The ACIE Newsletter

Weblogs in the Immersion Classroom

By Jennifer Lacey, Fifth Grade Teacher, L'Etoile du Nord French Immersion School, St. Paul, Minnesota

"Madame, est-ce qu'on peut continuer à écrire chez nous ce soir?"

How often do your students ask permission to continue their writing assignments at home? This was one of the many positive outcomes when I began using weblogs in my 5th grade French immersion classroom last spring. Not only did my students keep writing in the evening; they wrote on weekends, during spring break and all summer long.

La Tempete de neige - Microsoft Internet Explorer

File   Edit   View   Favorites   Tools   Help

My Class

La Tempete de neige
3/28/2005 1:15 PM

Il y avait du neige sur les arbres.

La Tempete de Neige

Quand on arrivait au parc, le bruit des eleves qui joue a disparu, et an sa place etait le bruit de la neige etouffe sous les bottes. Nous pouvons sentir la pollution qui vient de avant nous. Tous les arbres que je pouvais voir etait couverte de la neige blanche comme une ourse polaire. Nous avons promenade sur le trottoir noir pour aller aux une grand lac glacer. Nous avons arreter a cote dune partie de glace glissante. Quand jai tomber sur la glace, la neige a entrer ma bouche. Ca gout comme leau froid et sucre. Apres ca, nous avons march au le lac et rest sur le Pier et regard le grand lac couvert de neige et glace. Jai mis mes mains dans la neige et senti le joli froid.
Puis, le froid a gourde mes mains et je ne pouvais pas bouger mes droits, mais jetait toujours content.(Jaime la froide !!) Un ecureuil monter un grand arbre avant moi et jai presque pas la vue parce que larbre et l'ecureuil etait un brun foncent. Nous avons retourne au le parc, ou nous avons commence, et vu les autres Ives qui jouent contentement. a commencer de neige et nous ont travers la roue et entrer l'ecole.

Ecrit par Aquarius(16)

A fifth grade student's blog includes a photo and a descriptive essay.

WHAT IS A BLOG?

Weblogs, or blogs, are an interactive tool for journaling and exchanging ideas on the World Wide Web. They are easy to use and fun to read.   In the most basic sense, a blog is an online journal. The wonderful thing for educators is that even novice technology users can write, revise, edit, and produce a polished webpage without any need for knowledge of HTML. The immediacy of the process and the access to a broader audience make weblogs a powerful tool for any writer.

Current research tells us that the immersion student is a successful reader of their second language, yet they often lag behind in their writing skills. "Trying to grasp the concepts of print — such as sound symbol relationships, directionality, and the notion that written symbols are not arbitrary, but fixed — is obviously much more difficult in a language in which you are not strong" (Gibbons, 2002, p. 52). As an immersion educator in this setting, I find that the opportunity to use composition skills in a novel medium contributes to students' understanding of the writing process.

Research also shows that technology is a powerful tool for aiding and improving students' success with the writing process. A meta-analysis of studies on student writing and technology found that "on average, students who use computers when learning to write and produce written work are about .4 standard deviations better than students who develop writing skills on paper" (Goldberg et al., 2003, p. 20). By incorporating technology into writing, motivation is enhanced and students are given a new tool to develop

Each summer the Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition (CARLA) organizes and hosts week-long professional development institutes for language teachers nationwide. Of the three highly popular immersion institutes, one is always devoted to a compelling topic that can be explored in depth and is intended for veteran immersion educators. In recent years, the ACIE Newsletter has reserved its May issue as a forum for the publication of articles germane to the previous summer's Challenges Institute.

This May we are pleased to offer a selection of articles on teaching immersion students to write in the target language. As language teachers we know that of the four communication skills — reading, writing, speaking and listening — the production skills of speaking and writing pose more of a challenge for students to acquire proficiently. However, unlike elementary students in non-immersion foreign language programs where the emphasis is on listening and speaking, immersion students must acquire enough proficiency in the written language to convey their understanding of the entire elementary school curriculum — math, science, social studies, as well as language arts.

