

# The MEXTESOL Journal: 1992-1999: Moving Slowly into the Future

*JoAnn Miller, Associate Editor for Refereed Articles*

## Abstract

In this second part of the history of the *MEXTESOL Journal*<sup>1</sup> in celebration of its 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, we examine the trials, tribulations and changes that occurred in the MJ from 1992 to 1999. This series will continue on in the next two issues with articles from our editors to bring this history to the present day.

## Resumen

En esta segunda parte de la historia del *MEXTESOL Journal* en celebración de su cuadragésimo aniversario, examinamos los problemas y cambios que ocurrieron en MJ de 1992 a 1999. Este serie de artículos continuará en los próximos dos números con artículos de algunos de nuestros editores más recientes.

It all started at the 1991 National MEXTESOL Convention held in Guadalajara, Jalisco. It was one of those periods of suffering that MEXTESOL used to go through: little money and few members. I had traveled from Mexico City to Guadalajara on the night train. This meant that there were three EFL teachers in a small compartment with two beds. I got to sleep on the floor. The event was not held at a convention center or a large hotel but a small rather shoddy downtown hotel as I recall.

I do not remember how I found out that the *MEXTESOL Journal* did not have an editor and in fact, an issue had not been published in over a year. I volunteered to become the Editor-in-Chief. Now looking back on this, I definitely have no idea why I got the brilliant idea to volunteer. What I do remember was talking to the MEXTESOL President (who I do not remember) and saying: I can do it. Since no one else was or had been interested since the last issue had been published, I was accepted.

When I got home, the enormity of what I had taken on hit me hard. I had no idea of how to begin working on issues for the journal. I must have known I could not do it without help. So I asked Ulrich (Uli) Schrader to be the Associate Editor and Elinore (Ellie) Duque to be the Editorial Assistant. Both worked at the *Instituto Mexicano Norteamericano de Relaciones Culturales* (IMNRC) where I also worked. A few years later Ellie would become my Associate Editor and many years later, Uli would become the Editor-in-Chief of MJ.

Looking back at the first issue published in the Spring of 1992, two of the authors came from the IMNRC (Nina Guizar and Susan Zimmerman de Guzmán), two articles I wrote, and two of the articles were reprints from TESOL affiliates (something that is permitted). I really do not know how the other article<sup>2</sup> came into my hands.

One of the major problems I had was there was no money to print the issue. Because I was living near the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM), I was able to find an inexpensive print shop that specialized in printing *licenciatura* theses. I cannot remember how many issues were printed up, very few I am sure, and strangely enough

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<sup>1</sup> See the first part in the last issue—Vol. 40, No. 1, 2016 at [www.mextesol.net](http://www.mextesol.net).

<sup>2</sup> [Extra! Extra!...Read All About It](#) by Kathleen Donohue-Aedo, Universidad de las Américas, Mexico City and Leonor Estrada-Gómez, Campestre School.

they were only printed on one side of the paper. At least this made the issue seem larger than it really was.

There was no way to get the issue to members since there were no funds for postage, so I left most of the copies at the office and got the addresses of a number of members in Mexico City. I put the issues in individual plastic bags, loaded my two kids in the VW and drove around town delivering the copies to as many people as I could. I have a copy of this first issue (probably the only one in existence), but you can see it online in the Archive at [www.mextesol.net](http://www.mextesol.net).

One of the most difficult parts of publishing in the 1990s was that all articles arrived by mail (snail mail and on paper) and had to be retyped on the computers. This, of course, was easier than when we did not have computers. Although Microsoft Word existed back then, it was very expensive. I tried numerous other word processors in the early issues (Chi-Writer, WorkPerfect, etc.) until I finally was able to use Word.

One of the difficulties was that while email was in existence in the middle 1990s, it was not popular for many more years. At the MEXTESOL Convention in 1994, I invited some of the speakers to write articles for us. Jack C. Richards, David Nunan, and Marianne Celce-Murcia faxed me articles that were published in Vol. 18, No. 2, 1994 (see Archive). I remember being so impressed as Jack Richards' articles rolled out of the fax. It was instant communication (1990s style). I could see him (or his secretary) feeding the sheets into the machine somewhere in Asia moments before they were captured by my fax machine in Mexico City. There has been progress.

