



Winter 2017

Newsletter

Vol. 38, Issue 1

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Cover photo: Andrea Bontempi

Message from the President

Winter, 2017

Dear TNTESOL Members,

As my time as TNTESOL president is coming to a close, I want to thank everyone for the opportunity to serve this wonderful organization the last few years. I am so proud to be part of such an amazing group of teachers. YOU are my HEROS. Thank you for ALL that you do for the ESL students in our wonderful state and the difference that you are making in their lives, as well as, the lives of the teachers and administrators that you work with.

I am excited about the TNTESOL 2017 conference. If you have not registered, there is still time to make plans to meet us in Memphis for a fabulous conference. Dr. Abasi McKinzie and his conference committee have outdone themselves with planning this conference. It will definitely be one of the best that TNTESOL has ever seen – no doubt in my mind. 😊

I would like to encourage all of the members to participate in voting for the incoming board. We have three Member-at-Large seats to fill. That is one person from each region of the state. I am so excited to see the transition to true board equalization across the state. It is so important that everyone's voice be heard. 😊

I would also like to encourage you to think about getting more involved with TNTESOL. If you would like more information on how to do that, please do not hesitate to contact me at trharosky@king.edu

Hope to see you in Memphis!

Tammy R. Hutchinson-Harosky

Dr. Tammy R Hutchinson-Harosky
TNTESOL President



TNTESOL is your organization. Please get involved.

Communication



Linked In — Search for and join Tennessee Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TNTESOL).

TennesseeESL@Yahogroups.com — moderator Deborah Sams



Facebook has a private TNTESOL group with closed membership. If you would like to join, please contact the TNTESOL webmaster.

Follow TNTESOL on **Twitter** — Chat with us Monday evenings at 7pm CST.

Abasi McKinzie (@mckah01) and ChristineTennyson (@CBTennyson) moderate our #tntesolchat



Advocacy Day — Do you know of issues that need to be brought to the attention of political leaders? The TNTESOL Advocacy Representative, Byron Booker will listen and bring your concerns to Washington. Contact him at parliamentarian@tntesol.org



TNTESOL is an active and vital organization and we encourage and promote all TESOL professionals. If you know someone who would be interested, please let us know. We look forward to hearing from you.

The **TNTESOL Newsletter** is published three times a year. Submissions are accepted on a variety of topics. We welcome book reviews, issues in the fields of K-12, Refugee ESL, Adult Ed, Higher Ed and more, as well as articles on teaching strategies, news related to TNTESOL or the field, jokes, classroom anecdotes, even recipes.

The style for submissions can be informal and articles are typically 500-1000 words. Of course, exceptions can be made! A bibliography is not necessary unless the article is research-based.

Send your ideas via **email attachment** along with your personal information by the issue deadline to:

Andrea Bontempi, Newsletter Editor
newsletter@tntesol.org

Deadlines

April 15, 2017
August 15, 2017
December 15, 2017

Issue

Spring 2017
Summer/Fall 2017
Winter 2018

TNTESOL Newsletter
c/o ESL Instructional Facilitator
Instruction Department,
Rutherford County Schools
2240 Southpark Blvd.,
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Southeast TESOL 2016—Louisville, Kentucky

Abasi McKinzie
TNTESOL 2nd Vice President

Having only traveled “through” Kentucky and never “to” anywhere in Kentucky, I was unsure of what to expect. I’m sure people think the same of Memphis if they’ve never spent any time here. So, I am glad to say that I found the town and people very welcoming and hospitable. For example, their downtown had a nice ambiance that includes families as well as individuals looking for a way to enjoy themselves. Of course, I was not there merely to see the sites and enjoy the food; however, every conference is about more than just the academic collaboration and information that one receives. In fact, the organizers of SETESOL 2016 played up their Kentuckian setting and signaled the beginning of the conference by having the official bugler for the Kentucky Derby play the “Call to Post.” This was a nice touch, which was made even grander by his explanation of what he does and of his passion for education and reading.



The theme for the conference was “Racing toward a Brighter Future,” and the names of the strands for the sessions were connected with this idea by conjoining ESL issues with horse racing imagery. I know very little about the details of horse racing, but I felt that the theme fit very well. This is not just because it was held in the home state of some of the most famous horse races around the nation, but also because all the session strands pointed towards concrete, implementable ways of how we, as ESOL professionals, can help the populations we serve and provide that brighter future.



My first day of the conference, which was a pre-conference institute entitled “Dream Day,” allowed me the opportunity to learn of scaffolding ideas and techniques that were unfamiliar to me. I also obtained information on how to support the entire ESL family instead of just the student in front of me. Additionally, I found resources and methods to improve my instruction with my Kindergarten students and also played with technology programs that can be used to assist my students in how they learn. The greatest thing is that this top-notch provision of information continued over the next three days of the conference. By the time I was heading on my way back home, I had a binder full of useful ideas and resources. Therefore, I can truly say that I enjoyed my time in Louisville because of both the knowledge I gained and the great city that it is.



