Not too long ago parents complained that their children spent too much time chatting on the phone, watching television or listening to objectionable, loud music when they should have been doing their homework. Now, even if your child is seated at the desk doing his homework, you may find that he takes frequent breaks from writing essays on the computer to download music, watch video-clips, play interactive games with people from around the world or keep up with some of his 200 friends on Facebook. These new online forms of information sharing and communication (examples of Web 2.0) may seem nothing more than distractions to teachers but Web 2.0 holds much potential to enhance our professional and personal lives.

What then is Web 2.0? Though the name implies a new version of the World Wide Web, Web 2.0 really refers to cumulative changes to the way software developers and everyday users use the Web. It refers to developments that enable interactive information sharing and collaboration on the Web. Examples include social networking sites (eg Facebook, Myspace, Bebo), video-sharing sites (eg YouTube), blogs and wikis. The essential feature of a Web 2.0 site is that it allows users to interact with other users and to change content.

The Professional Teachers’ Council NSW (PTC) recently organised a workshop at St Joseph’s College, Hunters Hill on the topic of “Web 2.0 Tools for Professional Teaching Associations”. Sue Bremner, ATESOL’s Vice-president and I attended and learnt a great deal. The information we received will be shared with ATESOL (NSW) members via articles in this and upcoming newsletters. Judy O’Connell, Head of Library and Information Services at St Josephs, and all round expert on the internet and new technology, presented the workshop. Using several applications, a computer and her ever-present iPhone, Judy very ably demonstrated how Web 2.0 can increase teacher efficiency (and also be fun). In the collaborative and sharing spirit which is one of the most appealing aspects of Web 2.0 Judy provided many addresses for useful web sites. You may like to look at the following site which Judy created for the workshop: http://sites.google.com/site/ptcweb2/home. Browsing this site will give you an excellent introduction to Web 2.0 as well as access to lots of useful free applications.

At the beginning of the session Judy showed a video clip of a very sweet baby like the one below. What do such babies have to do with Web 2.0 and teaching? If you search for "iphone baby" in YouTube you will find that thousands of parents have uploaded video clips of their babies using an iPhone. Babies are using iPhones to take
Welcome to the spring edition of ATESOL (NSW)’s newsletter.

It seems that ESL/ESOL teachers are very busy at the moment. In addition to teaching, some teachers are campaigning against a loss of working conditions. Other teachers are working on the National Curriculum while still others are improving their internet skills so that they can teach more efficiently.

With fourth term coming up, the end of the year is in sight. Then there will be time to plan for professional learning during the summer holidays and at conferences next year. This issue gives information on all these matters.

For their generous assistance with this issue I would like to thank Robert Jackson, Elizabeth Hotop, Jill Sillar, Jill Yates, Kath Brandon, Eva Bernat and all contributors. Your contributions are always welcome at – helenfong9@gmail.com

Kind regards,

Helen Fong
Executive Officer/Newsletter Editor
Phone: 0427 536 897

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ATESOL NSW INC – COUNCIL MEMBERS 2009

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Cover image: Baby loves iPhone, She is 12 months old and loves iPhone. Her favourite Apps are Cooliris and First Words.
Source – www.flickr.com/photos/gnt/350440270
It is with deep sadness that I report the passing of Dr Penny McKay on 22 August 2009 after a long illness.

A long-time advocate for ESL education and LBOTE students, Penny was highly regarded for her work in TESOL teacher education, language curriculum and assessment and over the years worked on some of the research projects conducted through NCELTR in collaboration with her colleagues there. She was a member of the Executive Board of TESOL and worked tirelessly to support the research activities of TESOL.

A special 2009 issue of TESOL Quarterly on assessment edited by Chris Davison of the University of NSW, and Constant Leung of King’s College, London, has been dedicated to Penny. The following tribute is taken from their citation in the issue:

TESOL 2009 special issue

This special issue of TESOL Quarterly on teacher-based English language assessment is dedicated to one of the pioneers in the field – our much loved and respected TESOL friend and colleague Penny McKay.

As a teacher, consultant, researcher, author, and professional activist, Penny McKay was a leader in language education in Australia and internationally. She is best known for her work on developing the ESL bandscales (The NLLIA ESL Bandscales Version 2 (ed.), QUT and Independent Schools Queensland, 2007), and for her book Assessing Young Language Learners (Cambridge University Press, 2006) which won the 2007 Kenneth W. Mildenberger Prize, awarded by the Modern Languages Association of America.

Working collaboratively with educators and researchers in schools, Penny pioneered an approach to assessing learners’ development in English as an additional language. She was committed to four fundamental principles. First, assessment frameworks should be tied to empirical, classroom-based observations of English language learners of different ages and backgrounds. Second, those frameworks should respect and respond to classroom teachers’ understandings of and insights into their learners. Third, frameworks must be informed by theory as it continually develops. And finally, they must be designed to support learners’ language development and to inform teachers in their teaching. These principles are dynamic and generative. They have set a national and an international benchmark for the assessment of second/other language learning by children and adults, and can be applied to educational assessment more generally.

Penny’s work lives on in The Penny McKay Award for Promising Doctoral Research in School-Based Language Development, Curriculum and Assessment, co-hosted by the Applied Linguistics Association of Australia (ALAA) and the Australian Council of TESOL Associations (ACTA).


Robert Jackson

“All of us approach teaching in different ways. For me, teaching has been, from the beginning, an iterative activity in which I’ve worked with students and educators to search for, try out and disseminate effective teaching practices. I have always sought to observe, ask questions, and find patterns in how English and other languages are learned and taught. My life as a language consultant and researcher has been a stimulating journey of workshops, drafts and feedback seminars with students and colleagues. My colleagues’ questions about what is happening and being trialled in their classrooms has made an invaluable contribution to my work. We have become successful as language educators by working collaboratively and sharing our knowledge and skills like this.”

Penny McKay, 15 February 2009
MEMBER NEWS

Professional Development
Planning for 2010

ATESOL is now planning for PD in 2010. These are some thoughts for workshops for next year.