Our authors explore the curricular challenges of teaching young writers who have a more limited command of vocabulary and grammar in their immersion language than they do in their native language. Two authors describe ways to engage children using computer technology in "Weblogs in the Immersion Classroom" and "Using Keypals with Immersion Students." A third author chronicles her experiences with implementing a district-led initiative to improve students' writing skills and her adaptations to the program for first grade immersion students. Finally, our Bridge author articulates the too-little-time-to-do-it-all conundrum and then suggests myriad ways to integrate writing across all content areas. We hope you will find the writing challenge easier to address after reading this issue.

— *Kimerly Miller, Editor*

Weblogs, *continued from page 1*

writing skills. Because writing is specifically required by No Child Left Behind (NCLB) standards-based testing, increasing motivation matters.

ADVANTAGES OF BLOGGING

Before including a new instructional strategy in our teaching there needs to be a clear understanding of why we are integrating this approach. Here are five reasons to weblog with immersion students.

Ease. Students have quick and easy access to a broad audience with little technological skill required. The end product is a polished and widely accessible webpage. Posting and editing can be done virtually instantaneously.

Archiving. Entries are dated and organized chronologically by title. This allows the weblog to act as a portfolio as well as to provide students the opportunity to build on their own ideas and the ideas of others.

Multi-media. Weblogs allow students to add images, sound, video, hyperlinks, and polls to their writing. These interactive and multifaceted tools grant students access to multiple forms of communication.

Feedback. By using the response forum in weblogs, teachers, parents and peers have an opportunity to read and post their insights. Students are encouraged to reflect on their peers' writing and provide meaningful, immediate feedback.

Meaning. Students are more engaged and motivated when they realize that their writing will be read by others. This authentic interchange gives them one more avenue to develop writing skills in their second language.

SETTING UP WEBLOGS

Setting up weblogs for your students takes a few hours, but once established they can act as online portfolios for years. I have left the weblogs from my previous class open, and

Can First Grade Immersion Students Write in the Target Language?

By Mary Carmen Bartolini, First Grade Teacher, Adams Spanish Immersion, St. Paul, MN

In 2003 the staff from Adams Spanish Immersion Magnet School was invited to participate in the Saint Paul Public School's Project for Academic Excellence. One of the main elements of the project is the Literacy Initiative, which includes a daily one-hour Writer's Workshop integrating reading and writing. During the workshop time, students adopt the life of a writer. They write every day, generating their own ideas and working through the writing process (draft, revise, edit, and publish). They are exposed to different genre studies and authors. They learn about the techniques authors use to draw readers in, to sustain their interest and ensure their understanding, to create tension, and to bring writing to a close. They analyze texts, thus learning how to vary sentence structure, embed essential details, or organize an argument. They use authentic literature as a model for their own writing. And, finally, they publish at least ten polished pieces of writing each year.

The district offers teachers a three-part professional development institute on implementing the Writer's Workshop, and I was eager to take part. However, as I began the first level of the training, many questions arose:

- How do I implement these ideas in an immersion setting?
- How can I write stories with children who are beginning to acquire vocabulary in a second language?
- What is the best sequence for developing this process?
- When am I going to teach the mechanics of writing?
- How can I find authentic books in Spanish that are good examples of different genres? How will I find the money to obtain the books?
- How much time is this going to take?
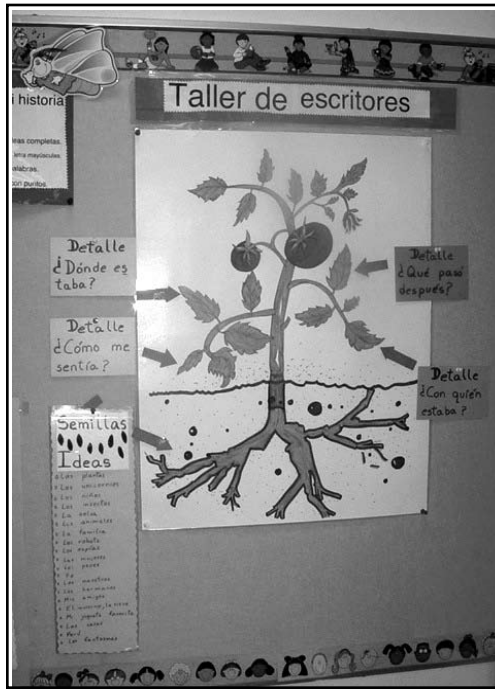
The Writer's Workshop schedule is posted in the author's first grade classroom.