A Message from the State

Dear Fellow TNTESOL Members,

This winter brings much anticipation to the Tennessee Department of Education.

We are excited to share our new Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) state plan with educators, parents, and other community members for discussion and review. The state plan was developed around the *Tennessee Succeeds* strategic plan ([here](http://www.tn.gov/education/topic/strategic-plan)) (<http://www.tn.gov/education/topic/strategic-plan>) that built on the foundations of standards, assessment, and accountability, which are supported by five priority areas: Early Foundations and Literacy; High School and Bridge to Postsecondary; All Means All; Educator Support; and District Empowerment.

The department is currently hosting town hall meetings statewide to explain and discuss the ESSA plan. On Dec. 19, the draft plan was published online ([here](http://www.tn.gov/education/section/essa)) (<http://www.tn.gov/education/section/essa>) for public review and final comment. Following this last comment period, the department will review the plan and submit the final version in early March to the U.S. Department of Education.

Your input is important; please share your ideas with the department through our online survey ([here](#))*. We encourage you to share the survey link with parents and community members. The following sections include plans around English learners (ELs) and/or English as a second language (ESL) that may be of particular interest.

English Language Proficiency Standards (under *Standards*)

English Learners (under *Assessment*)

Accountability for English Learners (under *Accountability*)

Use of Data to Inform Technical Assistance & Improvement, Title III
(under *All Means All*)

Title I, Part C: Migrant Education (under *All Means All*)

Title III, Part A: Language Instruction for English Learners & Immigrant Students
(under *All Means All*)

Students with Disabilities, English Learners with Disabilities (under *All Means All*)

Additionally, in 2017 we look forward to new ESL training opportunities. The ESSA plan includes an ESL focus on recently arrived ELs (RAELs) and long-term ELs (LTELs). The department will provide technical assistance for general education teachers for both RAELs and LTELs. In addition, the Title III office will collaborate with other divisions to develop meaningful training units that include cultural sensitivity.

*Editor's Note: This survey is now closed.

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The department will continue to use the W-APT screener for kindergarten. However, in July 2017 the department will begin using the new online WIDA Screener for grades 1–12 instead of the W-APT. We plan to offer training support in late spring or early summer. We would also like your input related to the storage of these initial scores.

Finally, please make your reservations for the annual TNTESOL Conference in Memphis, March 9–11 at the Sheraton Memphis Downtown Hotel, located at 250 N. Main Street. March 9 will be the State Day. There is no charge for this day of professional development, but we do ask that you please register ([here](http://www.tntesol.org)) (www.tntesol.org) to reserve a seat for these sessions. The day will offer information on the ESSA plan, the new accountability system, the new WIDA screener, and a special guest, Kathleen Leos, will be with us for the afternoon presentation. Kathleen is a former director of the Office of English Language Acquisition and has a rich history with ELs.

Happy New Year! Please let our team know if we can be of support or help in any way.

Jan

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Mid-Cumberland Collaborative ESL PLC

Representatives from the districts in the Mid-Cumberland region met in January at the Renaissance Center in Dickson. The meeting included a presentation by Joann Runion, TDOE Coordinator of English Learner Instruction and Intervention, on the EL Landscape and Differentiation in Instruction; a share



session facilitated by Amy Gullion, Academic Consultant, TDOE Mid-Cumberland CORE; and a technology presentation by Joseph Whinery, ESL Regional Advisor and ESL Supervisor for Williamson County Schools.

2016 West Tennessee ESL Mini-conference

Angela Rood
Dyersburg City Schools

On October 29, 2016, the fourth annual West Tennessee ESL Mini-Conference was hosted at Dyersburg Middle School in Dyersburg, Tennessee. This year's conference required a different location in response to the growing number of attendees with each year's conference. Dyersburg Middle School's lecture room, with theater seating for up to approximately 150 guests, provided us with the perfect accommodations for the conference.

Many things regarding the structure of the conference were kept the same, but a few changes were made based on suggestions and requests gathered through evaluations completed by previous attendees. Purchases and budget decisions for the conference were made with the help of the ESL administrative staff of Dyersburg City Schools. Susan Smith, the K-12 ESL Teacher for Lauderdale County Schools, graciously prepared all of the conference certificates, along with assisting in any manner needed on the day of the conference.

Once again, the EventBrite website was utilized to promote the conference, send email blasts, process registrations, and gather survey information at the completion of the event. If EventBrite does not collect any of the conference money on your behalf, then using the website for promotional purposes is absolutely free! It doesn't get better than that! I cannot say enough about how useful and time saving the EventBrite website was for me! I highly recommend it to anyone who would like to host a similar event.

Our conference agenda consisted of a morning keynote session led by Jan Lanier, followed by breakout sessions after lunch. As always, conference attendees were very grateful for the opportunity to receive information directly from Jan Lanier. Mrs. Lanier is always so gracious to make the conference part of her October plans and makes the day so worthwhile for all of us. She updated everyone on current ESL issues in the state of Tennessee and the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) as it pertains to English learners. Additionally, district ESL coordinators appreciated a private session with Mrs. Lanier to directly address their specific concerns.

