

Center for Language and Culture
2006 Roundtable
19 April 2006

Hand in Hand
New Ways for Mason to Serve Virginia's Local Educational Agencies

Part One
Greetings

Jorge P. Osterling

Interim Director, Center for Language and Culture
Associate Professor of Multilingual & Multicultural Education
College of Education and Human Development

“Acknowledging Winds of Change, new challenges – new solutions, Center for Language and Culture’s commitment to facilitate and maintain an ongoing self-reflective dialogue between MASON and LEAs about the continuous improvement of our teacher education programs and student learning.”

“Today our Center has chosen to take the “road less traveled” by conscientiously and courageously engaging in a *critical dialogue* with our partnering school divisions:

- Impact of changing demographics;
- Ways to help improve minority achievement; ,
- Narrowing the academic achievement gap
- Substantially reducing the drop out rate that continues to hurt our students of color

“We are being challenged to make a difference. There is a need to create an advisory committee or a task force.”

Joan Isenberg,

Associate Dean, Outreach and Program Development
College of Education and Human Development.

We are in one of the “most challenging educational environments that any of us have ever worked in.” We are eager, anxious, to hear your voices and to strengthen partnerships.”

Dean Isenberg introduced:

Marilyn Mobley

Associate Provost, Educational Programs
George Mason University

Provost Mobley told her narrative in an abbreviated way. At Mason, she has been asked to oversee the *Democracy Project*, to talk about civic engagement. She started the African American studies program.

“I’m a Toni Morrison scholar, and she talks about language, and it’s all we have, where language works for us, and where language doesn’t work for us.” “My investment is also very personal. I am a former high school teacher, and this past summer we invited teachers from districts around the country, and we talked about slavery, literacy and freedom. ... And for Mason, this is an act of civic engagement. I welcome all of you...”

Dennis Webster,

Associate Dean, University Life, (aka student services)
Director, Mason’s Multicultural Research and Resource Center.

He has the role of being in an organizational structure that combines the focused interests of students with the same interests of faculty and staff.

“We want the dynamic interaction of these resources to directly benefit and serve the community. ...finding resources that can be brought to, and into the university community, and to the regional area, and figure out new and creative ways to look at how we can develop student talent, faculty talent, and community talent... So my vice president would not recognize this as my job description, but it is what I am asked to do. I am honored to be here... and to say that the relationship is meant to be ongoing. ...

Educators are at the forefront, and I do not know that educators hear that often enough. ... Let me tell you, I have learned a tremendous amount. I’ve brought resources to them, and I know very specifically that the nature and the way some of us at the university do our work has been enriched by the way we see educators... so the way we work with culturally and linguistically diverse students is not the focus we thought we’d have... but as part of the university community, I value and know that you are out there creating new ways of learning, and ways to feed us students that are creative, active learners, and that we want to be full partners, and that the stakes are high. And so the way we go about the process is a way that values your leadership and the way you are change agents...

I had another wonderful experience this morning. I have a 3-year-old granddaughter and a 6-year-old grandson, and this was the first time that I took them to school, and prepared them for their journey this morning. And it comes with some nervousness, because they knew what they were doing, and I did not. And it came with a great sense of pride.... And in a personal way, it

can make a difference in the way we take the opportunities that we have. I hope that you can each find ways that we are renewing and finding ways to continue our commitments to our ...”

Dr. Osterling introduced Mason faculty and students attending the 2006 roundtable:

Jeanine Tate (Dean’s Office, Field Relations)
Libby Hall (ALPD)
Elaisa Gosnell (UTEEM)
Elavie Ndura (IET)
Marjorie Hall Haley (MME)
Becky Fox (MME and ASTL)
Lorraine Valdez Pierce (MME)
Shelley Wong (MME)
Rachel A. Grant (new director of Language and Culture)
Barbara Noel (Adjunct Faculty)
Barbara Acosta (Adjunct Faculty)
Anita Bright (Doctoral Student)

Part Two
Presentations and Dialogue
5-minute Presentations
A representative from each of the 15 participating school division
(No predetermined order)

	County	Page
1	Arlington	4
2	Prince William County	5
3	Fairfax County	6
4	Greene County	8
5	Alexandria City	8
6	Albemarle County	9
7	Harrisonburg City	10
8	Loudoun	11
9	Culpeper County	11
10	Clark County	12
11	Manassas Park City	11
12	Stafford County	13
13	Manassas City	14
14	Falls Church City	14
15	Page County	15
	Virginia Department of Education	15
	CLC Rachel A. Grant	17

Arlington: (see handout)
Mark Johnston,
 Assistant Superintendent, Instruction
 Arlington Public Schools

Presented a PowerPoint show.
 REEP program— [Arlington Education and Employment Program, formerly, Refugee Education and Employment Program]
 Emphasized that they have been focusing on the achievement gap for a while, since before NCLB.