- What if I spend all the time required and don't see results?
- What about students who can't write yet?
- How can I include an hour lesson in a traditional Language Arts block? How am I going to organize reading time in the schedule?
- What do they mean by "Students work to polish at least ten original pieces of writing each year?" Who determines when the piece of writing is ready to publish? Do they want perfect work? Do I have to type the stories and correct all the mistakes before placing the writing on the walls? Is that real student work?

WRITER'S WORKSHOP – YEAR ONE

In my initial attempts to implement ideas from the training, I felt insecure and alone since no other first grade teacher in my building had attended the professional development institute. My students were

In-service immersion teachers frequently explore new ideas for teaching and learning in the classroom. Sharing ideas that work is the emphasis of this regular feature, Best Practices.

In this section, teachers can read about tried and true, practical instructional techniques that immersion colleagues might also adopt for their classrooms.

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> " *Oral language development is an important pre-writing stage that is achieved by reading and discussing [authentic] literature.* "
>
> *- Mary Carmen Bartolini*

TECHNO TIPS

In an effort to push the edge of what we currently know about learning, researchers continue to design and publish new studies on issues important to immersion education. Keeping up to date with current research is a time-consuming task.

This regular feature will help inform the immersion education public about recent research by providing our readers with brief summaries of selected studies.

Thomas Robb can be reached at trobb@cc.kyoto-su.ac.jp

Using Keypals with Post-Secondary Immersion Students

By Thomas Robb, Professor, Department of English, Faculty of Foreign Languages, Kyoto Sangyo University, Kyoto, Japan

Electronic penpals or "keypals" can motivate your students to get valuable practice in both reading and writing. Not only can a keypal exchange improve specific language skill areas, it can also have a profound impact on your students' attitudes towards the target language and culture and provide them with their first chance to use the language outside the classroom context. Furthermore, the information obtained through keypals can add another perspective to whatever content is being studied and thus facilitate content-based learning.

Keypal exchanges broaden your students' linguistic horizons, exposing them to vocabulary, idioms and grammar that they would not normally encounter in the school syllabus. The French students in one university exchange arrangement, for example, got extremely frustrated at the standoff-ish attitude of their American counterparts who constantly used the formal "vous" form despite numerous pleadings to switch to the more informal "tu." This is undoubtedly because the language classroom environment did not provide sufficient opportunities for them to use and acquire the intimate speech form.

Target pairings for keypal exchanges can take a number of forms:

- Your language learners correspond with native speakers of the target language.
- Your language learners correspond with another class of students of the same target language.
- Your language learners correspond with native-speaking students of the target language who are learning the dominant language of your students, generally English.

Often, teachers do not anticipate the complexity of keypal exchanges. It takes more than simply finding another class somewhere on the Internet with approximately the same number of students and then letting students loose to write whatever they want. For example, some students may not be very good at writing letters of interest to their partner, causing the relationship to lapse. Thus, it is highly likely that some students will end up without a correspondent through no fault of their own. Allowing your students complete freedom to write on topics of choice will often result in superficial exchanges that never dwell deeply on any specific subject. Guidance is required to yield a fruitful keypal experience.

It is unlikely you will find a class with the same number of students as yours so you can pair each student with two or three in the opposite class. This will improve the odds that each student maintains at least one partner.