In addition to our perennials Grammar Workshop (K–3), Grammar Workshop (4–8), HSC English (ESL) Revision Day and Our Favourite Lessons (Primary and Secondary) we are considering workshops on the following:

• Teaching refugees
• Low literacy
• Pronunciation
• Computer Assisted Language Learning
• Teaching Adults

We are also considering two Conference on the Move sessions to follow up the three successfully held in Coffs Harbour, Armidale and Prestons (South West Sydney) in 2009.

Two possible sites for Conference on the Move 2010 are Newcastle/Hunter and Wagga Wagga.

We would appreciate your input and suggestions for professional development sessions. Please contact Bess Wassman (Vice president/ Professional Development Coordinator) with your ideas and suggestions at – besswassman@yahoo.com.

Our Favourite Lessons
(Secondary and Primary)

Early each year Sue Bremner convenes a workshop where several teachers present favourite lessons which have been well received by students. All attendees leave with lots of new ideas to try out and new ways of tackling higher order thinking skills with their students. Sue is now planning for 2010. If you are interested in presenting, contact Sue on sbremner55@gmail.com.

Term 3 2009

HSC English (ESL) Revision Day

Tuesday 6 October, 9.30am – 4.00pm

How to make best use of study time for the HSC English (ESL) exams

For all students of HSC English (ESL) and their teachers

Venue: Smith Auditorium, Shore School, William St, North Sydney

Cost: $25 students, and $50 teachers

Bookings: Yvonne Little, Professional Teachers’ Council NSW, Phone: 02 9564 3322

ATESOL

ARE YOU INTERESTED IN JOINING COUNCIL?

If you are interested in joining Council, you are most welcome to attend any of our Council meetings. The remaining dates for 2009 are as follows:

Tuesday 30 October
Tuesday 27 November

All meetings take place from 5.30pm – 6.30pm at the Professional Teachers’ Council NSW Conference Centre, which is located in the grounds of Leichhardt Public School, corner of Norton and Marion Streets Leichhardt, NSW.

Light refreshments are provided during the meeting.

Please contact the PTC NSW office on (02) 9564 3322 or admin@ptc.nsw.edu.au to advise that you will be attending.

You are also welcome to discuss Council membership with any Councillors or the Executive Officer. See contact details on page 2 of this issue.
FREE English for Academic Purposes Workshop

To round off another great year in Professional Development for ATESOL (NSW) we invite all members and friends to attend a FREE workshop which will run as a session at the 3rd Free Linguistics International Conference.

Date: Saturday 10 October 2009
10.30am – 12.40pm

Venue: University of Sydney,
Eastern Avenue, off City Road
Room to be confirmed

Presenter
Cintia Agosti, MA App Ling (TESOL), PG Cert (Ling Res)

With more than a decade of experience in LSP, Cintia has been involved in English for Academic Purposes through the development and teaching of several discipline specific direct entry into university pathways, the facilitation of teacher training sessions, her work as a consultant on the development and assessment of EAP programs, the delivery of conference presentations and the publication of research-based papers. Cintia is currently the coordinator of Language for Specific Purposes within the Linguistics Department at Macquarie University.

Abstract
This workshop is designed to develop teachers’ skills in teaching English for Academic Purposes (EAP). During this workshop we will discuss perceived English language needs as reported by EAP students and their teachers through their responses to questionnaires completed after a pre-sessional academic literacies intensive program. Based on the results of this analysis and on the responses experienced EAP teachers provided to another questionnaire, this workshop will focus on the skills teachers require in order to teach EAP programs effectively. Special attention will be given to the teaching of critical thinking (including looking at activities that work) and writing skills within the framework of an academic literacies approach to program design and implementation. Samples of materials used to scaffold the acquisition of these skills will be showcased as a point of departure for further discussion on the types of activities students find useful.

Registration
Also email helenfong9@gmail.com to let ATESOL know you will be attending so we can provide a room of suitable size for attendees.
Web 2.0: Time-saver or time-waster?
...continued from page 1

and view photos, make phone calls, listen to music and play with favourite applications. To see an example, visit Judy’s website (http://sites.google.com/site/ptcweb2/home) and go to Slide 4 of the Introduction. The baby in the video-clip cannot talk yet but follows her father’s instructions to manipulate the iPhone. To those who are worried that the baby is pushed too quickly into using technology, it may be reassuring to know the application which captivates the child features the classic children’s song “The wheels on the bus (go round and round)”. Take a good look at this child, in learning to be technology savvy at a young age, she is probably typical of our future students.

According to Judy, the challenge before us is to:

• trade-in good methods and tools for substantially better ones!!
• look in better ways for information and resources
• work in better ways to distribute news, resources and professional support
• seamlessly collect, collaborate and distribute information and knowledge across our professional networks
• create a community of enquiry that is simultaneously one-to-one and one-to-many
• embed new tools and new techniques into our daily practices
• promote change playfully!

In the rest of this article I will outline some Web 2.0 applications and my own experiences in using them for the first time.

Tagging

Tagging is an open and informal method of categorising that allows users to associate keywords with online content (web pages, pictures and posts). You can tag using any terms which have meaning for you. Two well-known examples of tagging systems delicious and flickr, have become key tools for educators the world over.

The benefits of tagging for teachers (according to eSchool News) include the following. They:

• cut down online clutter to deliver more relevant bits of information
• make it easier to find desired information again
• can direct students quickly and easily to more relevant educational content online
• allow users to make their list of tags and sites available to (and searchable by) either a closed community of individuals or all other web surfers.

You can tag and collect related websites together using social bookmarking sites like delicious.

Social Bookmarking with delicious

1. Register by going to http://delicious.com. Follow the “get started” link to sign up and create a free account. Download the browser buttons.

2. The next time you come across a website that you want to remember, click on “post to delicious” or the button. Enter key words as “tags”, for example, I have saved to delicious.com Judy O’Connell’s website (http://sites.google.com/site/ptcweb2/home) and used the tags “Judyoconnell”, “Web2”, “cloudcomputing”. Other people may use other tags. Favourite individual sites to which this site is linked can also be saved at delicious.com using such tags as “videomaking”, “photos” etc.

3. Retrieve your bookmarks by going to http://delicious.com and selecting your bookmarks. Use the tags link on the right to filter and display different groups of your bookmarks. One great advantage of saving your bookmarks to a social bookmarking site such as delicious.com is that your bookmarks are accessible wherever you have access to the internet. They are not confined to one computer. That means you can access your bookmarks from different computers whether you are at work or home or even if you are on holidays, wherever you have access to the internet.

