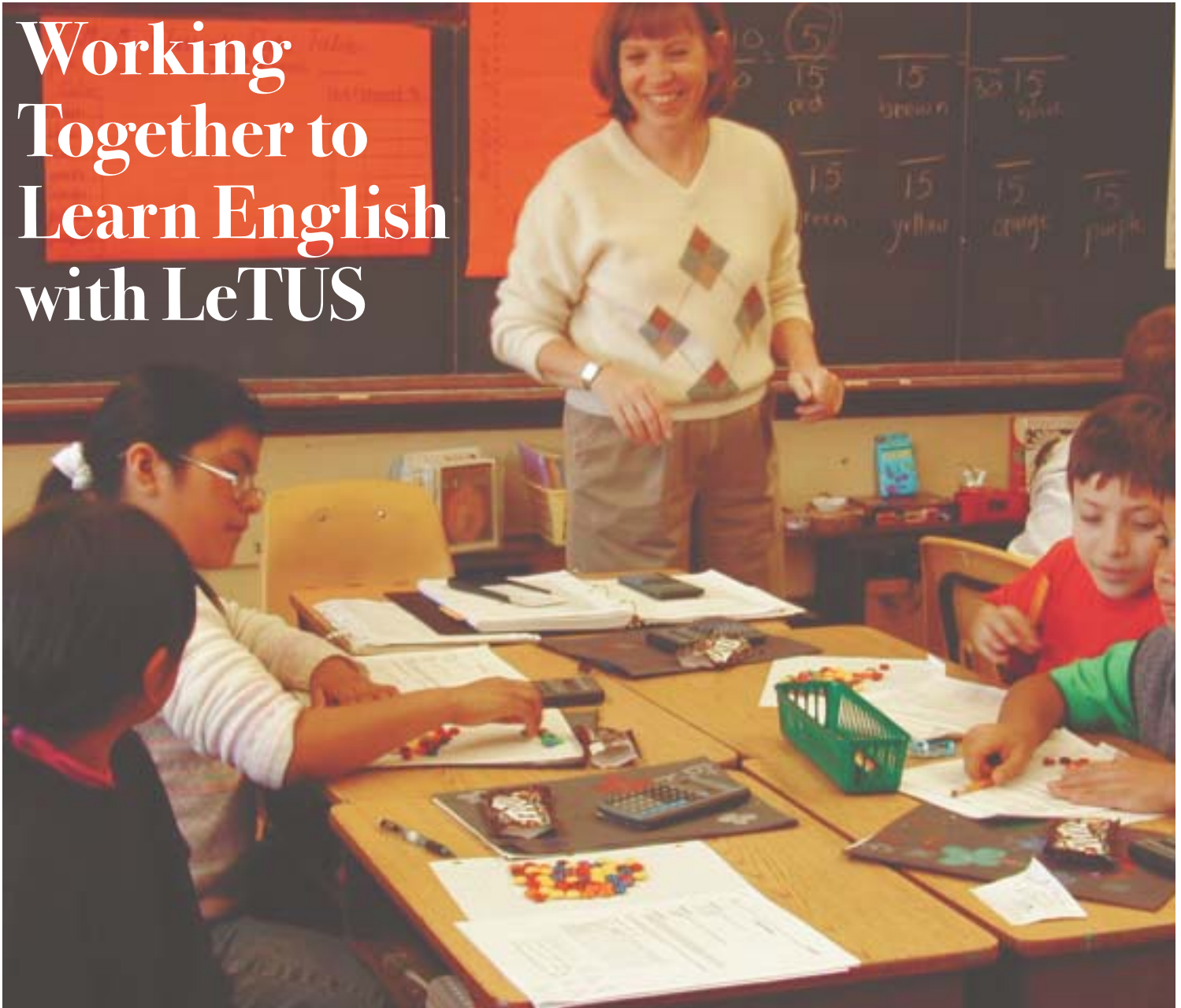


Connections

Winter 2003

The Newsletter of the Center for Learning Technologies in Urban Schools

Working Together to Learn English with LeTUS



Boone Elementary School teacher Barb Walsh leads her English As A Second Language fifth-graders through the Behavior Matters M&Ms lab. She and sixth-grade teacher Jenny Soro find that LeTUS curricula “are better than our textbooks” because of their hands-on material and in-depth explanations. Learn how the students work together beginning on page 8.