At the National Convention in 1995 a different kind of progress was begun at MJ. I quote myself from the "From the Editor" section of Volume 19, Number 2 (1995):

*Much came out of the convention [...] As part of the professionalization process, the Journal is soon to clear up a lot of bureaucratic details that have been ignored for many years: it will soon be copyrighted and have an ISSN registry. We also are planning to initiate a three-tiered system of publication. We will be receiving articles that are refereed, unrefereed and solicited. Refereed articles will be sent to members of a new Editorial Board which is being formed by interested professionals throughout Mexico. These referees will determine whether the article is suitable for publication or not. Unrefereed articles will go directly to the Style Editor as they have in the past, and solicited articles will include those we request from plenary speakers, etc. Authors will decide if they want to have their articles refereed or not. We hope this new system will advance our movement towards becoming more professional, and will be able to offer you, our readers, a superior Journal. (p. 4)*

The first members of the Editorial Board were listed in Volume 19, Number 4 (1996) and they were:

*Jorge Aguilar Rodríguez, Universidad Autónoma de Sinaloa  
María de los Ángeles Clemente, Universidad Autónoma Benito Juárez de Oaxaca  
Elvia Leonor Díaz Valdez, Universidad Autónoma de Zacatecas  
Christopher J. Hall, Universidad de las Américas-Puebla  
Peter Hubbard, Universidad de Guadalajara  
M. Martha Lengeling, Universidad de Guanajuato  
Camille Meade, Interlingua, México, D.F.  
Héctor Gerardo Ochoa Díaz, Universidad de Aguascalientes*

Do you recognize any of these names? Our first issue that included refereed articles was Volume 20, Number 2 (1996). There were two articles:

Peter Hubbard, *Should Higher Education be Open or Closed?*  
M. Martha Lengeling, *The Use of Portfolios for Teacher Evaluation*

More changes were made in 1997 and reported in Volume 21, Number 2. The Editorial Board was expanded and a new Advisory Board was formed. The following are both:

#### Editorial Board

*Nanette De Paoli, Universidad La Salle, México, D.F.*  
*Elvia Leonor Díaz Valdez, Universidad Autónoma de Zacatecas*  
*Peter Ecke, Universidad de las Américas-Puebla*  
*Guadalupe Espinoza, Universidad del Valle de México-San Miguel de Allende*  
*Christopher J. Hall, Universidad de las Américas-Puebla*  
*M. Martha Lengeling, Universidad de Guanajuato*  
*Margarita Matte, Colegio Alemán, Guadalajara*  
*Carlos Ocegüera Ruvulcaba, Universidad de Guadalajara*  
*Ulrich Schrader, Instituto Mexicano Norteamericano de Idiomas, México, D.F.*

#### Advisory Board

*Jorge Aguilar Rodríguez, Universidad Autónoma de Sinaloa*  
*María de los Ángeles Clemente, Universidad Autónoma Benito Juárez de Oaxaca*  
*Peter Hubbard, Universidad de Guadalajara*  
*Camille Meade, Interlingua, México, D.F.*  
*Héctor Gerardo Ochoa Díaz, Universidad de Aguascalientes*

In 1999, professional considerations, as well as the feeling that changes were needed, led me to decide to leave the editorship of the *MEXTESOL Journal*. However, I was never able to leave MJ completely. I continued as a member of the Editorial Board for many years and when M. Martha Lengeling became Editor-in-Chief, I joined her as Associate Editor for Refereed Articles. I am proud of the changes we were able to make while I was Editor. It would have been impossible without the support of my Associate Editors (Ulrich Schrader, Elinore Duque, and Nanette de Paoli) and later without the help of the Editorial and Advisory Boards, as well as that of MEXTESOL itself and all the people who read the Journal and those who wrote for the Journal.

In our next issue we will follow the history of the MEXTESOL Journal as it moves to the state of Puebla for another period of growth and development.