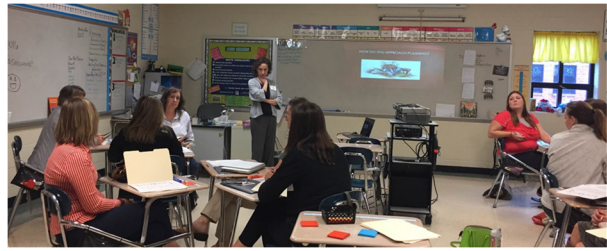
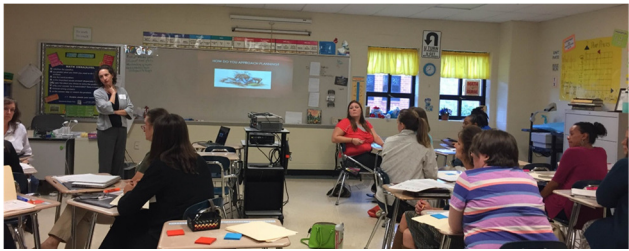


Mrs. Reed and her sister had beautiful jewelry for sale at one vendor table.

One new addition to the conference this year was having three vendors to join us (jewelry, books, and teaching materials) during the conference. The vendors did not pay a fee for setting up this year. However, in the future, it could serve as a way to raise additional funds for conference expenses. By the end of the day, participants had enjoyed six hours of quality professional collaboration and development, along with delicious snacks and lunch

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Lisa Hoelmer presented a session on lesson planning for ELLs.

prepared by the cafeteria staff of Dyersburg Middle School. Funding for the conference materials and food expenses was made possible by an affordable conference fee of \$20.00 and a generous \$200.00 donation from the TNTESOL organization. We received excellent feedback from our conference evaluations and we always have many requests to continue to make it an annual event. If you are considering hosting a mini-conference, create a plan and contact the TNTESOL Board for their support. The most difficult part of organizing a conference such as this is securing quality presenters. Starting early with promoting the conference and making connections with colleagues and others in your professional network can be beneficial to the process as well.



Whitney from Usborne Books had a fabulous vendor table.

I am currently in the second year of my second consecutive term of serving as a Member-at-Large on the TNTESOL Board and I can say that the experience has definitely contributed to my professional growth in so many ways. Four years ago, I would have never considered taking on the task of hosting a mini-conference; but now, I can sincerely say that doing so has been one of the highlights of my teaching career. Without the support and connections made through TNTESOL, I never would have taken that step. I was a member of TNTESOL for 4 years before becoming actively involved. Serving on the TNTESOL Board has been a metamorphosis for my ESL career. It has completely changed my level of professional knowledge and confidence. Additionally, I have developed such strong relationships with other ESL professionals. Since I am the only ESL teacher in my school system, having those connections has been invaluable to me. Consider becoming actively involved and see what a difference it can make for you!



Participants enjoyed conversation and collaboration over a delicious lunch.

If you have questions regarding hosting a mini-conference, please feel free to contact me through email at arood@dyersburgcityschools.org and I will be glad to help.



Stewarts Creek High School ESL Field Trip to the Nashville Holocaust Memorial



Johnna Kaye Paraiso, Ed.D.
ESL Instructional Technology Facilitator
SLIFE Facilitator
Rutherford County Schools

Like many lessons, this one began with an innocent question. “Teacher, what is the Holocaust?” The students waited for her answer. Stewarts Creek High School ESL teacher, Johnna Paraiso, tossed it back to them. “You tell me,” she challenged. “What do you know about it?” After a part of a class period of researching and reporting back to the class, the students were left with more questions than answers. “Did the Holocaust really happen?” one teen inquired.

Thus began a unit of study that sent these English Language Learners on a journey of learning about man’s atrocities to others, respect for all human life and ultimately, hope.

After building background knowledge about Nazi Germany, Dr. Paraiso launched literature units in each of the three ESL classes at Stewarts Creek High School. One group studied *The Book Thief*. Another class read *Anne Frank: Diary of a Young Girl*. The students delved into both the content of the study as well as the language objectives. They identified literary devices within the reading assignments. They examined propaganda techniques. But the students were captivated by the humanity within these stories.

Jill Coble, a retired Rutherford County ESL teacher and Belz-Lipman Holocaust Educator, was invited to speak to the ESL classes. The teens peppered her with questions. “Why did the Nazis do this?” “Did the people that hid Jews get in trouble?” “Who else did the Nazis want to exterminate?” And—ultimately—“This could never happen again. Could it?” Mrs. Coble explained that the Nazis targeted Jews foremost, but other groups such as the disabled, homosexuals, Roma Gypsies, Jehovah’s Witnesses and Communists were also imprisoned and murdered. Furthermore she informed them that the penalties for protecting any one in these targeted groups were severe and often fatal. “Genocide is occurring right now in many parts of the world. Some of you have seen it in your own home countries,” Mrs. Coble told the classes. “Now, what will you do to make sure this kind of persecution never happens again?”