QUOTABLE

“How many are in your bag?”

“57.”

“You ate one!”

“No I didn’t!”

– *Students in Barb Walsh’s ESL class at Boone Elementary School counting their M&Ms as an example of sorting different animal behaviors*

About LeTUS

At the Center for Learning Technologies in Urban Schools, we focus on:

- Collaborating with urban schools
- Designing project-based science curricula
- Developing interactive computing technologies
- Bringing about systemic education reform
- Working to improve the intellectual lives of all children

LeTUS is a partnership of university and public school educators and researchers from the Chicago Public Schools, the Detroit Public Schools, Northwestern University and the University of Michigan. They collaborate on the design and implementation of science curricula.

LeTUS maintains a close working relationship with teachers

using LeTUS curricula. University researchers investigate the process of teaching inquiry-based science.

LeTUS aims to change science teaching in all schools, especially in urban schools. LeTUS researchers design project-based curricula that help students learn scientific principles by investigating a question they find meaningful. LeTUS believes that children learn science best this way and works to provide them with the materials they need to succeed.

At the heart of LeTUS' work is pragmatic research into how students learn, how teachers teach and how school systems can change to better support both. We study leadership in schools and school systems and how bilingual classrooms adapt to inquiry-driven, technology-rich science. LeTUS focuses on the day-to-day practice of teaching and shares its findings with teachers, administrators and the broader research community.



WWW.LETUS.ORG

Be sure to check out the Center for Learning Technologies in Urban Schools' official Web site, where you will find:

- LeTUS News
- Curriculum and Software Information
- Links to Download the Software
- A Directory of LeTUS Personnel
- And More!

Upcoming Events

Chicago Curriculum Kickoffs

ReNUE, March 20, 2003

Water Quality, March 20, 2003

Solar Energy, March 21, 2003

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New Year Breeds Success

As we turn the calendar to 2003, I'm pleased to report significant activity among those involved in the Center for Learning Technologies in Urban Schools. We have seen success in the classroom and among our researchers. We trust we will continue that success through the new year.

Two LeTUS professors – Daniel Edelson and Brian Reiser – received a grant from the National Science Foundation to form the Center for Curriculum Materials in Science. This partnership among the American Association for the Advancement of Science, Northwestern University, the University of Michigan and Michigan State University will further the work done in LeTUS and develop not only great curricula, but also the next generation of great science teachers.

The Center for Curriculum Materials in Science will better science curriculum materials and textbooks for middle- and high-school students, support teacher professional development and create new doctoral and post-doc programs. The Center will also work with the Chicago Public Schools, Detroit Public Schools and the Lansing, Mich., School District in order to create a standards-based approach to learning and to ensure that teachers have input in the curriculum materials. The partnership with the school districts will also allow graduate students and researchers to apply classroom experiences to their research. For more information on the new center, please see the Center's Web site, www.ScienceMaterialsCenter.org

In the classroom, students involved in LeTUS have shown significant improvement between pre-test and post-test throughout the fall curricula. Because of the quality teaching in LeTUS classrooms, the students are able to, on average, answer a greater number of questions correctly on post-tests.

In this issue of *Connections*, you will see examples of high-achieving students and quality teaching. Barb Walsh and Jenny Soro take students who have just arrived in the United States and have them reading and speaking English in a short time. Woodie Bennett's love of science and teaching comes through in her work with her students.

Each of you brings something special to the LeTUS program, and we appreciate all of the input we receive. I'm sure you'll keep up the great work as we enter 2003.



Louis Gomez
LeTUS Director
Northwestern University

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LeTUS Teacher Profile



by Brad Perkins

Woodie Bennett sits straight in her requisite wooden teachers' chair in a small room complete with a large wooden desk and yellow lockers plastered with notes and memos reminding of various things from tardy and cut punishments to the last group of supplies she bought for her class.

The cramped space doubles as an office for her and her student teacher, sits between two classrooms and looks more like a locker room than an office. But in this area, the Kenwood Academy seventh- and eighth-grade science teacher has time to reflect on the joys and hardships of her second career as a teacher.

