education Council)—Connecticut Dept. of Education training.
- GED Interactive (Contemporary).
- Official GED Practice Tests (Contemporary)—Performance predictor.
- Pre-GED Interactive (Contemporary)—Basic skills development.
- A Day in the Life Mac Trial Package Modules 1 & 4 (Curriculum Associates and Penn State)—Learners build basic literacy skills while learning job skills in food services, health, retail, maintenance and clerical.
- Core: Reading and Vocabulary Development (Educational Activities, Inc.)—Spoken directions in English & Spanish. Begins with 36 basic words and progresses to more than 200 through various activities.
- Dilemma in the Workplace (Educational Activities, Inc.)—Workplace etiquette connects with vocabulary and reading skills.
- How to Read for Everyday Living (Educational Activities, Inc.)—Basic vocabulary and key words are taught with job ads, forms, applications. Crosswords and puzzles check comprehension.
- How to Write for Everyday Life (Educational Activities, Inc.)—Writing competencies using activities like resumés, employment forms, business letters, etc.
- Math for Everyday Living (Educational Activities, Inc.)—Tutorial and practice with real-life math and business topics.

- Sound Sentences (Educational Activities, Inc.)—Students reinforce their knowledge of sentence structure while acquiring the ability to communicate in daily settings. Useful for ESL and LD.
- English Pro (Eduverse Accelerated Learning System Inc.)—Phonics-based curriculum to teach English.
- Tools for Discussion: Attaining Excellence Through TIMSS (Eisenhower National Clearinghouse for Mathematics and Science Education)—Teacher resources examining comparative achievement of US math and science with other countries. Examination of classroom practice, curriculum resources, policy issues, etc.
- Rosetta Stone Language Library Power Pac (Fairfield)—Picture activities develop skills in listening comprehension, speaking, reading comprehension, and writing in Spanish, French, German, Italian, English, Russian and Chinese (Mandarin).
- All the Right Type (Ingenuity Works)—Interactive program to teach keyboarding.
- Quick Reading Test (Lexia)—Series of diagnostic reading tests to determine student decoding skills.
- Reading S.O.S.: Strategies for Older Students (Lexia)—Reading skills development based on the Orton Gillingham system.
- STAPLE: Supplemental Training for Practitioners in Literacy Education: vol. 1/Unlocking the Mystique of Teaching Reading and Writing (Literacy Coordinators of Alberta).
- TextHELP! (Lorien Systems)—Multimedia presentation of textHELP!, a vocabulary support package which talks, types, checks spellings, corrects mistakes, predicts.
- Sim City 2000 (Maxis)—Simulation of city building.
- Basic Life Skills at Work: The Factory Mystery (Microintel)—An adventure strategy game with a range of activities designed to improve the user's English language, calculation, and computer skills.
- Encarta97 (Microsoft)—Encyclopedia.
- Adult Literacy Explorer v. 2.0 1996 (NCAL)—An interactive information software program for adult literacy. Information on software applications, technical reports, guides to technology, ERIC Digests and abstracts.
- Decisions, Decisions: AIDS, version 2.01 (Tom Snyder Productions, Inc.)—Mac disks, 1993. Role playing software designed to generate informed discussion and decision-making in a one-computer classroom.
- Reading Magic Library: Flodd, the Bad Guy, version 1.0 (Tom Snyder Productions)—Mac disks, 1992. Interactive storybook for children.
- Cornerstone: Language Arts (Skillsbank).
- Cornerstone: Math (Skillsbank).
- Cornerstone: Reading Vocabulary (Skillsbank).
- Skillsbank 4 (Skillsbank).
- TESOL/CELIA '96—Computer enhanced language instruction archive. Freeware, shareware and publisher demos for English language teaching.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

New GED TV Show Debuts

The WGBH Diploma Connections offers a wide range of television programs for adult learners to gain basic skills and to prepare for the GED test. These include *Connect with English*, *GED on TV*, and *Math Basics*. On November 1, a new show, TV411, begins on Channel 44 on Mondays (with repeats on Wednesdays), from 8:30 to 9:00am. This series combines situation comedy, documentary, sports, entertainment, and talk show formats with an instructional focus designed to enhance reading, writing, and math skills for adults at the pre-GED level. For information and books, call 1-800-304-1922 or check the program's website at <www.tv411.org>.

New Citizenship Web Site Solicits Writing

The developers of a new web site intended for people who want to know about becoming a citizen are soliciting 50-200 word essays by ESOL/ABE learners who are in the process of becoming citizens or have recently become citizens. Learners are urged to write about any of the following

topics: deciding to become a citizen, the application process, preparing for the interview, the oath ceremony, next steps for new citizens, and citizenship stories from earlier days. They welcome submissions for students at all levels of English proficiency. Writings should be sent to: ESL Center, Jones Library, Amherst, MA 01002. For more information call Lynne Weintraub at 413-256-8037 or send e-mail to <lynnew@crocker.com>.

Local Volunteer Gets Award

Congratulations to Mildred H. Gilman of Lexington, Massachusetts, who has won the 1999 national Patricia Crail Brown Award for exemplary service as a literacy volunteer—the highest award presented by Laubach Literacy, the world's oldest and largest literacy organization. Ms. Gilman has been a literacy volunteer in this area for over 30 years, working with learners and tutors in a variety of settings, including the Eastern Massachusetts Literacy Council, Concord State Prison, the Lexington Interfaith Coalition, the Greenwood Methodist Church in Roxbury, the Commonwealth Literacy Campaign, and the Workplace Literacy Program at Winchester Hospital.

Adult Literacy Resource Institute

989 Commonwealth Avenue
Boston, MA 02215

*Massachusetts
Readers: Please
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Announcements
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Staff Development
Activities at the
A.L.R.I. Enclosed*