Classroom discussions followed. These teens were not satisfied to leave their learning inside the covers of their assigned book reading. “Dr. Paraiso,” they asked their teacher, “Is there anyone still alive that lived through this? Could they come and talk to our class?” Dr. Paraiso assured them that while many Holocaust survivors have passed away, there were indeed people still alive and living locally that had survived this experience and possibly would be willing to speak to the class.

A phone call to the Tennessee Holocaust Commission revealed so much more. With the cooperation of

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Danielle Kahane-Kaminsky, The THC's Executive Director, Dr. Paraiso and Mrs. Coble arranged a trip for the students to The Nashville Holocaust Memorial, located on the campus of the Gordon Jewish Community Center. At the JCC, the Stewarts Creek High School ESL students were privileged to hear Frances Cutler-Hahn, a Nashville resident and Holocaust survivor speak about her experiences during World War Two. Born in Paris, France in 1938, Mrs. Cutler-Hahn was a hidden child during the War. Her parents placed her in an orphanage, concealing her Jewish heritage. Later Frances was moved from the orphanage to stay the remainder of the War with a French Catholic family. "I remember most being jealous and resentful that I was not part of a family," she told the students. Many of the children had tears in their eyes as they listened to Frances talk about her life. "I was robbed of my childhood," she told them. Frances went on to share with the students that her mother was murdered in Auschwitz in 1942. "Had my parents not hidden me, I would most likely have been gassed in Auschwitz with my mother," she explained. Frances also told the children that her father died of tuberculosis shortly after World War Two. Since there was no one in France to care for her, refugee resettlement agencies in France found Frances' great aunt and great uncle in Philadelphia who were willing to raise the 10 year old girl as their own. Frances grew up in this adopted family, finishing her education, marrying and finally relocating to Nashville to be near her daughter, a local attorney. "How can you make sure this never happens again?" she asked the students. "You start in the small things, the everyday things. You don't tolerate hateful words and bullies."

The students were then given a guided tour of the beautiful Nashville Holocaust Memorial, designed by a local Nashville artist Alex Limor, whose parents were both survivors of the Holocaust. The guide explained the significance of the Memorial Wall, the Eternal Flame, and the sculpture itself: a bronze book with the center pages torn out representing the destruction of two-thirds of the European Jews. The students were able to look at the names on the wall and place stones of remembrance on the Memorial.

Back in the classroom after the field trip, the class discussion turned to ways to prevent hatred and intolerance in everyday school life. The students suggested helping other students who might have a disability, befriending students who are from a different race or religion and, perhaps most important of all, teaching their peers and classmates that any kind of dehumanizing speech or action is not acceptable. One of the girls in the class showed her teacher her personal copy of *Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl*. "Look Dr. Paraiso! The speaker signed my book!" Sure enough, Frances Cutler-Hahn had been gracious enough to sign this student's book. "I was almost crying!" the student continued. "I hope that this never happens to anyone else again!"

"Sometimes we must interfere when human lives are endangered, when human dignity is in jeopardy. National borders and sensitivities become irrelevant whenever men or women are persecuted because of their race, religion or political views. That place must—at that moment—become the center of the universe."— Elie Wiesel

-- An engraved quotation from the Nashville Holocaust Memorial

*For more information about educational resources,
please contact the Tennessee Holocaust Commission at (615) 343-2563*



Gundi-Ressin Scholarship Winner

Teaching English in the Dominican Republic

Rebekah Schoutko
ESL Educator
Lenoir City High School

The moment when I thought, “Wow, I don’t know if I could do this all the time,” came on about the third day of English camp. We were in one of our morning English classes, and while the humidity was still overwhelming, on this day it was accompanied by strong rain instead of the beating sun. I watched the corners of the classroom fill with water as the trash that gathered there started to stir. My voice rose as I tried to fight with the pounding rain echoing on the tin roof. One light bulb and one small fan attempted to illuminate damp papers and cool the sweat of 25 people crammed into broken desks and a poorly ventilated classroom. I slowed, with sweat dripping down my back, exhausted and humbled by the incredible students in front of me and the strength of teachers who endure and thrive in this setting all year long.

During the month of June in East Tennessee, I spent hours preparing three perfectly leveled lessons for beginning, intermediate and advanced ESL classes. After finishing my first year as a high school ESL teacher, I was excited about this opportunity to teach in the Dominican Republic and hoped to develop some of my new skills. I had never been to the DR, did not know anyone who lived there, but years ago had briefly met the woman who was teaching with me. We were going to teach in a small Christian school in Juan Tomás, a village just outside the large city of Santo Domingo, and I was told to expect between 35 and 50 middle schoolers.

