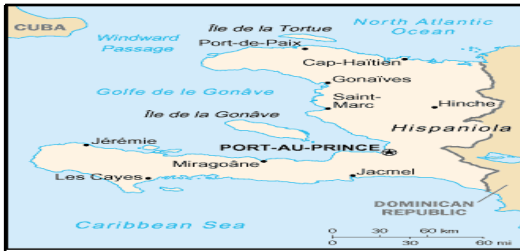


The HABETAC Newsletter

Haitian Bilingual/ESL Technical Assistance Center @ Brooklyn College



HABETAC @ Brooklyn College
James Hall 3103J
2900 Bedford Avenue
Brooklyn, New York 11210
Tele. (718) 951-4668
Fax (718) 951-4707

Nicole B. Rosefort
Director

Marie Lily Cerat
Resource Specialist

Jessie M. Cadeau,
Administrative Assistant

Professor Regine Latortue
Dean Deborah Shanley
Co-Principal Investigators

Advisory Committee Members

Nirva Baudin

Dr. Carole M. Berotte Joseph

Menes Dejoie

Dr. Beryl Dorsett

Humbert Emmanuel

Berthe Faustin

Dr. Henry Frank

Dr. Regine Latortue

Carlo Mitton

Dr. Jean Pierre Louis

Jean Previllon

Yolette Williams

Message From the Director

Dear Colleagues;

Many events have impacted our community in 2004, the year that marked the Bicentennial of Haiti's independence. Commemorating this historic milestone was a central theme of many discussions and activities. Haitian life was affected by political turmoil, natural disaster, daily challenges for survival amidst new immigration laws, higher standards, changes in administration and services.

Brooklyn College opened its doors, welcoming HABETAC to its family, placing us in the heart of the Haitian community in New York. The HABETAC staff quickly began the arduous task of establishing a new office and responding to requests for information and assistance from educators, parents, students and community organizations. Together with the Brooklyn College Haitian Student Association, we hosted a successful Career Day for over 250 high school students. HABETAC participated with the BETAC Network, the NYSED OBE, the NYSED OSI, and the NYCDOE in many professional development initiatives.

Our deepest gratitude to our community members who generously shared their profession and life experiences; thus, contributing to a very special day in the education of our youth. We are equally grateful to the parents and educators who valiantly represented our community at the NYSABE Annual Conference in 2004. Of particular interest were the Parent Institute, the Teachers' Forum and Language Delegate Meeting. A dance number created and performed by Jackee Bernard, in honor of the ancestors wooed the audience. It gave all the language groups at the conference an opportunity to mark Haiti's Bicentennial and to rededicate themselves to the legacy of the struggle for freedom.

Various radio programs helped us to disseminate vital information to the community. The June 2004 HABETAC Conference on the Haitian child brought many educators and parents together in a forum of sharing and examination. To provide the high quality education needed for our students to meet the standards and become productive citizens, we must continue to work collaboratively to ensure adequate delivery of services. We encourage you to contact HABETAC for support and technical assistance. Please be reminded that the 2005 NYSABE Conference will take place March 3-6 at the Rye Town Hilton.

See you all soon.

Nicole Baron Rosefort

The Parent Gallery

Haitian Parents at P.S. 34 Want an Unbiased and Sensitive School Leadership

In Queens, a borough that has always boasted a huge Haitian population, neighbors heard the angry voices of Haitian parents when a school administrator insulted their children.

Children and their parents recounted that Assistant Principal Nancy Miller of P.S. 34 ordered twelve or thirteen Bilingual Haitian Creole students to “sit on the floor and eat with your hands like animals, the way you are treated in your country.” Members of several community organizations stood by the children and their families, marching and demonstrating over

the discriminatory practices against the Haitian students and calling for the removal of the current administration.

Ms. Miller was first transferred to the Regional Office, awaiting the Department of Education’s investigation, which have found Ms. Miller indeed unfairly treated the students. At present, her removal from the New York City School system is imminent. However, the Haitian community stands by its position that Ms. Shakespeare, the principal should also go. “Ms. Shakespeare’s failed leadership and her insensitive attitude created the environment for these kinds of situations to happen. This happened

under her watch,” said Mr. ..., a parent at P.S. 34.