Challenges in Arlington

- Lack of affordable housing (people that work there cannot afford to live there... “What does it say to our families when they can’t afford to live in the communities where they work to provide a vibrant community?”)
- NCLB (“Students that don’t speak much English yet are expected to perform on English language tests. There is no growth model...Lack of developmental differentiation of

LEP standards... first grader versus 12th grader. We know that we need to adapt to this...Inconsistent standards—inconsistent groups across states)

- Determination of instructional level, (“...We have an *Intake Center*. One of the difficulties we have is how we place students in mathematics courses... because they do not read [in English], that does not mean they cannot be successful in mathematics courses... We don’t have teachers who are equipped to deal with students that have limited English.”)
- Dual identification and services (Special education/ Gifted / ELL)
- Instructional materials (“severe lack of targeted instructional materials” “Reading First grants.... And yet the *Reading First* framework won’t allow introduction of ESOL strategies...”)
- Parental engagement (“TESA program [Teacher Expectations & Student Achievement <http://streamer.lacoe.edu/tesa/>] Los Angeles County (CA) has done good work for involving parents”) “Most PTA meetings do not include LEP parents and families. Do we need to rethink what we are doing? Are we clear ourselves in what we’re doing?”)
- Cultural competence (“Is ...work that we’re engaging in helping people understanding behaviors and strategies... the students in our classrooms are very different from those in schools we attended.”) (“TESA... acknowledge ways for students to bring elements into their school assignments... also helps colleagues and peers better understand how to interact with students...”)

Prince William County Public Schools

Carol Bass,

ESOL Supervisor

Phyllis Giasson and Melvin Brown,

Carol came in 1979, and ever since then she has enjoyed almost 30 years of professional development. “It’s been a perfect marriage--- win-win.”

Teachers have been well prepared, not only in ESOL and foreign language, but other areas PWCS has benefited from grants, wherein teachers get scholarship opportunities

“Especially the *paraprofessional grant*, looking for bilingual and bicultural teachers”

3-year cohorts through contract courses, because not all teachers have the luxury after a long school day—opportunities for graduate work right in their backyards

Workshops and collaborative partnerships through the years.

As well as field experiences that Mason students get in PWC schools

Challenges:

Two main challenges:

“Training of mainstream teachers, because more and more of the movement to inclusion or co-teaching model, because of NCLB (ESOL teachers can’t be content experts in each area) ... so our biggest challenge is because even though we offer many tuition free opportunities for

mainstream teachers, we can't meet the needs of mainstream teachers in working with ELLs—although we have a tremendously successful multicultural department. Melvin, thanks for that.”

“Our second challenge – while we benefit from Arlington’s decline (we are taking those teachers) we are employing a lot—an average of 40 new ESOL teachers each year. And it may be that after Fairfax and Loudoun get into that competitive marketing and hiring of teachers...many of the teachers are coming as brand new teachers. They have some student teaching experience, but it is often more like tutoring, not working in a large formal program. Of course, our mainstream teachers have so much general knowledge that the ESOL teacher is expected to be the expert, but very often, they’re trying to present that expertise, and yet they’re challenged by their own lack of experience, but have to immediately field difficult questions.”

Areas for Mason to improve:

“We’d like to see you revisit the *paraprofessional training* [BIPACAL], because we have so many that want to continue their training, and they often have to pay for their own courses.

Another area: I would see it key to the lifespan, the insurance policy of a teacher, to be able to teach all students. In that, we also need to make sure that our new teachers have the knowledge and skills the minute they are placed in the classroom. I request that 9 hours for teachers, including 3 hour courses in cross cultural, SLA and ELL.”