The beginning of English camp brought me face to face with the sweetest group of Dominican students, about 60 to be exact, with the number growing each day. The boys’ cabins were busting at the seams with 45 kids while the number of girls settled around 15. Our “middle school” students’ ages ranged from 9 to 16. Our placement test consisted of a list of questions we would ask students in English and



they needed to answer verbally. Every single child proudly answered the first question with “My name is _____.” However, the second question, “How old are you?” stumped over half of the group, resulting in a brand new beginner class of about 40 students. My partner was a regular education English teacher who had never taught ESL. I prepared to teach about 20 intermediate students, realizing that my advanced level plans would not even be touched. I scrambled to adjust to the class sizes and levels of these eager students. We had about five hours over

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three days to engage and grow these kids. My perfectly planned lessons went out the window and we were in survival mode. The beginning students chanted colors and body parts, worked on plurals and the whole span of ages was engaged in movement activities that highlighted very beginning listening and speaking skills. I challenged my group to think about goals. I did not have enough graphic organizers or folders for the students to use but we got by with construction paper and markers. We talked about academic vocabulary words for goals and obstacles in



achieving our goal; the students shared some of their dreams with me. We practiced the vocabulary words in sentences and incorporated a visual representation of the students overcoming obstacles to achieve these goals. Whether their goal was to be an NBA basketball player or a teacher, the students all saw English as an important key to success. After reflecting about ourselves, we read a story about a young man who worked hard for his goals only to be presented with numerous obstacles. He remained true and determined and eventually was rewarded for his perseverance. The students practiced their English reading comprehension while learning from the example of someone in similar circumstances that even when the worst happens, to never stop working towards your goals. It was often a struggle to motivate these students to actually work and pay attention during a summer class.

As I am reflecting and planning for my summer 2017 trip back to Juan Tomás, I am challenged with improving the engagement and growth of these students in such a short amount of contact time. The extremely limited class time only allowed us to dip our toes into the water, and my hurdle is to make the most of this shallow yet powerful opportunity. In my classroom in East Tennessee there hangs a paper ornament that Robert made for me after class one day. Robert was curious, engaged, and a hard worker even in a summer class. He was my protector during the week and brought me treats like fresh fruit from the trees in the yard. I am often burdened by the bureaucracy of education in the United States and a sense of powerlessness to inspire change in a such a large, flawed system. I am upset with the lack of communication, when I don't have the technology I want, or when the copier is broken. I can call the office the moment the heat or air conditioning breaks to have someone come and fix it. This ornament is a simple reminder of students who are considered fortunate to be able to go to any school in a country that is struggling. It humbles me as I remember the flooding, sticky, humid classrooms where we were lucky to have a working Expo marker. How blessed I am to have access to the internet, a whole library of books, movies, and even paper with no problems. How blessed I am to come to a job everyday that both pushes and inspires me. Teaching English in the Dominican Republic was a sweet reminder of the joy of being a teacher and connecting with students, but it also serves daily to humble me and show me how fortunate I really am.

For photos, more information about the trip of 2016 or interest in joining us for the trip during the summer of 2017, email me at rschoutko@gmail.com.

View the guidelines for the Gundi-Ressin Scholarship Award at www.tntesol.org



We the People

Christine Tennyson, Ed.D.
 TNTESOL 1st Vice President
 ESL Teacher
 Rutherford County Schools

On December 11-13, I attended the National Immigrant Integration Conference (NIIC) in Nashville. This conference was organized in part by the Tennessee Immigrant and Refugee Rights Coalition (TIRRC) and by the National Partnership for New Americans (NPNA). Gathering organizations from around the United States, this conference focuses on immigration issues and working toward integration of immigrants into American society. The theme of this year's conference was *We the People*.



Because this conference was held after our fall presidential election and before the inauguration, there was uncertainty surrounding the future of immigrant rights and treatment. The rhetoric of the incoming administration left little doubt about how they stood on the presence of immigrants especially those who were undocumented and those of certain religious backgrounds. Despite these troubled times, there was a spirit of hope grounded in the unity these organizations provide. The clear goal of the participants was to continue to demand immigrants be treated with dignity and human compassion.

Plenary speakers included Nashville Mayor Megan Berry, entertainer and activist Ashley Judd, comedic writer and chef Eddie Huang (my favorite), Mexican Ambassador Carlos Sada, and many others. They spoke on a variety of topics including the power of food, our own voice, the global trends in immigrant integration, and solidarity. Overall, the lesson I took away from the plenaries and lunch entertainment was that we must appreciate the diversity immigrants bring to our nation and support their integration into our societies. In addition, when considering the current state of American political and social thought, when we, as a nation, make policies based on fear, we make terrible decisions which have had historically far reaching negative results.

As an educator in the field of K-12 ESL, I attended sessions on how to support newcomers and how to continue to engage them in their own educational process. Of these, the most informative were how to address the emotional needs of immigrants and refugees and how to meet the needs of newcomer immigrant youth. As refugees and immigrants arrive in communities with limited first language literacy and often having survived traumatic life events, educators and schools become responsible for supporting their difficult transition into American society and the English language. The lesson from these sessions centered around the importance of collaboration among nonprofit, government agencies, and schools to create a learning environment which both encouraged and supported academic progress and respected the unique challenges refugees bring to the educational environment. Unfortunately,

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many of these organizations and agencies are based in urban areas and have yet to reach the rural places. As immigrants spread toward rural America to work the fields and support construction growth, more outreach is needed to follow them into these areas.