Another possible problem comes from a mismatch in the length of the school terms. If partner classes are located in North America or Europe there is a strong likelihood that the classes begin and end at similar times of the year; i.e., September to May or June. There are, however, considerable fluctuations in other areas of the world. The school term in Japan, for instance, begins in April and runs until the following February. The school year for most of Latin America is vastly different as well. A listing of school terms by country is available at *www.kyoto-su.ac.jp/~trobb/terms.html*.

ESTABLISHING KEYPAL PARTNERSHIPS

While the concept of keypals implies one-on-one message exchange, one-to-many exchanges can sometimes prove more effective. These can be set up using mail server software, available on most web hosting services, or by setting up a course on a course management system such as Moodle (*http://moodle.org*) where discussion forums are set up for topics of mutual interest such as sports, music, cinema, cultural differences, etc. The
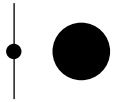
Keypals, continued from page 4

advantage here is that the students will have more material to read as well as more potential posts to respond to. Moodle, unlike some course management systems, sends out the postings as regular e-mail to all subscribers in addition to maintaining them on the web page. The "in your face" aspect of e-mail thus circumvents a common problem with web-based discussions — failure to log on regularly to see what is new.

UNDERSTANDING EXPECTATIONS

Before commencing any type of keypal exchange, be sure that you and your partner teacher(s) mutually understand the following:

- How does each teacher plan to integrate the keypal relationship into his/her own curriculum? Is it just an add-on activity (not advised) or is at an integral part of the course?
- How frequent will the correspondence be and of what general length?
- How will student participation be evaluated? Both teachers should be placing similar weight on the keypal project since this strongly affects the frequency and quality of the

correspondence. If a mismatch occurs, students who are depending on the e-mail might be disappointed.

PREPARING YOUR STUDENTS

Before your students send their first letter abroad, teach them the technical skills required for e-mail exchanges. Have them practice by sending messages to themselves.

Next, teach them the language skills required for effective communication. Supply them with a useful set of phrases for openings, closings and other functions. Students will need a few good models of complete messages so that they can observe the appearance of messages as a whole. Use these to point out the structural aspects of letters. Avoid the idea of supplying a simple template in which they fill in their own particulars since the students of the other class will then receive a full set of virtually identical letters. Multiple samples, or, at least, alternate phrasings will help.

NETIQUETTE

You will also need to teach your students the dos and don'ts for effective and polite e-mail exchange. The International E-mail

Teachers can search for partner schools on the ePals website.

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First Grade, *continued from page 3*

sharing ideas in English most of the time or were relying on theme-based prompts from our social studies or science units to write simple pattern sentences. They were not developing their own ideas — one of the goals of the Writer's Workshop. Nevertheless, with further training and a chance to observe classrooms where the Writer's Workshop was being used effectively, I began to incorporate the recommended sequence of study: the "writerly life", personal narrative, literary non-fiction, and poetry. Reading authentic Spanish literature helped us develop ideas for our writing, and we spent time sharing those ideas orally. When it was time to write, the process went more smoothly.

WRITER'S WORKSHOP – YEAR TWO

I finished the last phase of the professional development institute and began the second year of implementation by assigning a physical space for meetings, for writing materials, and for the display of our work and by establishing a specific time for the daily workshop (see Figures 1 and 2, p. 7). The consistency of the routines and the stability of the physical spaces provided the kind of scaffolding that helps students focus on learning and, in an immersion classroom, on second language acquisition (Peregoy & Boyle, 2005).

Although most of the sharing during the first unit was in English, little by little students started using words from the books I had chosen to guide our conversations and develop new vocabulary. I also took advantage

of the books to work on comprehension skills and to show my students cultural differences when the books lent themselves to such comparison. Following my modeling, students shared their stories with peers. They gradually built up and used their Spanish, a key aspect to developing oral language proficiency in the second language (Cloud, Genesee & Hamayan, 2000).