"Seeing kids get excited about an idea or finally really comprehend some idea that has been difficult is a big reward," said Bennett, who is in her third year teaching at the Hyde Park school, following a career in biomedical research and administration. She is also qualified to teach math, but was only able to do so her first year at the school. "I probably saw that more on a regular basis teaching algebra because you're constantly working with stretching the boundaries whereas with science you're kind of re-teaching the same concept at a higher level and applying it in more complex ways.

"In math, everyday it's a new concept, so I pretty regularly got to see kids run up to the front of the room and say 'I wanna show' and really get excited because they've figured out how to do something," she continued. "But I've seen that in science as well. That's a huge reward."

Bennett knows that, as a junior high teacher, her contributions may not be realized until much farther down the road, and even then, may not be recognized.

"The truth is you will not see the real stuff that happens," she said. "It's not a possible scenario to me. The real stuff that happens is you work and work and work to teach them the concept of slope and they just don't get it and then someday you read that they got a Nobel Prize for physics, and you figure somewhere in between they figured out slope. But you don't feel personally responsible for it, and you're not because it's an accumulation. It's kind of like a load that springs people onto the next level."

While Bennett strives to take her students to the next level, she knows that sometimes keeping them interested is the biggest problem.

"You have to try to vary the kinds of activities they do in a day," she said.

Woodie Bennett

Kenwood Academy, Chicago

Seventh and Eighth Grades

Years Teaching: 3

LeTUS Curricula Taught:

Behavior Matters, Struggle for Survival

Education: University of Chicago

Degrees: Bachelor Degree in

Biological Sciences

Master's Degree in Public Policy

(Health Care Focus)

Personal: "I have four children, two dogs, two cats and a husband."

If I weren't teaching, I'd be: Writing

"Middle-school kids have a short attention span anyway. Even though our classes are too short already – we have 45 minutes, which is really short for science – if you're trying to do a hands-on [lab] it makes it really hard.

"Nevertheless, you almost have to have three distinct things you do each day. If you just have one thing, 45 minutes – they can't do it for that long. Something they should be spending 20-25-30 minutes on, they really start to lose it after 10 or 15. You have to vary the kinds of activities they're doing: A little group work, then a little listening, then a little watching – as much hands-on as possible."

This is where Bennett sees the benefit of the LeTUS curricula she teaches. She taught Struggle for Survival last year and Behavior Matters this year. She also plans to teach I, Bio later this year.

"The first thing that makes it great is that there's always a driving question or a central theme that's both accessible and interesting to the students," she said. "It's an intrinsically interesting topic presented in a way that considers lots of learning."

Through hands-on projects, technology and observation, Bennett is able to get her students interested in learning physical

science.

"It always incorporates some form of computer technology that kids are immediately drawn to," she said.

She also finds the help and support she gets from those involved in LeTUS crucial to her success as a teacher.

"In addition to that content, there's the fact that you have a support group," she said. "You can find other teachers who have done it and who are doing it. You've also got the LeTUS people who you can call and talk to about problems you're having or issues that come up – those would be the implementation of the technology every time, but there's been great support. It's just that time and time again it seems to be the one thing that falls apart."

OVERCOMING TECHNOLOGY

As many teachers know, technology is a boon and a bane to education. While some students still get excited at the

prospect of using a computer in their classroom, others see it as commonplace as a pencil and paper. But the biggest problem is technology failing.

When this happens, Bennett resorts to her inherent resourcefulness, borrowing computers from friends and family, using movies or simply presenting what the kids would've done on an LCD projector.

"It depends on what it is that the computer was going to do," she said. "Sometimes it's a research piece, sometimes it's film clips or evaluations or analysis of something. Sometimes you have to find a substitute or rethink several days or a weeks' worth of lessons."

And just because an interesting video or program is on the computer doesn't mean it will hold students' interest.

"Computers are powerful and they're still great, but at this point they're no longer a novelty," said Bennett. "These kids all

have e-mail and most of them have Internet and computers at home. They still like to do it, but they want to do what they want to do."

When the technology doesn't work, Bennett resorts to less spectacular, but just as poignant methods of teaching.

"I do a lot with water, with all of my classes," she said. "I've found that there's endless things you can do with water that they never thought of before, and I never tell them the answers. We talk about it and I ask, 'well, what did you see? I'm not asking you to explain it, I'm asking what did you see.' So they're learning to observe.