As I drove away from the conference at the end of the final day, I was encouraged as an educator to find many who support what I do, and through the solidarity of the participants to stand up for positive integration of immigrants and refugees in our society. In addition, I was armed with knowledge of how to defend against those who want to spread false information about immigrants, refugees, and religious minorities.



2017 TNTESOL Annual Meeting and Conference



This year our theme for the TNTESOL conference is Respect: Bridging Languages, Academics and Communities. It is imperative that we take a holistic approach to reaching the EL and immigrant communities that we serve. There will be conversation and discussion on how including all three areas will assist us in making sure that our students are successful in all areas of life as they grow and become a vital element of American society. We hope that this conference not only is able to offer academic solutions to issues that we face, but also is an outreach to the other organizations that support our families and a chance to learn from them. As the saying goes, “It takes a village to raise a child”.

In Memphis this year, we want to elevate and spotlight the great strides we are making within education and to display the unity between organizations that support our EL and immigrant populations in Tennessee. America has always been its best when it has striven to build bridges of understanding and compassion between the various and multi-faceted ethnic groups that live within its borders; when it has worked not only to help the able to succeed but those who are without means; and when it has lived up to the poem emblazoned upon the Statue of Liberty’s base: “Give me your tired, your poor/Your huddled masses yearning to be free...I lift my lamp beside the golden door!”

We hope to see you in Memphis on March 9—11, 2017.

Find conference details and registration information at www.tntesol.org

TNTESOL Board of Directors—Slate of Nominees



President: Christine Tennyson has a BA from Hope College in Holland, MI, an MAEd from Austin Peay, and a doctorate from Trevecca. She spent one year studying in Germany and earned her ESL endorsement from TSU. Her first teaching job was in preschool and she also taught adult ESL students. For the last 16 years, she has taught in Rutherford County. She currently teaches at Smyrna Middle School where she is the ESL department head. She has presented many times at TNTESOL and won several travel grants including the Best of Tennessee three times. As a result, she has presented at the Southeast Regional TESOL many times as well. She is married, lives in Murfreesboro, and has two children, 23 and 17. She and her husband enjoy spending time with their grandchild.



1st Vice President: Abasi McKinzie has a BA from Rhodes College, an MA from the University of Memphis and both an Ed.S and an Ed.D from Union University. He has been with Shelby County Schools for 16 years, half of them being spent in the field of ESL. The majority of those years have been within the middle school setting, but he also has worked in elementary schools. He is currently an ESL teacher at Lowrance Elementary Schools and has also served as an immigrant facilitator and an instructional facilitator. Additionally, he is an adjunct professor for the ESL department of Trevecca University. He has presented at several TNTESOL conferences, at SETESOL and for MSERA. He is currently serving as the second vice president and is the chair for the 2017 TNTESOL conference.



2nd Vice President: Joseph Whinery is the ESL Supervisor for Williamson County Schools. Together with 30 full-time ESL teachers and two teacher assistants, about 700 English Learners from a wide range of heritage language and country backgrounds receive support in the program. He has served on the TNTESOL Board as an elected member since 2014 as well as the non-voting position of www.tntesol.org webmaster. Joseph is the Conference Chair for TNTESOL 2018 which will be co-hosted by the Williamson County Schools and Franklin Special Schools District in Franklin, TN. He is one of eight ESL Regional Advisors assisting the Director of English Learner, Immigrant, and Migrant Programs to organize and conduct area PLCs and other professional development opportunities for both ESL and general education teachers.

In an effort to achieve board equalization across the state with the member-at-large seats, there will be one seat open for East TN, one seat for Central TN and one seat for West TN.

East Tennessee Member-at-Large



Becky Young, Dayton City School

I received my M.S. in Education/ESL Emphasis from the University of Tennessee – Knoxville in 2003 and have worked at Dayton City School for the past 14 years. I serve as ESL Teacher, ESL Coordinator, Title III Director, and Migrant Director. There was no ESL program at DCS at the time I began teaching, so I began the program. We now have two full-time ESL teachers and about 70 students. I work to ensure that our program is the best it can be and that administrators and classroom teachers are trained in the needs of EL students. I have also served as an adjunct instructor for Bryan College. I taught “Introduction to TESL” there multiple times. I have also taught “Methods and Assessment in TESL” for them, and have hosted student interns. In addition, I taught one summer for Migrant School in Rhea County and another summer, I taught TEFL in Romania with a mission group. I served one term (2012-2015) as a Member-at-Large for the TNTESOL board, during which time I headed up the project to establish the Edie Barry Memorial Scholarship. I have maintained membership in TNTESOL and TESOL throughout my career.

My goals include excellence in teaching, encouraging other ESL professionals, and advocacy for my students. I believe it is important for ESL professionals to work together and for teachers in isolated settings to find the support and encouragement they need. I have served as a resource for other ESL teachers and small system ESL Coordinators in my region to the best of my ability.