The Haitian community held a press conference on Friday, April 29 on the steps of City Hall, flanked by some local politicians to ask for the removal of Ms. Shakespeare, the Principal.

“Racism and discrimination have no place anymore in our civilized society. Where would all the fights and blood spilled to end segregation and racism in this country have gone,” says Mr. Andre, an active community organizer around the P.S. 34 crisis.

The Language and Power of Myths: Closing Pandora’s Box

HABETAC continues to offer educators forum and workshop series to assist Haitian teachers to remain up-to-date with policies, regulations, have access to resources that enhance their instructional plans and provide them with innovative ideas and teaching practices. HABETAC always tries to make its professional development sessions relevant, and lessons and activities shared with teachers easily duplicable in the classroom. One often heard comment in the field is that “theories are good, but practices better.” HABETAC professional development sessions focus on tangible and reproducible lessons and practices for participants. That can be immediately plugged in.

One of HABETAC’s most recent session with a group of Bilingual and ESL Haitian Teachers delved into the realm of myths. Using an old, New York City Board of Education Haitian Creole publication titled *Ann Li Kont ak Lejann*, “Let’s Read Folk Stories and Legends.” Together, we revisited the Greek myth of Pandora and superimposed *standards two* of the

Language Arts, which says *students will listen, speak, read and write in their native languages for literary response*.

To active prior knowledge and motivate, we compiled a list of mythic expressions that are used in our language such as “Pa ban m panik” Don’t panick me, and correlated them to the Greek god/goddess, character or situation they are attached to. We looked at different artistic renditions of the character Pandora through time.

As we read the text, we had guiding questions that dealt with topics like the depictions of women in myths and other stories, whether curiosity is a good or bad thing, new vocabulary and the choice of words in the story. There were numerous opportunities to listen as selected readers read and discussions happened, speak: by making relevant points, giving opinions and sharing thoughts and ideas on the story, to read: aloud and silently, and to write: by completing the mythic expressions list as well as the

penning a persuasive letter to Pandora to dissuade her from opening the box.

One activity that generated concentration, cooperative learning, peer sharing was the construction of a small, origami box. The directions were given, a demonstration done and models were passed around. In addition to making the box, participants had to come up with three to five world and/or community problems that they were to seal in their boxes. And unlike Pandora, they vowed that their curiosity would not get the best of them.

Freebies and Great Materials for your Classroom

Dates to Remember HABETAC's Career Day for Haitian High School Students

The 2005 Career Day event for Haitian High Schoolers was again a great success. Over 300 students came and fifteen schools in all participated, coming as far away as Westbury. Twenty five Haitian professionals from the fields of Engineering to Journalism joined the students. The six hour day began with a College Fair where the students met with representatives from these schools and inquired about programs and services. The day continued, filled with presentation by some key presenters. The leitmotif of all the talks was the same: "You Can Do It. You Can Achieve. Believe in Yourself."



Florence M. Charles (RN), Director of Visiting Nurses Services speaking to High School Students at Health and Medicine Workshop

Following the plenary session and lunch, students met in career cluster

workshops with the professionals to discuss preparation for the specific career, schools recommended, current hiring trend in the chosen field, salary range, and so on.

Similarly to the majority of the youngsters, most presenters were not born in the United States and some even came as adults. In other words, they too were English Language Learners who had to overcome numerous hardships, but never allowed discouragement to enter their vocabulary. Several community organizations were present, and often students find internships, mentoring, college prep courses and many other extracurricular activities within these community-based organizations.

Please send your contributions, comments, and questions to newsletter:
HABETAC@ Brooklyn College 2900 Bedford Ave., Room 3103J James Hall, Brooklyn, NY 11210.
Telephone (718) 951-4668 Fax (718) 951-4909 or
Email: habetac@brooklyn.cuny.edu

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HABETAC Congratulates You!
HABETAC Konplimante W!

Menes Dejoie, Bilingual Haitian Creole Psychologist
Recipient of New York SABE 2005 Support Person of the Year

Brooklyn College Graduating Students

Natacha Bernard, Vice President

Haitian American Students Association

Chris Bissainthe, Member

Haitian American Students Association