"There's been some really fun things we've done this year where really smart kids just don't understand what they're seeing and they're scratching their heads and they want me to give them the answer and I won't do it. I'm teaching them basic physical science and basic observation



Woodie Bennett discusses computer use with two of her eighth-grade students. Bennett opens the lab an hour early each day, and tries to incorporate computer use into her lesson plans.



Woodie Bennett changes the water in her tank of marine invertebrates that was a gift from the University of Chicago. She undertakes an hour-long feeding process each day, and had to find another tank to house a stone crab that ate some of them.

and that always works because I can always find some water.”

MOTIVATING AND EXCITING

Experiments and observations go a long way to keeping Bennett’s students interested in the curricula. She teaches five classes of seventh- and eighth-graders, each with different abilities and goals. But she does see positive responses from her students.

“They like it. They like doing it, they’re interested in it,” she said. “During Behavior Matters, we took them to Brookfield Zoo, which is sort of a culminating activity, and while we were there, I was so impressed to see groups of students sitting around with their clipboards talking about focal scanning and calling out behaviors to each other using the correct terminology.

“You’d hear someone yell out ‘foraging’ or ‘grooming’ and other groups of kids were walking by doing a double take because they were kind of like ‘hey look at the gorillas.’ So they were definitely prepared for that trip and they got a lot out of it and they really acted like scientists. They were very involved and engaged in conducting that activity.”

SCIENTIFIC BEGINNINGS

Bennett has always been involved and engaged in science and math. Her father was a scientist, and she developed a passion for science and math early on.

“I decided somewhere early on in life that if you understand numbers and how they work and you understand science, no one can ever fool you,” she said. “And I find that to be real freeing and important because I see a lot of faux information out there and so many people who are manipulated as large populations and as

individuals by advertising or politicians or demagogues because they don’t know history, geography, numbers – they don’t know anything.

Bennett sees science as a way to avoid exploiting people and the environment.

“And if people don’t know anything, you can do anything to them. In a way, to be a real free, authentic human being you need to understand the terms in which you can be manipulated and in our culture it’s technology, it’s science, it’s math or it’s bad science and terrible things have been done to people in the name of science. But it’s never been done in the name of good science, it’s always been bad science – badly designed studies or fudged numbers.”

This is why she tries to take her students on as many neighborhood field trips as she can. She believes that the kids need to realize that, even in Chicago, there are an abundance of plants, animals and minerals.

“They have to be more active about their surroundings,” she said. “They have very little contact with that world, which means LeTUS curricula are especially important because they put them in the natural world and force them to see their environment and animals in an analytical way.

And this, she says, will help not only the students as they progress through Kenwood and their educational lives, but their futures and future generations.

“We take for granted that the natural world is going on around us,” said Bennett. “I think it’s important to keep kids connected to their environment because otherwise the next generation of environmental caretakers won’t be there.” ■



Woodie Bennett displays her students’ Behavior Matters drawings on cabinets around her classroom.

Curriculum Corner

It may still be cold and snowy outside, but it's time to start thinking about spring. In March, LeTUS at Northwestern University will host three kickoffs for spring curricula.

SOLAR ENERGY

A curriculum two years in the making, Solar Energy will kick off on March 21. The unit asks students what would happen if the world's only energy source came from the sun and challenges them to develop a passive solar house that will meet the needs of specific climate areas.

"Solar Energy gives kids the opportunity to do design work in designing a passive solar house," said LeTUS Professional Development Coordinator Lou-Ellen Finn. "The simulation they run on the software allows them to manipulate variables so they can maintain a habitable temperature," generally 68-78 degrees Fahrenheit.

WATER QUALITY

One of LeTUS' most popular curricula returns just in time for nice weather with a scheduled March 20 kickoff. Water Quality tests kids' prior knowledge of rivers and helps them figure out what they would like to know about their own river. Through Model-It software, the students model ecosystems and study relationships between differing variables.

"The unit gives kids firsthand experience in measuring water quality and learning how it applies to them," said Finn.

The unit culminates in a visit to the Chicago River in which the students take water samples for analysis of the water's quality. They also look closely at the chemical and physical factors that affect water quality and the relationship between water quality and biodiversity.

REALIZING NEW URBAN ENVIRONMENTS (ReNUE)

ReNUE asks students to think about environmental problems in terms of ecological systems, the causes and effects of these problems and how they can develop solutions.