Leigh Anne Sheppard, Kingsport City Schools

Leigh Anne Sheppard is originally from Knoxville, TN, and returned to East Tennessee her second year of teaching after graduating with a B.A. in Art Education from Winthrop University and teaching in South Carolina. In 2014 she worked to gain her ESL endorsement and an M.A. in Instructional Leadership from Lincoln Memorial University. Leigh Anne is currently back at L.M.U. pursuing an Ed. S. in Instructional Leadership. After teaching Art for twenty-one years, Leigh Anne followed another long-held passion introduced to her by Beth Lee, a veteran ESL teacher who shared her classroom, to serve some of the most vulnerable students in our educational system. She currently teaches secondary ELs at both middle schools and the high school in the Kingsport City School System. She regularly attends regional ESL collaborative PLCs and conferences, as well as seeks out leadership opportunities including serving on leadership teams, a grading and assessment task-force, the RTI implementation team and the global education committee in order to advocate for EL students within her system and throughout our state. Leigh Anne is the proud mother of Carter, a sophomore at U.T., and Hannah, a senior headed to M.T.S.U. in the fall.

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East Tennessee Member-at-Large *continued*



Christy Duncan - Cleveland City Schools

Christy Duncan currently serves as the ESL Coordinator for the Cleveland City School system. She received her B.A. in Modern Foreign Languages from Lee University, her M.S. in Curriculum and Instruction from the University of Tennessee at Knoxville, and her Ed.S. in Administration and Supervision from Lincoln Memorial University. Her ESL certification is from the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga.

Christy began her teaching career as a high school Spanish teacher and worked at schools in Knoxville and McMinn County before joining the Cleveland City School system as an ESL teacher in the fall of 2000. She has watched the number of English Learners in the Cleveland City system grow from around 75 students in 2000 to close to 575 students for the 2016-17 school year.

Christy was selected as Teacher of the Year for Mayfield Elementary School for the 2010-2011 and the 2013-14 school year. She was one of nine finalists for Tennessee Teacher of the Year in 2013-2014 and was the recipient of the 2013-2014 Lillie F. Fitzgerald Excellence in Teaching Award.

She has been a PLC Facilitator for the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga's Teacher's HELP grant for the past five years and has assisted newly certified ESL teachers in developing their skills in teaching English Language Learners.

In her role as ESL Coordinator for the Cleveland City School system, she works both with her team of 15 ESL teachers and classroom teachers throughout the district to promote best practices for ESL instruction through modeling lessons and coordinating various professional development opportunities. She assists the ESL teachers and other system faculty and staff in planning before and after school tutoring opportunities for ESL students as well as Parent Night programs for ESL families. In addition, she has partnered with the TESOL Department at Lee University to coordinate opportunities for student observation and teaching and to promote community classes for adults. Last fall, she joined with the Southeast CORE Office to plan and host a "Ready, Set, Grow...Your ESL Program" mini-conference for ESL teachers from around the region.

Christy is passionate about establishing the Cleveland City Schools ESL Program as a quality program for the ESL students and families in her system and working with her team to bridge the gap for these students and families.

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Continued from page 18 In an effort to achieve board equalization across the state with the member-at-large seats, there will be one seat open for West TN, one seat for Central TN and one seat for East TN.

Middle Tennessee Member-at-Large



DeAnna DeBow Osborne — Rutherford County Schools

Originally cultivated in Kentucky, DeAnna has enjoyed teaching student populations ranging from Pre-K through Adult Education in rural, urban, and suburban contexts for nearly two decades. DeAnna currently serves as an ESL teacher for Rutherford County and holds both Masters and Educational Specialist degrees with certification in several areas from PK—12.

She is deeply involved with facilitating the evolution of district-wide PLCs for ESL teachers, support and training for mainstream teachers, and work with Newcomer students. On the state level, DeAnna has been connected with TNTESOL workings, presentations, and a State-wide PLC effort for ESL.

Having made her home in various locations around the globe, Dagupan City to DFW, she is thankful to reside in the heart of Tennessee. DeAnna enjoys exploring places, ideas and cultures, dancing, writing, and rearranging her creative space.

With exceptional skills in the areas of communication, teamwork, analysis, and coordination, DeAnna is committed to lifelong learning, ESOL, and is dedicated to the common enterprise of public education. Her experiences as an educator and leader in various capacities present a candidate who possesses a depth of competence that combines integrity, vision, and adaptability which will yield positive results for our organization.



Tiffany Wilson-Mobley - Williamson County Schools

Tiffany Wilson-Mobley's enrichment of the lives of students and their families in Williamson County Schools runs an impressive range: concurrent instruction at all three divisions (elementary, middle, and high school); Family Literacy program for parents of ELs to improve their literacy skills; school-wide international club and events; school and district professional development sessions for general education teachers who instruct ELs in their classrooms.

