**Holding An Effective ESL Parent Meeting**

**Overall objective:** to hold an effective ESL parent meeting in order to help participants understand school culture & procedures; improving communication between ESL teachers, mainstream teachers, and parents

- Issues constantly come up between the school and the ESL parents
- Parents & teachers feel great frustration when they can’t communicate
- Compassion fatigue - hard to see the parents & their individual concerns, as unique and specific to each one
- It is difficult to empathize when we do not share the same cultural experiences
- Parents have lost their frame of reference, it is all new & unknown
- Parents & teachers have different ways of achieving the same goal
- Reaching out to our ESL parents makes everyone’s job easier
- An ESL parent meeting helps improve communication

*Monica Schnee, TESOL 2004, Long Beach, CA.*
How to Hold an ESL Parent Meeting

• Letters to teachers asking for concerns about ESL students
• Letters to ESL parents whose children are or were in the program
• Reminders to parents of date, time and place where meeting will be
• Handouts in English & translations of the gist of meeting
• Invite the principal, nurse, PTO representative, police/community liaison

Topics to cover at the meeting
• Your school’s ESL program & its benefits
• Criteria for placing & exiting students
• Clarification of school’s procedures & culture – hidden curriculum
• Brief explanation of SLA – BICS & CALP
• State testing – school’s & parents’ expectations
• Report cards, study habits, parent/teacher conferences

After presentation:
• Divide parents into groups according to language
• Hand out pens & paper for them to write concerns & questions
• Use a more fluent parent to act as a translator/group leader
• Answer questions and keep papers for feedback to share with teachers

Monica Schnee, TESOL 2004, Long Beach, CA.