In the unit, students identify a local environmental problem, such as air or water pollution, research it, build a systemic model of the science underlying the problem and propose a solution.

The curriculum uses Model It to map the environmental problem and simulate the effects of the problem over time.

The ReNUE kickoff will take place on March 20. ■



News and Views

LeTUS FACULTY EARN GRANT FOR NEW CENTER

Northwestern University and LeTUS professors Daniel Edelson and Brian Reiser were among a group that received a five-year, \$10 million National Science Foundation grant to create the Center for Curriculum Materials in Science – a new partnership to better science curriculum materials and textbooks for middle- and high-school students, support teacher professional development and create new doctoral and post-doc programs.

The Center includes the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the University of Michigan and Michigan State University and will support the development of new leaders in education, create a cross-institution graduate program and develop curriculum materials and courses to further students' and teachers' science learning.

It will work with the Chicago Public Schools, Detroit Public Schools and Lansing School District in order to create a standards-based approach to learning and to ensure that teachers have input in the curriculum materials. The partnership with the school districts will also allow graduate students and researchers to apply classroom experiences to their research.

CPS COMES IN SECOND

Crain's Chicago Business reported in its Nov. 25, 2002, edition that the Chicago Public Schools is the second-largest employer in the six-county Chicago area, behind the federal government and ahead of the City of Chicago, Cook County and grocery store chain Jewel-Osco.

The Chicago Public Schools employed 46,179 people as of Oct. 1, 2002, according to the article.

TEACHERS HAVE OWN PLATES

The state of Illinois and the Golden Apple Foundation in October unveiled an education license plate that will benefit the Golden Apple Foundation and the Illinois Future Teacher Corps Scholarship Fund. The plate features an apple, colorful letters and a yellow ruler. More information on the plate is available at www.cyberdriveillinois.com or by calling (217) 558-6148. ■

Learning English with LeTUS

Boone ESL students learn vocabulary and usage through curricular projects and hands-on labs

by Brad Perkins

Annyong. Hallo. Hola. Marhaba.
Namaste. Privet. Salaam.

Boone Elementary School teachers Barbara Walsh and Jenny Soro could hear any of these forms of “hello” when their students enter the classroom and greet their teachers.

Walsh and Soro teach self-contained English As A Second Language classrooms of fifth- and sixth-graders who range from newly arrived in the United States to less than two years in the country. The two use LeTUS curricula as part of their lesson plans in their fifth- and sixth-grade English As a Second Language classrooms.

“We have many different languages,” said Walsh. “We have 20 students and 10 different languages.”

And that’s just in Walsh’s class. Soro has 25 students who speak a multitude of languages. Languages heard in their classrooms include Russian, Urdu, Nepali, Bosnian, German, Greek, Arabic, Spanish and Korean.

Coordinating an immense number of

languages into a cohesive group that learns English together is not an easy task, but with the help of LeTUS curricula, Walsh and Soro are able to better focus on helping the students learn.

“This is learning English through content,” said Walsh. “In other words, we do not have a grammar-based approach at all. We teach grammar and usage as it’s used in the curriculum and we use a lot of graphic organizers because it has to be a way that the children can actually visualize what they’re doing in order to be able to put it down on paper.”

This is where LeTUS curricula come in. Whereas Soro and Walsh would have to create their own lesson plans to achieve the state goals for their students, LeTUS curricula provide them with the framework, and they simply make modifications based on their students’ abilities.

“It’s ready to use,” said Soro, “and they don’t see any difficulty.”



A Boone student conveys his emotions through a plate of M&Ms

Before using LeTUS curricula – including ReNUE last year and Behavior Matters this year – Soro and Walsh would develop their own units. Now, they simply have to modify the units to the needs and abilities of their students.

“I’m not having to go out and get all this stuff and put it together,” said Walsh. “We end up basically writing our own units because you’re not going to find this in the marketplace until last year when I did the ReNUE project. I was amazed because this is the way we are teaching so it just goes hand-in-hand with what we’re doing, but somebody’s handing it to me.”

Minus a few modifications, LeTUS curricula incorporate everything Soro and Walsh need to teach their students.

“It’s basically taking what LeTUS is giving to us and modifying it for our students. For example, today’s lesson – part of it has to do with finding percents,” said Walsh. My students are fifth-graders, so they’re not doing percents; it’s not something we touch on till the end of the school year. When we graph, it’s going to be finding the mean – the average number of M&Ms; the average number of colors in the package because we have to modify it to be something that goes with their grade level.