Why is delicious.com called a social bookmarking site? This refers to the fact that you can keep your bookmarks
Web 2.0: Time-saver or time-waster?

personal or you can “publish” them, making them available to either people you know or to everyone. The corollary is that you can access the bookmarks of other people and may be able to find websites of interest to you more quickly than if you had to search alone. Delicious is the first application I tried out after attending the Web 2.0 workshop. As a means of saving and sorting interesting websites, I find it invaluable. As well as bookmarking sites to do with ESL which may be useful for my own teaching or the ATESOL (NSW) newsletter, I also bookmark sites to do with personal interests which include a trip to Japan I’m planning for next year and also Chinese Australian history. By tagging each site saved I am easily able to find sites relevant to a topic when I want them.

Cloud computing
Cloud computing is a computing paradigm in which tasks are assigned to a combination of connections, software and services accessed over a network. This network of servers and connections is collectively known as “the cloud.” This means that if you save your data on a ‘cloud’ then no data is stored on your personal computer (unless you choose to also save the data there).

Ross Cartlidge, software engineer for Google and a man who knows the needs of teachers, being husband to the current president of the History Teachers’ Association spoke passionately about cloud computing and the Google cloud in particular. He explained that all data uploaded is stored on 3–9 computers and that no data is lost if an individual user’s computer breaks down, is stolen or lost. There is no need for local systems administration. If you use cloud computing you will not run out of space on your computer. Cloud computing is particularly useful for collaborative projects as documents may be easily accessed from the computers of several individuals. There is no need for collaborators to send documents to each other.

Google docs

1. To start on googledocs go to www.docs.google.com.
2. If you have a gmail account sign in to google docs. If you don’t click the Get started button and follow the prompts.
3. To create a new document click on New and choose Document. A new document will open up. The tool bar is similar to most word processors.

I have just started using googledocs for a personal research project which I want to access from different computers. I will probably use this application cautiously as I have some concerns about access, ie whether the system may sometimes be ‘down” at inconvenient times. I will from time to time save the text to my personal computer. Googledocs may be more suitable for documents which are not confidential.

I am also experimenting with using Googledocs for ATESOL projects. Theoretically, if small mostly volunteer run organisations like ATESOL used cloud computing, documents would be accessible indefinitely to future office bearers and there would be no loss of continuity as there can be if correspondence is kept on the computers of individual office holders.

Helen Fong
ATESOL (NSW) Executive Officer

This article has drawn from online content provided by Judy O’Connell, and material written by Liz. B. Davis as well as material produced by Practical applications (www.practicalapplications.co.uk). Thank you to Judy O’Connell, Ross Cartlidge, the PTC NSW and St Josephs College for providing such a stimulating workshop.

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Four thousand TAFE teachers and supporters from across NSW rallied outside Parliament House in Macquarie Street on Wednesday 2nd September. The participants voted unanimously to continue their campaign to ensure the NSW government delivers proper salary increases without destroying the quality of TAFE education in NSW.

The NSW government has made various demands on TAFETA to cover the 1.5% gap in government funding of the TAFE award agreement of February 2009. The initial government demand was for an additional 57 hours teaching p.a. This demand was then increased to 118 hours for teachers (17.3% increase); 154 hours for head teachers Band 2 (47.5% increase); and 154 hours for special programs co-ordinators (85.6% increase).

The current government demand is for an increase of 71 face to face teaching hours p.a and an increase in the working week from 30 to 35 hours as well as the loss of Professional Development time. School teachers did not lose any working conditions in their award agreement of the same date.

The September 2nd meeting carried unanimous resolutions, expressing no confidence in the Director-General Michael Coutts-Trotter and urging the Minister, Verity Firth, to ‘take charge of this matter from the Department of Education and Training and to enter into negotiations with the Federation to resolve the dispute.’

For further information on this campaign go to this link: www.nswtf.org.au/media/latest_2009/20090902_seprally.html
National Conference 2010
Preparations for the ACTA Conference 2010 are well under way. The conference title is ‘Redefining “TESOL” for the 21st Century – Language learning and teaching for the future’ and will be held at the Gold Coast Holiday Inn on 7–10 July 2010.

The conference will focus on the need for TESOL practitioners to rethink and reconfigure the way we view and practice our profession in light of rapid global change and new challenges: to think outside the square and to share ideas and practices that are contributing to such thinking.

There will be four strands at the conference:
- Pedagogy (including classroom practice and teacher education)
- Assessment and Evaluation
- Learners and Learning (including Second Language Acquisition, identity, literacy development, culture, etc.)
- Curriculum and Policy.

Participants will be from early childhood, primary, secondary, ELICOS, TEFL, adult migrant and tertiary sectors, including teachers/scholars who work with Indigenous language learners at all levels.

The Call for Abstracts has been released and can be accessed at the Conference website – www.astmanagement.com.au/ACTA10/

ACTA has also accepted an invitation from the Australian Joint Council of Professional Teaching Associations to promote the conference at the 2009 International Conference ‘Tipping Points’ at the Darwin Convention Centre on 26–28 September 2009.

ACARA
ACTA is calling for feedback from the states and territories to prepare a response for the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) on the Senior Secondary Years Curriculum Position Paper (version 0.6) which is available on ACARA’s website – www.acara.edu.au/position_papers.html

The Senior Secondary Years Curriculum Position Paper proposes guidelines for national curriculum development in English, mathematics, history and science for the senior years of schooling.

ACTA is currently in the process of drafting a discussion paper entitled ‘Towards a National Framework for Learners of English as an Additional Language or Dialect (EAL/D) in Australian Schools’, and has been invited to send representatives to the ACARA Senior Years English National Curriculum Development Workshop held in Melbourne on 22 September.

LLNP
An ACTA sub-committee is also in the process of drafting a response to the Vocational Graduate Certificate and Graduate Diploma in Language, Literacy and Numeracy.

Invitation to contribute
We would be very interested to hear from any ATESOL NSW members who would like to contribute to these national responses and any other advocacy issues in which ACTA is involved. Please contact me or one of the other ATESOL NSW Councillors directly if you would like to provide your input.