My first grade students needed a lot of encouragement in their initial attempts to write. However, they were so completely involved in the process they overcame their fears. Students started using the vocabulary I had introduced during writing time (*escritor, escritora* [writer]*, reunión* [meeting]*, lección* [lesson], *ideas* [ideas], *¿Quieres compartir conmigo?* [Do you want to share with me?], *Me gusta tu historia.* [I like your story.], etc.). They learned the routines and the language that goes with them. As a result, their second language development was being supported (Peregoy & Boyle, 2005).

Students began to collect entries in their writing folders. Their ideas came from the books we read, from classroom experiences (field trips, projects, presentations), and from their personal lives (weekend activities, birthday parties, visits to relatives). They wrote classroom books to reinforce the idea of themselves as writers. These were the most requested books from our classroom library during independent reading time.

Each student brought in a memory box to

First Grade, continued from page 6

establish his/her "writerly life." Serving as a connection between school and home, parents and children enthusiastically created the memory boxes choosing special objects that reflected important moments in each student's life. After sharing the stories that came with each object we started to write following the steps of the writing process. It was a powerful experience for my students because they were free to choose their own topics (Peregoy & Boyle, 2005) and they were taking responsibility for their own learning.

After working on their pieces for several days, we created a checklist to assess our final products. Using the checklist students were able to examine their own writing to ensure that they had all the elements of a finished piece.

WRITING IN A SECOND LANGUAGE

Current studies confirm the similarity of the writing process for both first and second language writers: "… The problems writers face are either specific to the conventions of writing English, such as spelling, grammar, and rhetorical choice, or they relate with more general aspects of the writing process, such as choosing a topic, deciding what to say, and tailoring the message to the intended audience— elements that go into writing in any language" (Peregoy & Boyle, 2005, p.208). Although the writing process is similar for both first and second language writers, there are important differences. Second language writers have a more limited ability to express original ideas since they do not possess the depth or breadth of vocabulary, the understanding of idiomatic expressions, or the ear for correct grammar usage that native speakers do. Nor do they have much exposure to writing in the target language. For this reason it is crucial to give students many
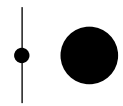
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Figure 1: Writer's Workshop Schedule (a) and Rules (b)

(a) Momentos del taller de escritores
- *Canción* (song)
- *Reunión* (meeting)
- *Revisión de las reglas* (rule revision)
- *Lección* (lesson)
- *Escritura* (writing)
- *Compartir* (sharing)

(b) Reglas del taller de escritores
- *Formo un círculo* (Make a circle)
- *Nada en las manos* (Nothing in your hands)
- *Manos cruzadas* (Hands crossed)
- *Miro a mi maestra* (Look at my teacher)
- *Escucho a mi maestra* (Listen to my teacher)
- *Levanto la mano en silencio para participar* (Raise your hand silently to participate)

Figure 2: Topics for Procedural Mini-Lessons (Young Writers)

Topics for Young Writers' Mini-Lessons
- Writing the title, author's name, and date
- Establishing workshop rules
- Defining the structure and sequence of the workshop (mini-lesson, writing with conferring, large-group sharing)
- Using only one side of the paper to facilitate revision
- Managing time in the Writers' Workshop
- Identifying ways to respond to writers
- Using a writer folder
- Suggesting procedures for editing one's writing

Taken from America's Choice Writing Monograph Series (collection of monographs of the National Center on Education and the Economy)

Weblogs, continued from page 2

WEBLOGS TO EXAMINE WITH STUDENTS

Preview these sites the morning of the lesson. The very nature of blogs means that they change every minute, and there is no guarantee that everything is appropriate for children.

www.sandiegozoo.org/word-press/Zoo

Weblogs written by contributors throughout the San Diego Zoo, Wild Animal Park, and Conservation and Research on Endangered Species (CRES).

www.sciencenewsforkids.org

Weekly science newsmagazine (a blog that functions as a website)

www.wizardblog.com

Random and sometimes humorous thoughts about the worlds of Harry Potter and Lord of the Rings from Dave Haber, editor of Wizard News.

these now sixth-grade students continue to add to them to this day (one of my most active writers is no longer even in our school!). In Saint Paul Public Schools, weblogs are easily added onto classroom homepages using the district software Urban Planet. Prior to setting them up, students select pseudonyms to protect their identity. As an added security measure, I protect the main page with a password so that only families and students have access to the blogs. All comments posted in response forums are emailed to my school address. Weblogs can also be set up through many free servers on the Internet such as *www.blognet.info*, *www.blogger.com*, and *www.xanga.com*.

