

# The Communicator

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El Centro College*

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*El que sabe dos idiomas vale por dos.  
The one who knows two languages is worth double.*

## **World Languages Lab Staff:**

**Coordinator:** Jeff Gregory

**Dean:** Dr. Carla Boyer

### **Lab Assistants:**

Rahul Ghose

Marc McCullough

Mary Moa

Vandana Sureddy

## **What Does It Take to Learn a New Language?**

by Jeff Gregory, Coordinator

At El Centro College one of our jobs is to teach languages to adults. When you began to learn your first language **as a little child**, you had nothing to do all day except play and eat and listen to people around you talking. As you listened and observed you began to associate words with objects, actions, and relationships. So gradually you began to speak your “mother tongue” with relative ease. Professional linguists tell us that by the time a child reaches age five he/she knows the entire grammatical structure of his/her language.



But learning a new language **as an adult** is a totally different experience. You already have at least one language fully ingrained in your mind. Also your speech organs have adapted totally to the correct pronunciation of your “mother tongue.” In addition, you already have a full and busy life. You have to work, go to school, and may have a family to take care of. You do not have the leisure time to devote to language learning that you had as child.

So, with all these competing factors it is not easy to learn another language. But the good news is that **it can be done!** According to the observations of the famous American linguist, Noam Chomsky, every human being is born with a “*Universal Grammar*,” i.e., an innate ability to learn perfectly whatever language he/she is exposed to. Of course, this happens easiest and fastest as a child. But an adult still retains the “*Universal Grammar*” - so a new language can be learned at any age. It just becomes more difficult because of some of the factors mentioned above.

To overcome these competing factors a person must exercise three “virtues to language learning:”

*Continued...*

***commitment, practice, and perseverance.***

At El Centro College we have the professors, the curricula, as well as the World Languages Lab, to assist you in exercising these virtues. The process is not quick or easy, but the rewards are well worth the effort. We hope that you will experience firsthand the truth of our motto:

*Él que sabe dos idiomas vale por dos.  
The one who knows two languages is worth double.*

***WLL Staff  
Let us introduce our lab assistants...***



**Rahul Ghose**

"I am from Chittagong, a major city in southern Bangladesh, on the Bay of Bengal. My native language is Bengali, which is the 7<sup>th</sup> most spoken language in the world! It has been ten months since I arrived in the U.S.A. I live with my parents and brother in East Dallas. I want to be a computer engineer. One day I hope to be able to help millions of people around the world. I am a student at El Centro College and I am so happy to work and study here.



**Marc McCullough**

I am from Dallas, Texas, and am also a graduate from the Dallas Sound Lab School of the Recording Arts. My specialty is Sound Engineering and Studio Recording. It has been my pleasure to work with several artists like DOC and Erotic D. Currently I'm attending El Centro College full time studying to be a respiratory therapist. I love working in the World Languages Lab because the people here are friendly, and I also enjoy helping people in need of assistance.



**Mary Moa**

I transferred here from Cedar Valley College. My goal as a Lab Assistant in the World Languages Lab is to provide the best quality service for our students in a caring, sincere, and honest manner. All of our students will be treated with the respect and dignity that they deserve. I will listen to them and understand the language needs that they may have.

This will enable us to have a long lasting relationship with our students and become the World Languages Lab that our students can trust.



**Vandana Sureddy**

I am from Andhra Pradesh, the southern part of India, and am doing my Associates Degree in Radiology in El Centro College. I will be graduating in May, 2007, and am so looking forward to that day. I work in the world Languages Lab part time and like working here. This is my first work experience in the USA.

### ***Language Learning Via Technology***

*Review quiz from the last issue*

Directions: indicate true (T) or false (F) for the following questions:

\_\_\_ 1. Computer programs make language learning more accessible and interesting than a generation ago.

\_\_\_ 2. The formula for successful modern language learning is:  
**Software + Commitment + Time = Success**

\_\_\_ 3. The key factor in learning a new language is determined by what your first language is.

*Answers are found on p. 6*

### ***Mr. Gregory visits Rice University***



On November 6 our Coordinator, Jeff Gregory, visited Rice University in Houston, Texas, to observe their fine Language Resource Center.

(At Rice, students are not required to take a foreign language but 50% are taking language courses.)

### ***A Popular Companion***

by Jeff Gregory

#### *An Essay in Three Languages*

[Note: the following article is in three languages: English, French, and Spanish, for the benefit of all our language students at El Centro]



Among the creatures in the animal kingdom, the domestic canine species known as the "dog" holds high rank as a preferred family pet for humans.

Dogs seem to be quite content with human companions. It seems they could get along quite well without any further canine fellowship if they

have human social interaction. Dogs' friendliness, loyalty, and protective nature have won them the hearts of many an owner. Dogs are known for their wagging tails, wet noses, licking tongues, and, often, floppy ears.

Many a person comes home, tired from a day's work, and finds that the enthusiastic, affectionate greeting of their dog re-energizes them. House dogs are always happy to assist in house cleaning by licking up the crumbs that fall from their master's table.

To sum up, their intelligence and affection have won dogs many devoted fans among the human species.

#### **Un compagnon populaire.**

(translated into French by Daniel Campos, an El Centro student from Paris, France)



Parmi les créatures du règne animal, l'espèce canine connue sous le nom « chien » tient le haut rang d'animal favori chez les humains.

Les chiens semblent être tout à fait contents en notre compagnie. Il semble qu'ils pourraient tout à fait vivre sans leur congénère s'ils ont l'interaction sociale humaine.