Copies of both of these responses will be forwarded to ATESOL NSW members when they become available.

Indigenous education

As well as ACTA’s ongoing support for the Northern Territory campaign, we have also been working on an ACTA National Definition of English as an Additional Language or Dialect (EAL/D) learners which will include speakers of Aboriginal English. Preliminary talks with the NSW Aboriginal Education Consultative Group have been very positive, and we hope to have a final version of this document ready to go out by the end of the year. One of the major hindrances to ESL education in Australia over the past decades has been a lack of agreement between the states, not only about curriculum and assessment tools, but also about who the cohort of ESL (or EAL/D) students actually includes. A consistent national definition of EAL/D learners sponsored by ACTA can only be a positive move in the seemingly endless battle to retain and strengthen differentiated ESL support programs and funding in the states and territories.

Robert Jackson
ACTA Vice President
PARTIAL PARAGRAPHS

by Jill Yates

About five years ago when I was surfing the web looking for ESL resources I found this little gem. Unfortunately it has since disappeared into cyber space but, once used, never forgotten!

This strategy is best used at the end of a unit of work to check if students have learnt the English, Concepts and Skills that you have taught. However, it could just as easily be used at the beginning of the unit as a Needs Analysis activity.

This particular piece of writing is designed to be used at the end of a Year 8 Science unit about the 5 Kingdoms of Living Things. (See ATESOL (NSW) Newsletter June 2009 for this Science unit.) The Objectives are to write an Information Report (Description) with the appropriate structure and language features of that Genre, and to be able to work in pairs (a team). The complexity of the text can be altered to suit your needs.

This is what you do. Explain to the students that now they are at the end of the unit and have learnt how to write a Description of the 5 Kingdoms of Living Things, you want them to copy a good summary into their books. Holding up your Description, which is right and left justified (as per newspaper article), tell them that you will give a copy to each pair of students and they are to copy it into their books.

Then, with scissors in hand, tell them that you have decided to give them only part of it. They are not to copy the whole piece. Instead, they are to finish it. Dramatically cut off the right side of the sheet (the amount you cut off depends on the students’ language ability – a small amount for weak students, more for strong students).

Hand out the sheets and give them a time limit to finish the missing part of the Description in their books. Note that the missing words on the right side of the sheet can readily be altered by moving the margin. This way you can challenge students by having more or less of the target language missing.

When they are finished, use an OHT of the sheet with the cut part covered and slowly reveal it as you proceed. Ask students for their suggestions for the missing words or parts of words. As you do, ask the reason for their decision and why they didn’t choose another alternative. When you finish, ask them what Genre this is and what information is in each paragraph, and why.

Your conversation may go something like this (Questions in italics, with the responses following):

What is missing on the first line?
classed
What is another word you could use there?
classified
Does anyone know what verb tense/voice this is called?
Present Passive
Why is this tense/voice used in this piece of writing?
It is a Description so we use Present Tense. Passive Voice is used to make it more formal and objective and to remove Us from the sentence.

What about the second line; what’s missing there?
Plants
Is there any punctuation missing there?
Yes, a comma.
Why do we use a comma there?
Because there is a list.
How do we know there is a list?
We know this is a list because there is a colon before “Plants” indicating that a list might follow, and the words after “Plants” have commas between them.

And the third line; it looks like a little word?
and
When do we use “and”?
Between the last two things in a list.

Try it yourself and discover what you need to know before you can complete the activity. This then, is what you need to teach the students before you do it with them. I came up with the following list that needs to be pre-taught.

• Content (concepts) – I usually use plenty of visuals, videos, experiments and teacher talk to get across the concepts especially if they have large educational gaps.

• Which Genre?
  o Model
  o Deconstruction
    ▸ Structure – How is the text organised?
      What comes first, second…?
      – Language features
      – Language functions
PARTIAL PARAGRAPHS

◊ Classifying  
◊ Listing  
◊ Describing use or function  
◊ Describing things  
  •  Joint construction  

• Vocabulary  
  •  General (things, use…)  
  •  Subject-specific (Kingdoms, Protists, Monerans, multicellular, organisms, cells, nucleus, chlorophyll, Photosynthesis…)  

• Syntax  
  •  Grammar grid (functional grammar) – This grid was first devised at Milpera and tabulates parts of a simple sentence into Process, Participants (Doer and Done to), Circumstance and Conjunctions. It helps students to structure a sentence so that it is syntactically correct.  
  •  Parts of speech (verbs, nouns, adjectives, prepositions, articles…)  
    •  Verbs  
      •  Choice of verbs (classify, be, have, contain use, make, call, divide)  
      •  Verb Tense (Present, Why?)  
      •  Voice (Active/Passive)  
      •  Verb agreement with subject  

  •  Articles  
    •  Definite/indefinite/plurals  

  •  Punctuation  
    •  Upper case, lower case, commas, colons  

  •  Prepositions  

  •  Relative Pronouns (which, that)  

PLANTS  

Living things can be classified into five Kingdoms: Plants, Animals, Fungi, Protists and Monerans.  
Plants are multicellular organisms which have cells that contain a nucleus and the green colour, chlorophyll. Plants use chlorophyll, carbon dioxide, water and the energy in sunlight to make oxygen and simple sugars, which they use as food. This process is called Photosynthesis.  

The Plant Kingdom is divided into four groups: Mosses, Ferns, Conifers and Flowering Plants. Most of these plants have leaves, stems and roots.  