Clear expectations are definitely needed before launching any online activity. We discuss appropriate postings; quality of writing, grammar, and spelling; and thoughtful responding. Rules are drafted together as a group and then posted in the classroom. We also take time to look at other student weblogs and well-known weblogs on the Internet (see suggested URLs in the sidebar). Doing this provides students with an understanding of the power of writing for what is essentially a global audience.

WEBLOG WRITING ACTIVITIES

To target NCLB writing standards, I focus on four key types of writing when using blogs: descriptive, narrative, clarification and persuasive. Below are descriptions of these activities as well as some further suggestions for blogging lessons.

Descriptive Writing. Using a digital camera, have students photograph an interesting image (e.g., nature scene, desktop, face). Before writing, brainstorm sensory-rich vocabulary. Students upload their photos to their blogs with a rich descriptive article detailing the scene.

Narrative Writing. To scaffold the key elements of story (plot/conflict, setting and character) students create concept maps using the software Kidspiration. Using these outlines, students write and then post their

stories with concept maps.

Clarification Writing. Allow students to research their favorite educational website. Using the five paragraph format, students are required to draft a thesis and give three reasons supporting their site selections. A link to the site and a snap poll make the entire experience interactive and engaging.

Persuasive Writing. Teach this in the form of a script and a 30-second Public Service Announcement (suggested themes include anti-bullying, no littering, be yourself, say no to drugs). Content-obligatory language about video and filming can be studied. Videos are filmed, edited (using iMovie or RealPlayer), and posted on the weblogs where they can be viewed by friends, peers, and families.

Other ideas:

Current Events. Students can create links to newspaper articles in the target language on current events of interest. Opinion pieces and discussion forums allow for meaningful interchanges.

Internet Shorthand. Students learn internet shorthand in the target language as one of the ways to respond to a peer. It is engaging and real, as this is one way in which young people today enjoy communicating.

Reading Responses. Rather than a book report, students can write a reading response on their weblogs. Some ideas include rewriting a scene from a different character's perspective, writing an open letter to a character or to the author, crafting a newspaper-type review with poll, creating a radio advertisement sound recording, developing a character trait diagram (using Kidspiration), writing a new book ending, or finding five related internet links and explaining how they relate to the book.

With all of these activities, be certain to include follow-up time for students to read and respond to each other's work. It is in this sharing time that the real learning and most meaningful interchanges occur.
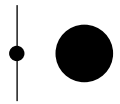
¿Cómo se dice buen idea? Iguana! *By Mary Robbins*

Reprinted with permission from NEA (National Education Association) Today, April 2006 issue.

When Christianne Meneses Jacobs couldn't find a quality children's Spanish-language magazine, she got an idea: create one. Meneses Jacobs' *Iguana* has something a little different from most lizards under its skin—pages of entertaining and educational reading, artfully assembled out of a desire to preserve cultural identity.

The second-grade teacher at Garfield Elementary School in Phoenix, Arizona, created *Iguana*, a magazine for children ages 7-12, written in Spanish. It was born out of Meneses Jacobs' struggle to find quality Spanish literature for her young daughter. She wanted something to help her retain Spanish language skills and take pride in her heritage. With help from native speakers from around the world, she and her husband published the first 32-page issue last year. They filled it with stories, educational articles and colorful pictures.

"The idea for this magazine is that kids will continue reading in Spanish, especially since we are becoming a global society where it's so important to be bilingual," says Meneses Jacobs, a native Nicaraguan who moved to the United States in 1988. While helping bilingual children retain the language and preserve the Latino culture, the magazine serves as a supplemental classroom resource. She alternates reading the magazine to her students in English and Spanish, and says some students enjoy it so much they ask their parents for a home subscription. The bimonthly magazine contains ideas for art projects, recipes, word searches, comic strips, and interviews with prominent Latinos.