“Also because of NCLB with parent outreach, teachers should have to have some kind of first hand experience in terms of doing home visits, doing part of the LEP parent outreach requirement.” “(in-service/ pre-service) Teachers need some type of community service training.”

“And one of the last areas we are struggling with is finding interpreters and translators—they need the training in the education setting. We are developing our own training in “education-ese”. Maybe Mason could set up training for people interested in doing that.”

Fairfax County Public Schools (see handout)

Teddi Predaris,

Director, ESOL Office

Fairfax County Public Schools

Introduced Sharon Mullen, Acting director, Staff Development

Rosie Johnson, Coordinator, ESOL office

Diane Staehr-Fenner

Paula Patrick, coordinator of foreign language

“Thanks to Mason, the exchange of information, bringing theory into practice, relating to day to day activities, so we have benefited greatly from the rich experience and staff development. Thanks, Mason, for the collaboration and for taking the lead. This ongoing dialogue is

important, not only in closing gap, but also making sure all students meet the highest level of achievement”

Making sure students get into advanced programs
These are ongoing goals, in place far before NCLB.

“In FCPS we have many of the same challenges already explained. We’d like to highlight areas that haven’t been mentioned yet.” [see handout on tables]

“The greatest need in FCPS is doing as much as we can together on the teaching of reading. So much hinges on this... but one course on reading is not enough—not enough for general education, ESOL, etc. So each teacher that is involved is able to develop student literacy skills.

So our number one skill is the teaching of reading, but then also the teaching of mathematics, not only for ELL but also for all students. Math has maybe not been as well addressed in recent years, as it should have been. We want our teachers to feel comfortable in working together in mathematics education. We want teachers to know how to diversify education to support mathematics.”

“In terms of foreign language teaching, we want to make sure we’ve jointly prepared our teachers in using elementary strategies. We want to also make sure we work collaboratively as a team. We value what Mason does in terms of having teachers come into schools, but they see a lot of team teaching, collaboratively. So we want teachers prepared to work collaboratively with other teachers—beginning at pre-service, and throughout professional practice.”

“As our needs evolve, we need to keep this communication with our institutions of higher learning open. In our collaboration with local communities, we need to stress involvement with other community members who are not parents. We need to make sure the tax dollars are paying off in the school systems... maybe we need meetings for communities to share what we are doing. We can use interpreters, headsets, etc... We’d be happy to work collaboratively in making community meetings.”

“In response to question 3, we have a collective responsibility for making sure we’re meeting the needs of all students. I would like to say it is all there, but it is not yet. As a means to an end, perhaps creating individual courses or embedding this into existing courses Teachers need to be able to differentiate instruction for all students. The more we prepare every teacher to differentiate, the more we can close the achievement gap.”

“Family involvement—we need to share information with families about the programs and services available to them because they’re not always informed. We can do things to bring in parents, like family math nights, family science nights, and send home things to--supplemental things to do in the home, all the while considering the restraints on their time. We also want to support and make sure that some of the things we do exist in every place that needs it.”

Greene County School

Jennifer Richter

We have about 70 ESOL students in their whole district. The ESOL program is in its infancy. They have the same challenges as everyone else and are seeking the same support from Mason that other people have said. But they want to know how to do it for much smaller numbers, on a smaller scale.

Alexandria City Public Schools

Roger Rudy

Director, Staff Development
Alexandria City Public Schools

“Everything that’s been said can be dittoed in Alexandria. If you reduce Arlington by about 10 percent, you’ll see Alexandria.”

“We’ve benefited from Mason in the ways we’ve already discussed—but we also like our new *Ed Leadership Cohort for Urban Schools*. It has helped target skills necessary to be an administrator in a highly diverse and highly mobile community. We also need to thank VA for funding this grant.”

“In Alexandria, we can now re-offer the course 695, the *Northern Virginia Writing Project*, Writing across the curriculum. Finally this year we have a group that’s very successful.”

“Our National Board Teacher Certification process also includes the 6 hour Mason course to support them in their move towards that goal.”

“We struggle with other ongoing staff development needs being met. We have very limited staff development days.... So something with our new teachers is the importance of peer observations as sources for professional development—they can learn about classroom management, working with parents, etc. So we require this as part of our mentoring program. And it is a way to getting to staff development that is embedded.