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Grammar Grid (from H. Bergstrom)  

Instructions  

•  Begin with the PROCESS. What is happening (the doing, saying, thinking, being word)?  
•  Then the PARTICIPANT/S. Who or what is involved in the process of doing, saying, thinking or being?  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONJUNCTION</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>CIRCUMSTANCE</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>PARTICIPANT (DOER)</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>PROCESS</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>PARTICIPANT (DONE TO)</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>CIRCUMSTANCE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Linker, conjunction</td>
<td>Adverb, adverbial phrase</td>
<td>Noun group, pronoun</td>
<td>Verb group</td>
<td>Noun group, pronoun, adjective</td>
<td>Adverb, adverbial phrase</td>
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<td>e.g.</td>
<td>tomorrow</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>will</td>
<td></td>
<td>at the shop</td>
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<td>so</td>
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<td>very much</td>
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<td>near the school</td>
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</table>

Jill Yates, Dip RSA Diploma in Teaching English across the Curriculum in Multilingual Schools (RSA London), Dip Ed (Hons) (University of Melbourne) B Ag Science (University of Melbourne).  
Since 1998, Jill has been teaching Mathematics, Science and SOSE in the ESL SEU (Special Education Unit) at MacGregor State High School, Brisbane. MacGregor State High School is one of the largest secondary schools in Queensland with an enrolment of over 1600 students from more than 50 different nationalities. She is currently involved in the writing of a teaching unit about the Water Cycle for the Department of Natural Resources.
MISSING LINKS IN REMOTE LITERACY DEBATE

How do we make sense of the literacy debate in remote Indigenous Australia? Public commentary commonly attributes blame to inadequate teaching, poor resourcing of remote schools or even lack of parental support for school attendance.

Recently, in a review of education in the Northern Territory, Dr Chris Sarra from the Indigenous Education Leadership Institute in Queensland, accused NT educators of expecting less of their Indigenous students and inadvertently creating an underclass.

Why? Because the 2008 national English literacy and numeracy benchmarking tests indicated that the NT had some of the highest illiteracy rates in the country.

With its singular focus on schooling, benchmark testing and attendance, the drive to increase literacy in remote Indigenous Australia tends to ignore adult literacy.

Australian of the Year Mick Dodson has just declared that adult literacy is the key to closing the gap in Aboriginal life expectancy.

The literacy debate rarely addresses the critical social and historical factors that also account for why literacy levels among remote Indigenous youth are lower than their mainstream, urban, English-as-a-first-language-speaking counterparts.

The focus on schooling obscures the less obvious fact that we must also be cognisant of the broader sociocultural factors associated with literacy acquisition, maintenance and transmission in newly literate context such as that of the remote Indigenous world.

There are many complex and intersecting factors that can be attributed to the lower rates of literacy, many of which actually have little to do with the quality of teaching or resources, school attendance or lower expectations of competence.

Let’s look at just a few.

The newly literate context

It is commonly assumed that schooling alone will achieve uniform high levels of literacy competence without acknowledging that Indigenous people in the remote world made the transition from an oral culture to a literate culture only relatively recently, in comparison to most Western or other major literate cultures.

In some remote sites, this generation of school-attenders may in fact be only the first, second or third generation to pass through schooling and literacy is being learned in contexts where there are few antecedent social literacy practices.

Literacy in English as we know it today has taken more than a thousand years to evolve and we still have not achieved universal literacy, despite a long history of schooling interconnected with family and community literacy practices developed over many centuries.

In fact, the 2006 national Australian (i.e. mainstream, not remote Indigenous) Adult Literacy and Life Skills survey found that 16% of the adult population has reading, comprehension and maths skills so low that they would be required to undertake a Certificate I or II basic education course to attain the employability skills required by modern industry.

Literacy not just schooling

Academics from the disciplines of history, anthropology, linguistics and literacy studies commonly view literacy as social practice. For them, literacy cannot be understood simply in terms of pedagogy as it is part of other more embracing social institutions and conceptions.

From this perspective initiatives to increase literacy also need to take account of broader issues such as the connection between language and identity and what people actually use reading and writing for in everyday life, beyond the parameters of schooling.

Researchers recognise that children who learn to read successfully do so because, for them, learning to read is a cultural and not primarily an instructed process.

That is, being literate involves more than having individual technical literacy skills, it also depends on the relationship between language behaviors and supporting social relations and cultural practices.

These cultural practices are what people use reading and writing for in adult everyday life in different social and cultural contexts: at home, at work, in church, and in recreational and leisure pursuits.

For example, many remote Indigenous adults with strong literacy skills often did not learn to read or write well at school, but strengthened their literacy through adult participation in Christian literacy activities (such as Bible study or translation) or involvement in employment or
MISSING LINKS IN REMOTE LITERACY DEBATE

governance roles requiring literacy.
Cultural practices result from the acquisition and transmission of everyday social habits and routines over successive generations.
If the current generation of remote Indigenous children are to acquire a set of cultural practices where reading and writing are integral to everyday life, in the way that literacy is assumed practice in most European Australian families, then we need to pay attention to incorporating literacy into life beyond the school boundary.
Following on from this, it is well understood that family literacy is an important antecedent to school success.
If this is so, why are we not concerned that Indigenous families have few locations in their community to buy or access home reading materials? Community stores commonly stock DVDs, CDs and occasionally magazines, but rarely children’s books, educational activities or writing materials.
In the bid to improve literacy in remote communities why is the government not ensuring that community stores also sell cheap child-oriented reading and writing resources?
Likewise, why is there not the demand that every remote community have a public library so that reading materials can be accessed in the out-of-school hours and borrowed by families for home literacy activities.
In a number of remote communities Libraries and Knowledge Centres have been established by the Northern Territory Library, but they are unable to service every NT community.
Why are we also not noticing the important job that youth centres, media centres and arts projects in remote communities are doing to ensure that Indigenous youth have access to computers to continue reading, writing and honing their computer skills in the out-of-school hours?
In many locations, youth centres are seen as diversionary rather than as learning environments. Nevertheless, in youth centres and media centres across remote Australia we are seeing young people engaging in filmmaking and computer editing, writing film scripts and titles, as well as writing, recording, transcribing and translating songs and other oral texts, often in their own language as well as in English.
These are all activities that enhance meaningful literacy acquisition, maintenance and development.
During a recent visit to Warlpiri communities in the Northern Territory I noticed that youth centres had far fewer resources than schools, yet high attendance and engaged participation in activities requiring literacy. Warlpiri communities recognise the importance of youth centres having substantially funded and built them using their own money from mining royalty payments.