Flip through a recent issue at www.neatoday.org and visit www.iguanamagazine.com. You can find the Spanish-language site at www.iguanavista.com. ○

Weblogs, *continued from page 8*

IN CONCLUSION

The key advantages of using weblogs in the classroom include high student motivation, technological skill development, and the use of the response tools to interact with peers and to construct knowledge. Most notably, weblogs provide easy access to both a polished finished product and an authentic audience. By individualizing the types of postings to reflect student interests, enthusiasm is very high and the learners take pleasure in creating new entries for their weblogs.

It is evident that weblogs can motivate and assist elementary students in both reading and writing in their second language. Writing tools in Microsoft Word provide support with grammar and spelling, and weblogs offer learners the capacity to express themselves not only through these texts but through images, sound, graphics, surveys, and links. Furthermore, students are enthusiastic about reading and responding to each other's articles. Pedagogically, it is valuable to give students the opportunity to develop their language and technological skills in a real–world setting whenever possible. Weblogs, due to their multimedia attributes, provide endless opportunities to write, read, and share. ○

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Keypals, continued from page 5

Classroom Communication site provides excellent information (*www.iecc.org/Etiquette.cfm*). For example:

- Try to use words and language familiar to your partner. If you use language that is too advanced or unfamiliar, it may make your partner feel inadequate.
- Try to listen for and talk about common experiences. That will help establish a common ground to connect you.

GETTING THE MOST FROM KEYPALS

As alluded to earlier, students will need guidance in order to sustain a meaningful exchange of information. Be sure to set some specific goals with your partner teacher. This can take the form of a joint project between each set of individuals or between classes. You might assign a question or two each week for the students to ask their keypals, and then have a class discussion to compare the answers. A set of possible questions can be found at *http://iteslj.org/questions*.

TRACKING YOUR STUDENTS

E-mail can be frustratingly messy. The students have differing numbers of penpals and take varying amounts of time to read messages and create responses. Thus, some students may not complete their correspondence in the time allotted in class; others may complete it early and have nothing else to do. Time management can become a problem.

Another management problem concerns the volume of correspondence and grading based on performance. If older students are writing personal letters, submitting copies as proof of e-mail activity might be too intrusive. You might ask them to 'cc' you on their first letter so that you can see how well they do on this initial, crucial message.

You can request that students keep a log of their correspondence with columns to enter the date, who the message was sent to or received from, and the total number of lines in the message. Students can be assessed on the total lines sent and received. Students who write stimulating letters will most likely receive longer responses than those who write brief, uninteresting missives. Thus, evaluation based on a combination of both sent and received messages tends to work well. One of my university students, however, received the full text of Hamlet by e-mail because his partner in Hong Kong thought that it would contribute to his line count!

TANDEM LEARNING

While at first glance it might seem that native speakers would be the ideal choice for partners, consideration has to be given to what the other party would gain from the partnership. Correspondence with native speakers may place your students out of their depth (though this may not necessarily be the case with upper–level immersion students). However, native speakers' correspondence has been shown to work well with tandem pairings where both partners are seeking help in learning the other's native language. For details on tandem pairings, see *www.slf.ruhr-uni-bochum.de*. This website has a search function where you can select the native language of your students and the desired target language. It then displays matches from teachers looking for the opposite set of conditions. The Tandem project even has suggested activities that can be accessed from the menu on the home page.

CONCLUSION

Keypals can be an extremely rewarding experience for your students but, like any other aspect of your teaching, it will take some experience to discover the best implementation for your own setting. Don't be surprised to find some students exchanging snail-mail addresses with their keypals, turning a virtual friendship into an actual one. It happens! ◯
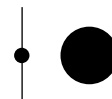
First Grade, *continued from page 7*

different opportunities to write in order to improve their writing and promote second language acquisition (Peregoy & Boyle, 2005).