So I would ask Mason to emphasize this in their programs—to take the opportunities to observe others in your staff. Whom do I see about setting up a classroom management system? Smooth transitions? Etc.”

“We ditto the need for new teachers to be prepared to meet the needs of all learners with all diversity—“

“In terms of that special needs child, we need teachers to understand the co-teaching model. We don’t feel like our teachers are well prepared to engage in that, in learning how it works and how it SHOULD work.”

“Another issue is *cultural competency and issues around race*. Alexandria is looking for something that is systemic and organized in terms of addressing those issues in our district. We’re looking towards Albemarle county---- We’d like Mason to present something systematically and cohesively, rather than a one-shot “now you’re culturally competent.””

“We talked about accessibility of Mason courses to staff and paraprofessionals. Some teachers take advantage of those support systems, but I would like to ask Mason to make it possible to make it possible for teachers working in Virginia schools to take classes at an in-state tuition rate. Because we have teachers from DC, Maryland, etc. It would benefit them to use their employment address to get instate tuition. “

Albemarle County Public Schools

Courtney Stuart

International ESOL coordinator

Only 6 months on the job.

Introduced: Charlene Greene

Sujatha Hampton

“The earlier comments are right on target.”

“Our major challenge is *ownership*—who owns these ESOL kids.”

“Albemarle County has had “*courageous conversations*” about who owns the achievement gap, and who is responsible for the gap, and not saying well, it’s SES or parent involvement. We are looking at what we can do in our classes. We are trying to inform each other, that is general education and ESOL.

One of our aha’s is instruction that is good for all kids. We are looking for content area teachers with training in ESOL, and vice versa, we would like more ESOL teachers trained in content, especially in high school. And then we need highly competent teachers for low level ESOL kids that can break the instruction down.”

She agreed with FCPS that reading is important, but also emphasized that vocabulary is important.

“Another piece is closer collaboration with foreign language department—providing programs for native language speakers [to provide Spanish to Spanish speakers] with appropriate cognitive scaffolding, especially at the elementary level.”

One of her observations is that they have great teachers that are good technicians, but they forget about the joy of teaching. “How do we remind them that this is a joyful event, and we’re not producing widgets? We’d like teachers that are reflective and able to think outside of the box, and provide their own professional development.”

Introduced her two colleagues – Charlene Greene, diversity & equity trainer, and Sujatha Hampton, Title 1 Coordinator
Stressed close collaboration

Diversity—**Charlene Greene** is talking

“Our relationship with Mason is not as close as some of the divisions up here, but we do have some Mason people. The one thing I see in the new teachers that are coming into our school division is the lack of cultural competence and the lack of comfort in dealing with students that are different from themselves. We have a program called “courageous conversations.” If we’re not mindful of having this deep, understanding dialogue to know what an 8 year old African American child is experiencing in our classroom, or a 15 year old white girl from a trailer park... if our teachers don’t know what those experiences are, they can’t connect with the students—
New 3 Rs: rigor, relevance, relationships.

It’s important to have that comfort level, and I think that assists the school division in trying to get those teachers on board with those systemic courageous conversations, and those sustained conversations about diversity.”

Harrisonburg City Schools

Wanda Hamilton

Introduced her colleagues.
Deanna Benavides, Sue Smith, and Laura Feichinger-McGrath

Wanda Hamilton the ESL supervisor, and also FL supervisor, and English...
She is in the Shenandoah Valley, in Region 5.

“As we meet, we know that our diversity is great.” “Things are difficult in the valley. We are struggling.”

Transformation from within—“In 5 years, we’ve grown incredibly in our ESOL population. So soon 50% of our students will be ESOL children.”

“Our lowest school is fifty percent low SES, while our highest school is 85 percent low SES. Teddi, a lot of the things you listed also apply to us. So we have decided that every teacher, K-12, needs to be an ESOL and literacy teacher. So now we’ve mostly made that goal.”

“One of the things we struggle with is collaboration. And it is hard. We’ve also found that *chemistry* matters when putting teams together and it’s been a challenge.”