Language and identity
Indigenous futures are increasingly being oriented towards employment and mainstream aspirations.
In Australia, despite our multilingual heritage, there is a sense that English is superior. More worryingly, there is an assumption that learning English will lead to literacy acquisition, and ipso facto that English literacy will result in employment and improved futures for remote Indigenous youth.
Most children in remote schools come from a speech community where the mother tongue is an Indigenous language. Yet most of the teaching in remote Indigenous schools, and increasingly so in recent years, is in English.
We can continue to teach more and more English, but we may never reach the desired outcomes of improved literacy and numeracy levels if we don’t also understand the sociocultural factors including the nuanced relationship between language and identity.
For the realisation of mainstream employment goals Indigenous families have to believe that schooling is worthwhile and that the institution respects their language, culture and community.
Recently the Northern Territory Department of Education and Training (NTDET) decided to replace the bilingual education program with more intensive English teaching.
There were only nine operating bilingual education programs in remote NT schools.
In the Warlpiri region the bilingual program gave Warlpiri families a strong sense of ownership and pride in their school and their children’s learning. Some adults became qualified teachers, Warlpiri reading materials were produced and children observed their elders taking on responsible leadership roles and using literacy in Warlpiri (and English) meaningfully.
Moreover, children attended school because they accompanied their elders who were involved in the bilingual program.
The move to abolish bilingual education has, in effect, given the Indigenous bilingual educators the impression that their program was a failure.
MISSING LINKS IN REMOTE LITERACY DEBATE

I recently conducted a survey of young adult English literacy competence in the region. The findings indicate that the English literacy levels of 16–25 year olds, some of whom went through the bilingual system, are certainly equivalent to young adults in other remote locations where youngsters had English-only schooling.

I would conclude that the bilingual program has not had a negative impact on English literacy acquisition and has also given some youngsters foundation skills in mother tongue literacy.

Warlpiri educators believe strongly in the importance of the Warlpiri language program and identity is at the heart of this issue. In response to consultations by the NTDET around a Regional Learning Partnership Agreement the Warlpiri have repeatedly articulated their desire to teach their children Warlpiri language, literacy and culture in school.

They want the Warlpiri program to sit alongside an English language and literacy program. NTDET has refused this request. These experienced Warlpiri educators are so upset by this disrespect for their language and culture and their right to decide how their children should be educated that they have refused to sign the Warlpiri Regional Learning Partnership Agreement.

This conflict cannot enhance community support for schooling and the ultimate goal of improving literacy outcomes.

To assume that literacy is a simple skills acquisition process that can be delivered in a programmed way, in a short period of time, in a language not used by the learner in their speech community, and achieve outcomes comparable to mainstream standards is unrealistic.

Literacy is a gradual process that cannot be speeded up. It will take more than two or three generations for literacy to truly seep into family and community practices.

If we are serious about increasing literacy in the remote Indigenous world then, in addition to thinking about schooling, we need to pay attention to providing the resources that support everyday adult literacy practices.

Adults never read and write without a purpose. For literacy to take hold in remote communities it must have meaning and purpose over the changing domains and practices that span a person’s life and this meaning and purpose must then be transmitted to the following generation.

Children in remote communities need to see reading and writing as elemental to everyday life, enacted by their own community members and not just something done by non-Indigenous experts such as teachers.

Rather than focus solely on schools by laying blame for purported failures on teachers, we could instead be considering how to make literacy integral to everyday life so that remote Indigenous youth can grow up unable to imagine a life without reading and writing.

Dr Inge Kral is an ARC Post-doctoral Research Fellow at the Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research, Australian National University, Canberra.

This article first appeared in the National Indigenous Times on 30 April 2009.
Why do we have irregular verbs?

Everyone has trouble with English irregular verbs. Small children often make mistakes with them because they instinctively assume that all verbs are regular.

That’s why they might say ‘buyed’ instead of the correct ‘bought’ for example. Language students also struggle with strange irregular verb endings.

You would not logically guess that ‘go’ becomes ‘went’. Irregulars can seem like traps set up to make life difficult! To confuse things further, some verb endings are the same in the past and present. The book you read today is the same as the one you read yesterday.

Why?

Irregular verbs seem illogical. So why are they so important in English?

The psychologist, Steven Pinker, has an interesting theory. He says that irregular verbs are ‘fossils’ of an Indo-European pre-historic language.

The Indo-Europeans wandered across Europe and southwest Asia. They spoke language with a regular rule in which one vowel replaced another. But over time pronunciation changed. ‘The ‘rules became opaque to children and eventually died; the irregular past tense forms are their fossils.’ There are now around 180 irregular verbs in English. That may sound a lot – but it is a small fraction of the thousands of regular verbs. But irregular verbs are heavily used. They make up:

- 70% of all the verbs we use
- the ten verbs we use most often: be, have, do, say, make, go, take, come, see, get.

Learning irregular endings

We need to work hard to memorise an irregular verb. It takes children years to learn to use ‘spoke’ and not ‘spaked’. Some never learn that there is nobody ever ‘writ’ anything.

In fact all the grammatical mistakes commonly made by native speakers – we was, they done etc – involve irregular verbs. And yet children have a remarkable capacity to memorise new words. They learn a new one every two hours and know an average 60,000 by the age of 13.

Decline

The number of commonly used irregular verbs is declining. Some die of natural causes. Most modern children don’t know the word cleave or that its past is clove. Nor are they likely to come across abide/abode.

Other irregulars like dream and learn are gradually becoming regular.

How long can dreamt survive alongside dreamed? As English becomes ever more international, the simpler verb forms become more dominant. Despite this there is no danger of irregular verbs disappearing. Even before they learn to read most children can use 80 irregulars. They may not realise that ‘went’ originally came from ‘wend’ but nobody over the age of six seriously tries to replace it with ‘goed’.

The Future

The future is less promising for new irregular verbs. All new verbs in English are regular, including all new noun conversions: I accessed, you emailed. Even when an old verb takes a new meaning it uses a regular pattern – the army officer rung his general but his men ringed the city.

For a new irregular verb to survive it must offer some familiar pattern in how it works. One of the most recent irregulars is sneak/snuck, which you find in American English. In Britain we prefer sneaked but snuck is also logical because it follows the pattern of strike/struck.


The editor of the site is Kieran McGovern, an author of graded reading materials for English language learners published by Macmillan, Oxford University Press, Longman and Penguin. He was BBC teacher blogger for August 2009, currently he teaches in Bath, UK.