“As far as language goes, LeTUS gives us so much good vocabulary but it’s also going along with things we already do so



Boone teacher Barbara Walsh gathers her students at the board so they can record behavior findings on the class chart.



Boone teacher Jenny Soro explains the beginnings of the Behavior Matters M&Ms lab as she passes out bags of the candy to her students.

they have much of the vocabulary for the project," she said.

NEW BEGINNINGS

Walsh started the English As A Second Language program at Boone in 1998 and taught four grade levels in one classroom for the first two years of the program. The program became so popular and successful that each grade level now has its own self-contained ESL classroom.

"We really believe in this program, and some of the ESL teachers in this school are some of the very best teachers in this

school," said Walsh.

The English speaking and reading abilities vary greatly from student to student. Some students can read English perfectly but do not speak it well, while others are the opposite. Because of this, Soro and Walsh use a lot of modeling and linear thinking in applying LeTUS curricula to their classrooms.

"We can't just stand up and say OK we're going to do a science experiment and let's think of what our purpose is and what we think is going to happen and let's write out our procedure because there are big gaps in it because they just don't have the

vocabulary for it," said Walsh. "So, we might just start out modeling the whole experiment ourselves."

Through modeling everything from percentages to reading children's novels, Soro and Walsh are able to improve their students' vocabulary, grammar and

learning abilities.

"Sometimes we feel like we're from another planet when we introduce something," said Soro. "You can see on their faces – 'What is she talking about?' That's why we need to take them from step one and build on that.

"Every single word, the kids say, 'What was that?'" Soro continued. "Even very simple words they say 'What does that mean?' Even if you say 'jog,' you have to explain what that means. When we read a novel, I find every single word in the dictionary and type it and give it to them for each chapter. If you just let them read a chapter and summarize, they will be nowhere."

Because of the limits of teaching students in a language that is not their own, Soro and Walsh rely heavily on visuals to help the students learn both English and content.

"We do a lot of visuals and everything is hands-on," said Walsh.

CHALLENGING AND BEING CHALLENGED

Reading is a challenge for the students, not only because they are learning English, but because in many of their countries, reading for pleasure is not highly stressed.

"Many of the things the children – either the Spanish-speaking children or the Muslim children – read are religious things in their native language, so they haven't really even been exposed to children's novels," said Walsh. "So this is something we have to teach them, how to read a novel and what kind of pleasure you get out of that. It's something that they're not familiar with because it hasn't been part of their experience, so we can't take anything for granted, we can't just assume they know something."

Walsh began the fifth-graders reading a series of mystery novels by first reading to the class, then having the class read together. Many students are now on the second or third novel they have read by themselves.



A student in Jenny Soro's ESL class adds his M&M numbers to find the color ratio in his bag



Jenny Soro discusses calculations with some of her students.

Soro provides her sixth-graders with a vocabulary list and a tape of her reading the chapters to help them understand and be able to summarize the reading. The students also have the added benefit of hearing how to pronounce the words.

"I make them a cassette of the chapter and tell them to take it home and listen," said Soro. "And when they come here they exactly imitate the reader. Same tone, same up-and-down and I ask them how many times did you listen to that? And they say 10 times or six times, it depends. I also ask three or four questions for each chapter. So they will go home and listen and they have their vocabulary and I ask them to answer these questions."

This added preparation holds true for math, science and other subjects, as well.

Soro and Walsh sometimes have to read the students parts of the statewide assessment tests because the students are used to their voices.

"When I give them an assessment, they say 'Ms. Soro, you read' because they know the way I read," said Soro. "If you don't prepare their assessment for them, don't expect the highest score to be higher than a C or a D. You need to prepare every assessment."

WORKING TOGETHER

Despite all of the challenges of being a middle school student, learning English and attending class with classmates of various backgrounds and abilities, the students in Soro's and Walsh's classes get along very well.

"You don't see anyone putting another one down because he or she is new," said Soro. "They all support and help each other because they know – they're coming from the same background."

In both classrooms, the teachers group the students in fours, generally with one strong speaker and one strong reader. As the students worked on the Behavior Matters M&Ms lab, stronger-speaking students walked around the classrooms asking those who don't speak well if they

understood what was going on.