“Another thing is *differentiation*—even for gifted. And it is hard. We already ask a lot of our teachers, and this is difficult. We, too, struggle to find staff development days—but we do need training. We need training! We hired Barbara Acosta (and others) and we’re paying big bucks!”

“It’s hard for our teachers to come 2 hours up the road to get a degree, but we need what you have.”

“We all need continual stuff going on, and it can’t be a shot in the dark... so we need to get together, and they need to be givens—reading courses, ESOL courses, those would help.

Our poor new [novice] teachers, I just grieve. Not only do they have a couple of reading groups, but also some do not speak English! They are not prepared—they have had a 3-hour reading course, and they are not ready for what they have to do. Their arts appreciation courses do not help them in meeting the needs of the students (not saying anything against courses in the arts or whatever) —and they need things to sustain them so they do not get discouraged and quit. The training needs are a big challenge; it’s really hard—and we don’t have time, either.”

Loudoun County

Johnetta Smith,

Loudoun County

Apologized for Alessio Evangelista’s absence.

“I oversee all federal programs, so usually everyone wants me to be with them because I have the money.”

“Loudoun County is one of the fastest growing counties, and we now have 47,000 students, and of them a little over 5,000 are Hispanic. So we have some commonalties, which we share.

We also have “courageous conversations” and equity teams. It is required not just for teachers, but for administrators as well. Our teachers have attended MANY courses here at Mason. The biggest need is for classes offered in the evenings, because we do not have money for substitutes all the time. We are making sure our teachers are highly qualified, but again, offering more courses for our lead teachers.”

Culpeper County Public Schools

Barbara B. White

Culpeper County Public Schools

Introduced: Linda Bauers, a parent liaison, [Linda helps things a lot in helping parents to understand they are valued and important. Dr. White had been in her current role for three years.

But... it was like being told she had won a cruise, but found out she is booked on the Titanic. She sees Harrisonburg as her savior.

In 1997, Culpeper had five ESOL students, and now has over 800, serving about 350. They have affordable housing there... ELLs are mostly Spanish speaking, but many parents work in northern Virginia as day laborers.

“One of the major hurdles is *cultural awareness*, because we have difficulty in moving forward unless you understand the people you’re working with, and how we can best meet their needs.”

“Another difficulty is that a lot our teachers are very traditional teachers, and have lived and taught in Culpeper for many years—the problem is *ownership*. Who do the children belong to? Attitude. They [ELL/ LEP students] aren’t really “ours” so what do we do with them? We really do need a lot of in-service and professional development, and I think that comes from doing best practices all the way around, and differentiation.”

“One of the things we’re looking at is *reading*—and *reading coaches*, because we have 2 reading coaches now at our elementary schools, but our middle and high schools are crying out for help. What we really need is for all teachers to be good reading teachers. We’d very much like to partner with Mason in helping some of the content teachers become certified in ESOL, and we’d like to get on that wagon. A literacy coach is a great way for us to go—because we’ve found people that are excellent in what they do.”

“We do have people that work in teams together—we have team spirit. We’d like to partner with those who already have experience working with ELLs.”

Clark County
Shelley Pine,
(near Winchester)

“We believe that all children will learn at high levels, and we have IB program and almost all of our students take IB courses, including ESOL students. We have about 80 ESOL students.”

“Harrisonburg and _____ are our big helpers.”

“Our biggest problem is “non-English speaking high school students. The high school teachers don’t know what to do, so they say “Take them out! They don’t speak English!””

They don’t have any parent involvement

They are going to start using “language line” because nobody talks to each other because they can’t communicate with each other—they have no interpreters or translators. They have one ESOL teacher.

Manassas Park City Schools
Virginia Bowerman

“The high population of ESOL students is taking us by storm. Every concern we have has been mentioned. The problem for us is that we don’t have an ESOL coordinator. What should we do? What are the best programs? We have one K-3 school, one 4-5 school, one middle school and one high school. We can’t have a program for all of our elementary programs... There is no area office that can help with the ESOL children and their parents’ needs.”

“For Mason, maybe have a differentiation practicum for interns, maybe 6 weeks, focusing on working with students with diverse needs. Our teachers don’t feel like they can meet the needs of these students.” Called for a “push-in” model.

“Secondary teachers really don’t know what to do, so they’re asking that students be pulled out until they learn English. I don’t think our administrators know what to do in terms of designing programs that have a research base.”