To coincide with the release of re-mastered recordings by the Beatles, eslreading.org has produced resources for lessons on the theme of the Beatles. The site includes links to YouTube video clips of the Beatles singing such well-known songs as “Michele”, “Something” and “Revolution”. (Students will get a giggle out of the cool people of 1965.) The site features “Today in History” and has links to podcasts and other interesting sites.

ESL Reading has been providing free graded reading materials for English language learners since 2002. It has links with Extensive Reading, the British Council and many other organisations promoting language learning through reading. In February 2009 it won the EnglishClub.com Site of the Month Award.

Some texts are original while others are adaptations of classic stories. All the materials are graded by vocabulary, grammar and readability. These include short texts ideal for classroom use (see Strange News), original stories and simplified versions of classic ghost stories like Charles Dickens’ The Signalman.

- All texts specially prepared for English language learners
- Graded by vocabulary, grammar and readability
- Full PDF print-friendly short stories
- Short texts for classroom use
- Glossary
- Activities to accompany texts
- All text simplified and graded according to level
- Audio and video clips accompany some of the texts.
- Links to some of the best podcasts for English language learners

Special sections

Listening – www.esllistening.org
Young Learners – http://younglearners.eslreading.org
Ghost, Horror & Mystery Stories – www.eslreading.org/ghost/ghoststories.html
The Story of Football – www.footballhistory.eslreading.org
The Story of The Beatles – www.gradedreading.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/TheBeatlesStory/index.html

**UNSW 2010 SUMMER INSTITUTE ON LANGUAGE TEACHING**

**Mathews Building, University of New South Wales**

The 2010 Summer Institute on Language Teaching aims to provide short courses for students, teachers and researchers who are keen on updating their skills or learning new ones. Headed by Professor David Nunan and Professor Chris Davison, the Institute provides intensive week-long sessions, led by prominent academics in the field of language acquisition and learning. The Institute will run five courses, each course being handled by an expert in the field.

One course lasts for three hours per day, and will run for five days.

Courses available:
- Classroom-based Research for Language Teachers
- Teaching Speaking Skills
- Digital-Critical Literacies
- Learner Contributions to Language Learning
- Assessment for Learning

Registration costs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Options</th>
<th>Regular Fee</th>
<th>Early Bird Fee</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One Course</td>
<td>A$395</td>
<td>A$316</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two Courses</td>
<td>A$695</td>
<td>A$556</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three Courses*</td>
<td>A$945</td>
<td>A$756</td>
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* This option is possible only if one of the three courses is Assessment for Learning.

For further information go to: http://education.arts.unsw.edu.au/news/archive/090811.htm or contact Michael I Narcisco, School of Education, University of NSW, Kensington, NSW 2052, Australia Tel: (+61 2) 9385 8004, Email: education.events@unsw.edu.au
ELICOS (English Language Intensive Courses for Overseas Students) is the name given to programs for international students studying English in Australia. Other countries may refer to it as EFL. ELICOS is offered by government and private institutions around Australia.

Supporting international students

International education has received considerable bad press recently and English Australia (EA) is very active in developing strategies to ensure there is sufficient support for international students. Last month EA met with other international education industry peak bodies (Universities Australia, TAFE Directors Australia, ACPET, the Independent Schools Council of Australia and the International Education Association of Australia) to discuss what could be achieved as a group. EA has also put in a submission to the Senate Inquiry on International Education, urging the senate committee to consider how existing requirements could be more effectively monitored and enforced for all providers of international education rather than implementing new regulations and EA will shortly release a ‘Guide to Best Practice in Providing Student Support Services in ELICOS’, compiled from member contributions and available to all English Australia members.

Monitoring student satisfaction

English Australia, supported by DEEWR, has joined with international student research organisation iGraduate to monitor how international students view their ELICOS experience in Australia. The ELT Barometer Project is currently being carried out in the UK, New Zealand and Australia (with more countries expected to come on board soon) and the first results for Australia will be presented at the English Australia Conference later this month. Member colleges who have signed up for this project are looking forward to finding out how they are meeting student needs, and these results will be benchmarked against those of other participating countries.

English Australia Conference 2009

Registrations are going very well for the 2009 English Australia Conference, to be held 17–19 September in Melbourne. Continuing the theme of ‘Engaging With the Many Dimensions of ELICOS: learning, teaching, supporting, marketing, leading’, the conference will maintain its strong support for teachers’ professional development while providing PD and networking opportunities for other staff working in ELICOS, including management, marketing, student services and administrative staff as well as government stakeholders and promotional bodies. It will be a great opportunity for people across the field to learn with and from each other. The full program is available on the conference website, www.eaconference.com.au.

We also have dates for next year: put 16–18 September 2010 in your diaries and come to the Gold Coast. Professor Janet Zadina, Professor Jun Liu, Gavin Dudney and Anh Do will be presenting, along with many others. Contact EA Secretariat – easec@englishaustralia.com.au if you’d like to be put on the conference mailing list.

Post-Conference Workshops

Pearson Australia is bringing Professor John de Jong, Chair in Language Testing at the University of Amsterdam, and author JJ Wilson to Sydney for workshops on Tuesday 22 September. John de Jong is one of the developers of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEF), now used extensively around the world, and he will be ‘Applying the CEF’. JJ Wilson will outline ‘Fifteen Ways to Attack a Text’. Participants can register for one or both sessions. For details, please contact the EA Secretariat on 9264 4700 or email easec@englishaustralia.com.au.

ELICOS Statistics

English Australia recently released its ELICOS statistics for 2008, incorporating data for all students, not just those on student visas. Asia continues to provide the largest number of students, with China moving to the number one spot followed by South Korea then Japan. This year growth in student visa issue has slowed somewhat, with around 10% for the year to date in July. Although numbers from South Korea and Japan have decreased, we’re experiencing growth from countries including Brazil, Thailand, Vietnam and Colombia. English Australia members are still cautiously optimistic about numbers.

Katherine Brandon
Professional Development & Support Officer
English Australia
kathbrandon@englishaustralia.com.au

English Australia is the peak body and professional association of institutions offering ELICOS
RESOURCES FOR TEACHING REFUGEES

Foundation House, the Victorian foundation for survivors of torture, develops publications and resources to enhance understanding of the needs of people from refugee backgrounds. The resources and publications of Foundation House are available on its website for free download – www.survivorsvic.org.au/resources/publications_and_resources.htm

PUBLICATIONS AND RESOURCES AVAILABLE FOR DOWNLOAD

**A guide to working with young people who are refugees (1996 & 2000)**
Strategies for Providing Individual Counselling and Group Work. Includes the Kaleidoscope Program with a six session structured group program for secondary school.