The Writer's Workshop, an example of the process approach to writing, places the learner at the center of the learning process and considers that children learn to write most successfully when they are encouraged to start with their own expressive language. This approach affirms research findings:

writing should take place frequently and within a context that provides real audiences for writing (Gibbons, 2002).

After completing the professional development institutes and implementing the Writer's Workshop in my first grade immersion classroom, I have found some answers to the questions I inititally posed. They appear below. ❍

Figure 3: Responses to My Initial Questions

How do I implement these ideas in an immersion setting?	The Writer's Workshop is related to the process approach to teaching writing that has been used successfully in second language classrooms. Establishing the rules and routines for the workshop are important in creating a solid base upon which to build future learning experiences.
How should I write stories with children who are beginning to acquire vocabulary in a second language?	Students start the year sharing stories orally using their first language but increase the use of the immersion language after acquiring vocabulary from books and class routines. Teacher modeling of the immersion language helps students develop their language skills.
What is the best sequence for developing this process?	The Writer's Workshop scaffolds a complex process by breaking it down into smaller steps (pre-writing, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing). From the beginning students develop vocabulary and writing ideas from exposure to authentic literature.
When am I going to teach the mechanics of writing?	At first writing time is shared with skill-development time; later, the whole hour is dedicated to the writing process.
How can I find authentic books in Spanish that are good examples of different genres? How will I find the money to obtain the books?	One of the best ways to find appropriate books is to go through personal collections identifying books that are examples of each genre. Share ideas with colleagues, ask for their advice and expertise, analyze books together. Tell parents about the Writer's Workshop, propose a list of books and ask for donations of books or money to buy books.
How much time is this going to take? What if I spend all the time required and don't see results?	The implementation of the Writer's Workshop in an immersion classroom will take more time and effort than in a monolingual classroom, but the benefits are numerous: Students take ownership of their own writing; they understand the process and can concentrate on each phase; their second language skills increase daily with exposure to authentic literature and class routines.
What about the students who can't write yet?	Oral language development is an important pre-writing stage that is achieved by reading and discussing different genres of literature, talking about personal experiences inside and outside the classroom and managing class routines. Schedule the Writer's Workshop when an assistant may be available to help with struggling writers.
How can I include an hour lesson in a traditional Language Arts block? How am I going to organize reading time into the schedule?	Since the Writer's Workshop is built on an interaction between reading and writing, the Language Arts block encompasses both. Reading authentic literature immerses students in the study of genres and promotes the development of oral language proficiency. Strategies and skills learned during both writing and reading can be integrated and used with other subject areas like science and social studies.
Who determines when the piece of writing is ready to publish? Do I have to type the stories and correct all of the mistakes before placing the writing on the walls? Is that real student work?	Students, with direction from the teacher, develop rubrics or checklists to assess their own and peers' writing. Self and peer editing is part of the writing process.

GUIDE FOR

CONTRIBUTORS

We welcome submissions to be considered for publication and give preference to those that relate to our current features, including best practices, parent communication, new teacher tips, technology and second language education, immersion research, guest editorials, and "The Bridge," an insert with a focus on bridging research and practice.

Manuscripts should be between 750 and 1,500 words. All references and notes should follow the specifications described in the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (APA), 5th edition, and must be placed at the end of the article. Please include the title of the article, your name, address, telephone number, e-mail address, institution, a short biography as well as pictures.

Manuscripts can be submitted, preferably by email, to:

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Submission Deadlines

May 15	*November issue*
August 15	*February issue*
November 15	*May issue*

ACIE NEWSLETTER/MAY 2006

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The American Council on Immersion Education (ACIE) is an organizational network for individuals interested in immersion education—teachers, administrators, teacher educators, researchers, and parents.

Conceived by immersion teachers in Minnesota and funded in part by the National Language Resource Center (NLRC) in the Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition (CARLA) at the University of Minnesota, ACIE aims to facilitate communication among immersion teachers and others interested in immersion education.

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