“Bilingual education—that has dominated the conversation, because we can’t hire teachers to do bilingual programs in all the areas we have. So what are good programs? What is a good way to get them integrated into their learning? So programs for administrators need to include this. Also we need guidance in parent involvement—even a workshop, so when we have a back to school night teachers know what to do.”

“Let’s do a series of Saturdays or speakers on reading and/ or the achievement gap.” Manassas Park can’t hire top name people to do expensive staff development, but could send two people here to an event at Mason for a reasonable price.

She saw a presentation from the *National Literacy Panel* and it was great, and she wished her teachers could have been there.

Stafford County**Nancy Guth**
Literacy Coordinator

We have 1000 ESOL students. There is decreasing availability of affordable housing.

“It’s hard to train “seasoned” teachers.”

Stafford had reading classes in a cohort situation. The elementary teachers are well trained in reading, but the secondary are less so. “It’s hard to get the teachers trained and we’d like more courses here on evenings and weekends.”

“We have Spanish *for Educators* course and that’s good, and we have ESL methods courses that we are teaching on site. We have a lot more needs for trainings for our administrators as well.” We need training for translators too.

“We won the exemplary reading award for our middle school and we’d like to share our info on that.”

Manassas City Public Schools

Megan Carol

ESOL Coordinator

“In 1992, Manassas City had 12 students, and now we have 1200. Suddenly classes don’t look like those that they had 10 years ago—we want teachers that are teacher leaders, especially for seasoned teachers that are not familiar with differentiation.”

There’s a particular Mason course has been spreading like wildfire- it’s a reading and writing course also sponsored by Virginia Department of Education.

“We have a parent liaison, and it would help for her to have some training in outreach.”

“Manassas City has started to look at the issue of whether it’s a language differences or a special education issue, so dual certification or courses that focus on that would be beneficial.”

Falls Church City

Gloria Guba

“We would like to echo the sentiments of everyone else, and thanks you for having us here. Hopefully this will be the beginning of ongoing meaningful conversations and dialogue.”

“We are a small, small, small district. We have about 2000 students total, and only a couple hundred ESOL.”

“Partnerships are critical because we’re so small. But partnerships require an awareness of opportunity and cost. This includes universities, other agencies, etc. In the past, when we have been offered partnerships, we were offered very limited lead-time—and it takes time, energy and trust, and it is not easy to do that in a short amount of time. Administrators could use some training or opportunities for identifying those factors that are critical, especially in cross-cultural partnership.”

“Teachers share candidly that we don’t want to hear any more talking heads. When they walk away, we still lack visual models of differentiation, or what a comprehensive classroom looks like. We should open our doors to one another so we can see what we are doing—and learn from each other. In small districts, we need to get off the ranch. Maybe Mason can facilitate this. The one thing I feel is jeopardizing us is our inability to find a way to cross-pollinate.”

One Roundtable Participant stood and announced, “I’m part of a group called NOVEL—northern Virginia Literacy (??) and they collaborate and let others share resources, in sharing info about guest speakers, etc.”

Page County Public Schools

Donna Whitley-Smith

Introduced Mary Ann Liscomb who works with families.

Small and rural school district

Only recently started to reach for partnerships with neighboring school districts.

Page County only has 52 ESOL students. Their power comes from their relationships. They are organized K-7 and 8-12, which is challenging.

Valerie Gooss

Virginia Department of Education

[See handout with general information in folder. Related to instructional development, etc.]

Her daughter-in-law is working in Roanoke public schools, and loves it and wants to work in a school division with the challenges of ESOL, et al. She (the daughter in law) has two ELLs... and she is going to work on her endorsement in ESOL.

“Congratulations to Mason for being a model in Virginia. I have not seen other universities open their doors to other districts not concentrated in Northern Virginia. To have both Arlington and Green at the same table shows that Mason has a concern for everyone that faces the exact same challenges. If NCLB did nothing other than start these conversations, it was valuable.

The conversations within the field of second language acquisition are very important.”

“Mark from Arlington did talk about standards, and the need to revise our standards. Deanna Benavides and Megan Carol have worked to make recommendations to modify the English language standards. You can view the first draft electronically (in July and August). Look for opportunities to comment on the standards.”