"Help your neighbor if you understand," Walsh instructed as she explained how to find the ratio of a sample of M&Ms to the whole bag. She instructed the students to take 15 M&Ms from their bag and separate them by color. She demonstrated how to find the ratio of one color out of 15 to that color out of an estimate of 55 per bag.

"This is what is great about teaching and about LeTUS – see how happy they are when they get it?" said Walsh. "They understand the rote method, and they get really happy and then I'm like, 'yes!'"

In each classroom, the teachers explained how to predict the number of M&Ms in a bag without opening the bag, explained ratios, showed them how to graph the number of colors and said that each color represents one kind of animal behavior.

Soro graphed the class total for the students before sending them home with an assignment to work on their individual graphs. The students, some of whom had never used a calculator or studied math before arriving in the United States, added the totals with Soro.

"We didn't practice with the calculator," she said. "This is good."

She had the class explain to her what percentages are and how to find them. And then came the reward.

"Do for yourself as you did for the class," she said. "Find your graph and percentage, and then you can eat your M&Ms." ■



Barbara Walsh leads her class in song while they wait to write their M&M color ratio findings on the class's chart. Walsh finds that doing activities together brings the students closer.

Cultural Differences Bring Kids Together



Jenny Soro prepares the M&M lab for her sixth-graders.

by Brad Perkins

Chicago is known as a multicultural city, and with this multiculturalism sometimes comes internal strife, especially when world events intervene.

But in Jenny Soro's and Barbara Walsh's English as A Second Language classes at Boone Elementary School, students who come from diverse, and sometimes enemy, backgrounds remain friends. And no one is embarrassed by lack of knowledge or teased by anyone else.

"Even if they are shy, they have support from others," said Soro. "There's nobody here better than them."

Soro's class was featured in the *Chicago Tribune* in October 2001 as she discussed the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks with students from the Middle East, Afghanistan and Europe. Two students –

one from Afghanistan and one from Russia – nearly came to blows in a school hallway because of their countries' animosity. Today, however, they are the best of friends.

This setting aside of cultural conflicts in the name of unity is prevalent in these classrooms today. Each student helps the other out, and all are eager to learn, discuss and show what they know. And the teachers want to learn about the students' cultures as well.

Soro, who was born in Iraq and has taught for nine years at Boone, knows the difficulties of reaching students of different backgrounds.

"It's difficult because I have students from around the world," she said. "Sometimes I ask how to say a word in their language to learn their background."

This helps Soro to reach students who normally would not speak up in class. And because of this, even the shyest student eventually gets in on the act.

"When I see someone who is shy, I tell them 'when you feel like you are ready tell me,'" said Soro. "So when that person reads for the first time, everybody's clapping. They are so close to each other, it's unbelievable."

For many of the students, school is the only place that they can seek advice about everything from reading help to typical pre-teen problems.

"When you were in school, you could go home and ask your mother," said Walsh, who has taught in Chicago for 30 years, including the last 11 at Boone. "But their parents have come from a different educational system, too. For example the fifth-grade curriculum is



Boone ESL students help each other out when one has a problem understanding an assignment. The students sit in groups to encourage discussion and helpfulness.

studying American history, well that's something that their parents haven't studied."

While these students may overcome certain hardships and lack some of the prior knowledge in certain subjects that other students may have, their unity helps them learn and relate to each other better.

"The thing that's wonderful about working with them is that they're like sponges," said Walsh. "They are absolute sponges. They are very attentive. They're all very decent children, they work well in groups. They depend upon each other because they all have different strengths. The energy is all positive energy."

To promote unity in her class, Walsh uses rhyming songs that the class can sing that play on the students' names. She also encourages students to learn about each other's cultures. While small distractions may occur during the class day, it helps the learning process in the long run. Units take longer to teach to a class that is not yet fluent in English, but it makes them better students – and better citizens.

"It doesn't matter as long as they're learning," said Walsh. "It could take all day."

Of course, no matter how much they learn in one day, they are still fifth- and sixth-graders.

"Can we go home? It's late," one of Soro's students asked, as the clock hit 3:05, five minutes after the final bell of the day. ■



Boone fifth-graders Anna Hasan (left) and Maliha Arman perform calculations to determine ratios.

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