Les chiens ont la particularité d'être bienveillants, loyaux, et leur nature protectrice justifie le fait qu'ils aient

gagné le cœur de beaucoup de propriétaires. Les chiens sont connus pour leur queue remuante, leur nez mouillé, leur langue toujours prête à vous lécher, et souvent pour leurs oreilles souples.

Lorsqu' une personne rentre fatiguée, après une longue journée de travail, elle se sent revitalisée grâce à l'enthousiasme et l'affection de son animal favori.

Les chiens sont toujours heureux de participer aux tâches ménagères, léchant les miettes qui tombent de la table de leur maître.

Pour résumer, l'intelligence et l'affection des chiens ont gagné le cœur de beaucoup d'admirateurs dévoués parmi l'espèce humaine.

#### **Un acompañante popular**

(translated into Spanish by Geraldine Rodríguez, ESOL student, from Mérida, Mexico).



Entre las criaturas del reino animal, la especie canina doméstica conocida como "perro" tiene un alto rango de preferencia entre los humanos como mascota familiar.

Los perros parecen regocijarse muy bien con la compañía humana. Al parecer pueden pasársela bien sin convivencia canina si tienen algún

tipo de interacción social con humanos. La simpatía, la fidelidad y la naturaleza protectora del perro se han ganado los corazones de muchos de sus dueños. Son conocidos por el movimiento de sus colas, por tener la nariz mojada, por lamer todo con sus lenguas y en ocasiones, por sus orejitas caídas.

Muchas personas cuando llegan a casa, cansados del trabajo diario, encuentran el gran entusiasmo y los afectuosos saludos de sus perros, que los revitalizan de nuevo. Los perros domésticos siempre están felices de participar en la limpieza de la casa comiéndose las migajas de comida que se caen de la mesa.

Para resumir, su inteligencia y afección han hecho que los perros ganaran muchos seguidores entre la especie humana.

### ***Interesting Facts\*...***

There are about 6,900 living languages in the world. For the three languages taught at El Centro, here are their world rankings - how they rate with other languages in the number of native speakers in each:

#3 – Spanish – 350 million

#4 – English – 340 million

#18 – French – 67 million

Note: next semester the most spoken language in the world will be offered at El Centro: Mandarin Chinese – 873 million

\*source: Seattle Language Academy

### **Instructor Lee to move on...**

It is to our loss that Professor Robyn Lee has decided that this will be her last semester teaching ESOL at El Centro. Ms. Lee began teaching here in the fall of 2003. While teaching here she earned her Th.M (Master of Theology) at Dallas Theological Seminary. Congratulations, Robyn! She plans to either work as a teacher and/or on a graduate degree.

### ***Winner of Most Popular ESOL Software...***



*...for Fall Semester is Fundamentals of English Grammar Interactive and Understanding and Using English Grammar Interactive.* Our students are getting better at English grammar and enjoying the process through using this fine software.

### **Meet one of our ESOL instructors:**



Dear Students,  
Many of you know me, but for those of you who do not, my name is Theresa Kiefer. I am certain that we have all said "Good Morning" on those foggy Saturday mornings when we all come together to work toward our mutual learning of language and culture. It brings me

great joy to see each of your smiling faces and to help you through this journey of "life" in the United States. Each one of you is brave and special and add so much to our family here at El Centro. More importantly, I want you ALL to come take our classes, LOVE this language, and HAVE FUN! Keep in mind that, when you learn a new language it opens doors to another world. I hope you will all walk through that door and embrace this life and all that this country has to offer.

Much Luck!  
Theresa Kiefer

(Note: Ms. Kiefer teaches ESOL in the Credit Dept., as well as ESL and Spanish for the Continuing Education Dept.)



*Other ESOL instructors this fall include Lisa Yabuki, Erin Lestrade, Wayne Conrad, Roberta Hofbauer, Julie Poe, Clinton Franklin, Robyn Lee, Harry Holden, Jala Yonkovich, and Maggie Spence.. You can learn more about them in **future issues**.*

### Survey Results

A survey was conducted recently to see what our upper level ESOL Writing instructors and students think of the new *Criterion Online Writing* program that is being used for the lab assignments. The overall results are favorable and we will continue using Criterion in the spring semester.

### Language Lab Coordinators to Meet at El Centro

Coordinators from around the DCCCD (Dallas County Community Colleges) will meet here on Nov. 15 to share ideas and information.

### Do You Read Out Loud? (you should!)

According to some scholars, people in some cultures have traditionally read out loud (not silently) as a regular practice. There are many benefits to reading out loud when it comes to language learning. Read more about it by picking up the handout on the information table.

### Language Lab Statistics

According to our AccuTrack recording system, for the first eight weeks of the fall semester 570 individual students used the World Languages Lab. Here are the winners for number of minutes spent in the lab:

#### ESOL Credit:

- #1- Maria Morales – 3,679
- #2 – Chih-Yen Hsu – 2,601
- #3 – Gabi Acosta – 2,089
- #4 – Lozano Clemente – 1,984
- #5 – Blanca Deltoro – 1,864

#### Spanish:

- #1 – Larry Molina – 1,228
- #2 – Gabriel Chavez – 1,135

#### French:

- #1 – Catherine Salinas – 412
- #2 – Daniel Campos – 406



*[These students have prizes in the WLL]*

### Answers to Quiz on p. 1:

1. True
2. True
3. False (the correct answer is *commitment*.)