“Another concern is the issue of *student ownership*—who is responsible for teaching our children? We think it is important for content teachers to know what students at a certain age/level look like in a classroom. We are moving to do crossover training for content area teachers. We will do some training in the summer of 2007 for teachers in the content areas to transform their instruction. We have dedicated time next summer for teachers from around the state.”

“No negative findings in any school division in meeting the NCLB Title III requirements.

“We anticipate the release of a superintendent’s memo for next school year on the process of assessing ELLs. We will also release guidelines for assessing students over the age of 21, either through Testing Memo or Superintendent’s Memo...Most school divisions are using SELP. Visit the website for information on this, which includes video clips.”

“Money is a big issue. You can see federal applications on website... Title 3 and Title 1 should buddy up to do consolidated applications for these funds. Title 1 can be used for LEP students. Contact us for questions.”

“The application process changed this year. Smaller districts have to be a part of a consortium to make it total \$10,000. The state of Virginia can help you work with another school division to get the funds if necessary. A new consortium just formed, which included Orange County, and I am pleased to see that. They also do professional development as part of their consortium.”

Her hat is off to Mason for providing professional development. They are wrapping up their seventh course on reading and writing. The course used to be made up of ESOL teachers looking for recertification. Now most of the participants are content teachers.

“We get rave reviews every time we offer it. We try to offer these on Saturdays and weeklong programs in the summer (where we pay for their hotel and food). Look for memo on April 28th – the whole thing is paid for.”

“I recently hosted our first WEBX program, which is an online web interface. What we hoped to do is provide support to small divisions that do not have a lot of information. For example, how to identify newly arrived LEP students. Also focused on data collection, and what’s required. There were divisions that aren’t really sure where to find the data, etc. Little Lee County (down in the extreme southwest corner of the state) now has five ESOL students. We are working to use technology to provide professional development.”

They’re planning on hosting first new coordinators meeting for Titles I, III & III (?) in Richmond and Roanoke.

“Turnover impacts us all, so this training will be beneficial.” See handout.

The second “*Vision to Practice*” academy coming up, as partnership with Mason. It will be focused around closing the achievement gap and focusing on Title 1 and 3. Dr. Osterling and Dr. Grant will be presenting at this. This 4-day academy will include culture and content—see superintendent’s memo in folder. Pam Robbins, Edie Holcolmb, et al will be presenting.

The course for reading and writing strategies—“We always have a waiting list. We will have a class of 75 this summer with 3 instructors, because of the need and desire.”

“This summer there will be a PEP program, which stands for *Parents as Educational Partners*. (Carol Bass knows about it—she is the guru).

Carol Bass:

Prince William County Schools was the first to bring in the trainers. It totally satisfies the NCLB parent outreach requirements. Curriculum focuses on how U.S. schools operate, etc. It's developed for LEP parents—not adapted from something else—it's specific and interactive. It focuses on English for parenting a child in a public school. What are the reasons for absences? How to communicate with schools? It addresses these things in a delicate, sensitive manner. It can be customized to your own school division. It's flexible. Another benefit is that it can be implemented at a pace that works best for parents, students and staff. We have it in 62 of our 82 schools. It gave our school system a framework that was effective.”

Back to Val Goss:

Gratitude to Mason for listening, and congratulations on our willingness to reach out across the state, and would hope that they would do some of that in encouraging other universities to do the same.

Rachel A. Grant

In-coming Director [August 2006], CEHD, Center for Language and Culture

“I do listen. Some people think I'm not engaged because I'm listening.”

“Thank you very much.

“I especially would like to thank Jorge Osterling for keeping things going until I arrived, but I am finally going to be here. I am deeply indebted to you for all of your work.”

“I first want to say: we hear you. Your voices are important.”

“I learned that cultural competence is really at the top of your wish list.

I learned that reading and the importance of literacy is very important.

I learned that availability of courses in professional develop for your teachers is important.

I was really happy to hear that the work of teachers with parents is important.

I learned that partnerships are important.

I heard that teacher preparation is important and the abilities of teachers are important. So you are looking at ways to prepare teachers as they work with our children.

Here is what I want you to learn from me:

Think about the issue of class, diversity, as we prepare our teachers as well!”