On Wednesday, February 2, 2005, we had our first Coffee Talk of the semester in Room Y21. Although turnout was staggered, attendance was great. In attendance were: (from English) Todd Heyden, Tom Henthorne, Diana Lu, Pat LaRose, Jonathan Silverman, Kristen di Gennaro, and (from ELI) Andrew Schneider, Geoff Sobol, Cynthia Elmas, Michelle Johnson, Lisa Kraft, and Marcie Williams.

Note that we have a Coffee Talk website where we post meeting agendas, announcements, and past discussion topics. The website is http://appserv.pace.edu/emplibrary/ACF13A0.htm.

We reminded everyone that the Winter NYS TESOL Applied Linguistics conference will be Saturday, February 12th at BMCC. This is usually a very useful local conference with a wide variety of presentation topics. Marcie also announced a writing center conference at LIU coming up in the spring.

An important reminder was for the upcoming One-Day Mini Area Conference (ODMAC) that Pace is hosting with NYS TESOL on Saturday, April 30th (for the 3rd consecutive year). Marcie pointed out that we should take advantage of Coffee Talk meetings like this to generate ideas for presentations. Proposals are due on February 25th. We encouraged ESL writing center tutors and tutor trainers to consider submitting proposals relevant to this area of ESL. We’d like to encourage peer tutors from the writing center to attend the conference as well so they can learn more about ESL learning and teaching. Marcie will take conference announcements to the writing center.

The plenary speaker for this year’s conference will be John McWhorter. Kristen has been communicating with him and will soon publicize the title of his talk. To prepare for his visit to Pace, we have decided to read some of his books. Kristen suggested we start with Word on the Street, as this is the most accessible of the ones she’s read so far. For anyone interested in the book discussion meeting, please e-mail days and times you are available to Marcie.

Marcie informed everyone of the new Knit Pick meetings – informal professional development sessions where people can bring knitting and crochet materials to work on while discussing whatever teaching issues might come up. Pat LaRose added that the suggestions she received at
the last Knit Pick meeting helped her solve the classroom behavior problems she had brought up. Meeting times and locations will be sent by e-mail.

A very long discussion followed concerning how to encourage more ELI teachers to attend Coffee Talk – most loyal participants are English Department faculty. This led to conversation about the theoretical background in TESOL programs and how to find meaningful connections between theory and practice. Questions were raised such as: What is the content for language teaching? Is pedagogy considered content in degree programs the same way literature is? Jonathan stated that most graduate students in the liberal arts are not required to take pedagogy courses. Kristen countered that those who work as teaching assistants in foreign language and literature programs certainly are required to take such courses. Todd added that he thinks he learned how to teach in great part by imitating some of his own professors. Todd also recommended the book *A Life in School: What the Teacher Learned*, by Jane Tompkins, for learning about one teacher’s transformation through self-reflection.

A few participants pointed out that they found potential conference ideas from this discussion.

Future dates for Coffee Talk meetings for this semester, Spring 2005, are:

March 2
April 13
May 4