**The Rainbow Program for Children in Refugee Families (2002)**
A seven session structured group program for primary aged children (age 9–12).

**School’s In for Refugees: Whole-School Guide to Refugee Readiness (Updated 2007)**
This guide aims to strengthen the capacity of school communities to promote a supportive school environment for students from refugee backgrounds and their families.

The kit has a guide for early childhood services working with parents from African backgrounds; and a DVD for parents from African backgrounds with young children.

**HealthWize – health literacy teaching resource for refugee and other ESL students (2004)**
Health literacy program for secondary school aged students from refugee and other culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. It has been designed for a ‘whole-class’ approach and is suitable for use in classes where there are also non-refugee students. The first six units can be adapted for use in upper primary ESL programs. Many of the units are also suitable for use in young adult ESL programs, particularly those which target refugee youth.

Please contact publications@foundationhouse.org.au if you have queries about Foundation House publications and resources.
International Conferences & Events

December 2009

5 (Asia and Oceania)
Email: alaksecretary@gmail.com.
Web: www.alak.or.kr.

8–11 (Asia and Oceania)
“Globalisation and Localisation in Computer-Assisted Language Learning Conference,” Faculty of Humanities, Chiang Mai University, Chiang Mai, Thailand.
Web: http://www.glocall.org

10–12 (North America)
TESL Ontario, “Language for a Changing World,” Sheraton Centre Toronto, Toronto, ON, Canada
Email: conference@teslontario.org.
Web: www.teslontario.org/conference

January 2010

28–30 (Asia and Oceania)
Email: ubon_s@hotmail.com.
Web: www.thaitesol.org

February 2010

20 (North America)
7th TALGS Conference, “Research Meets Practice,” East Carolina University, Bate Building, Greenville, North Carolina, USA
Email: talgs@ecu.edu.
Web: www.ecu.edu/cs-cas/engl/talgs.

25–27 (Europe and Eurasia)
Hildesheim University and the Young Learner & Teenager SIG, IATEFL, Children’s Literature in Language Education, “From Picture Books to Young Adult Fiction,” Hildesheim University, Germany
Web: www.childrenslit.de/

26–7 (North America)
Email: convention@itbe.org.
Web: www.itbe.org/convention.htm

March 2010

4–6 (North America)
Tennessee TESOL (TNTESL), “All Aboard for ESOL,” Downtown Chattanooga Marriott and Convention Center, Chattanooga, Tennessee, USA
Email: tntesol2010@yahoo.com.
Web: www.tntesol.org

12–14 (Europe and Eurasia)
Email: convention2010@tesol-spain.org.
Web: www.tesol-spain.org/convention2010

13–14 (Europe and Eurasia)
TESOL Greece, “Living and Learning in a Brave New World,” Hellenic American Union, Athens, Attika, Greece
Email: chair@tesolgreece.org.
Web: www.tesolgreece.org

June 2010

24–25 (Central and South America)
MATE-TESOL Haiti, “Strengthening English Language Learners Success,” Haitian American Institute, Port Au Prince, Haiti
Email: jeangfrancois_vilmenay@yahoo.com.

28–30 (Europe and Eurasia)
FEELTA, “From Broadcasting to Narrowcasting: Global Englishes, Local Contexts,” The Far Eastern State University of Humanities, Khabarovsk, Russia.
Email: ilm_conf@mail.ru.
Web: www.feelta.wl.dvgu.ru/info/htm
ATESOL (NSW) Inc is a professional Teachers Association formed in 1970. It has a membership from early childhood to tertiary, adult, community and ELICOS. It also caters for colleagues in the related areas of Aboriginal and Maori education, bilingualism, linguistics, community and foreign language teaching.

ATESOL (NSW) Inc is affiliated with The Australian Council for TESOL Associations (ACTA) and TESOL International. It aims to strengthen the effective teaching and learning of English while respecting individuals' language rights.

ATESOL offers:
- e-bulletin updates on events
- positive support for teachers
- practical classroom assistance
- regular seminars and workshops
- reduced registration rates to ACTA/ATESOL Conferences
- reduced rates to professional development activities
- affiliation with national and international associations
- regular newsletters
- relevant publications
- up-to-date information about TESOL opportunities
- special interest groups (SIGs)

Contributions to the newsletter
The Editor, ATESOL (NSW) Inc
PO Box 223, Leichhardt NSW 2040
Phone: 02 9564 3322
Fax: 02 9564 2342
Email: helenfong@bigpond.com

Deadline for Issue 4, 2009
Friday 6 November

Advertising rates for 2009 – space only (including GST)
- Full page
  182mm x 270mm $250
  4 issues $750
- Half-page horizontal
  182mm x 135mm $100
  4 issues $325
- Quarter-page vertical
  88.5mm x 135mm $65
  4 issues $180
- Inserts $300

Website: www.atesolnsw.org

MEMBERSHIP FORM 2009

An invitation to all people interested in the field of teaching English to speakers of other languages to join ATESOL (NSW).

Please print
Title ____________________________ Given name(s) ____________________________
Family name __________________________
Postal address __________________________
School/institution __________________________
Home phone __________________________ Business phone __________________________
Email __________________________

Employing authority
☐ NSW DET
☐ Catholic Education Office
☐ AMES
☐ TAFE NSW
☐ University
☐ ELICOS
☐ ACE
☐ Other __________________________

Special interest group
☐ Infants/Primary
☐ Secondary
☐ Adult
☐ Teaching English to deaf students
☐ Other __________________________

Annual membership
Cost AS (all prices within Australia include GST)
☐ Individual 75
☐ Student/unemployed 40
☐ Overseas individual 105
☐ Institutions/corporations 195
☐ Institutions overseas 220

☐ I enclose cheque for $___________ made payable to ATESOL (NSW) Inc.
or charge to my: ☐ Mastercard ☐ Visacard
Card No. __________________________
Expiration date __________________________
Authorization signature __________________________

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