Tiffany's dedication to the field of English Language education is apparent in her own accomplishments and peer recognition. She holds a Masters Degree and is a National Board Certified Teacher. She has been chosen as the Williamson County Teacher of the Year and TNTESOL Teacher of the Year (Middle TN and overall TN). She has attended and presented at state, regional and national conferences (TNTESOL, SETESOL, TESOL). She has served as the Site-Based Mentor Leader at Fairview Elementary School for several years.

Personally approachable and always an advocate for the best that education can offer, Tiffany Wilson-Mobley will bring her sense of fairness, balance, and commitment to continuing the vital work and future directions of the TNTESOL Board.

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In an effort to achieve board equalization across the state with the member-at-large seats, there will be one seat open for East TN, one seat for Central TN and one seat for West TN.

West Tennessee Member-at-Large



Kandice Lee, Bartlett City Schools

I began working with English language learners at the age of 18 in Colorado during a mission trip. We volunteered in an impoverished area sharing best practices for learning English and how to navigate without all of the needed vocabulary. Throughout my undergraduate studies at Lambuth University, I mentored at various middle and elementary schools, working with English language learners, as well as at risk students to make them more successful in their studies. During this time, I also volunteered as a Spanish tutor to struggling college students.

After undergraduate school, I moved to Madrid, Spain to study at Estudio Sampere. It was there that I was able to see through the eyes of a language learner in another country. The differences of culture and language provided many obstacles during a tumultuous time in the area. The practices that I needed during this time to learn and navigate the city gave me a better understanding of how to work with learners of other languages. I have taught and worked with immigrant farm workers in the MS Delta, encouraging them to learn the language and teaching them how to navigate an area with little Spanish-speaking experience for approximately the last 12 years.

During graduate school at MTSU, I worked with students and professors to help make the language-learning environment more successful, working with students from all over the world. My work since earning a MAT-Foreign Language, has taken me to Memphis, TN, where I have taught Spanish, English, Math, and English as a Second Language for the last eleven years. While at Bartlett City Schools, I have been awarded Teacher of the Year for my school and helped my base school Bon Lin Middle receive recognition for their achievements with RTI2-B. I volunteer at Su Casa Ministries for their ESL program, as well as offer free Adult ESL classes at my base school with Bartlett City Schools.

My work with teaching world languages, English and Spanish, provides an understanding of how difficult learning another language can prove to be. My experience in education, curriculum writing and interpersonal skills with new people, would allow me to promote TNTESOL throughout the state successfully. I have worked with speakers of other languages throughout my region as well as parts of MS to help bridge the gap and bring understanding to others who do not understand the obstacles that one can be impeded by when learning another language.



Caitlin Lunsford, Knox County Schools

Caitlin Lunsford teaches elementary ESL for Knox County Schools. She is a graduate student at the University of Tennessee pursuing a degree in Cultural Studies in Educational Foundations with a specialization in TESOL. The goal of her academic studies is to better serve minority and immigrant students and to teach with a social justice perspective. She has taught adult ESL for UT's University Assisted Community Schools, and has worked with Bridge Refugee Services in their summer ESL program. She was also involved in advocating for tuition equality for DACA students, which would have given undocumented students the opportunity to apply for in-state tuition. Caitlin is particularly interested in serving refugee students and newcomer students both in the school and in the community.

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West Tennessee Member-at-Large *continued*



Michelle Sluder, Arlington Community Schools

Michelle has been an ESL teacher for 12 years, and is currently an ESL teacher at both Arlington Middle and High School. She provides community outreach by teaching weekly English classes to parents of students and other adults in the local community, as well as offering a tutoring program in writing. She has spent past summers teaching students from Mexico that attended the Lasillan Language Camp hosted by Christian Brothers University and at an ESL summer school.

Recognition for her many accomplishments include being awarded TESOL's Virginia French Allen award for Scholarship and Community, the 2013 Arlington High Teacher of the Year, and the 2009 West Tennessee ESL Teacher of the Year.



Susan Smith, Lauderdale County Schools

Susan has been in the education field for nineteen years. She taught high school and middle school English and Language Arts for ten years, and for the past four years she has been the K-12 ESL teacher in Lauderdale County, serving between 35-50 students at 5 schools per day. She has a Bachelor's degree in English from Union University in Jackson, TN and received her ESL endorsement from the University of Memphis.

Before her tenure began as an ESL teacher, Susan was the Center Director and Director of Education for Sylvan Learning Centers in Dyersburg and Jackson, TN. While there, she wrote and received a state grant that allowed Sylvan teachers to tutor in local schools, with a focus on at-risk students including ELL's. Susan then moved on to become the coordinator of a tutoring program during the school year for Lauderdale County Schools, which also served at-risk students and included many ELL's. She later coordinated the summer school program for these students, funded by a three-year state grant. For the past three years, she has assisted with the coordination of the West TN ESL Mini-Conference held each year in Dyersburg, TN.

Susan is a strong advocate for her students and stays in constant communication with the parents to keep them involved as much as possible. She has a heart for these students and found these last few years of teaching ELL's as the most rewarding. Susan would be honored to serve as member-at-large to continue to grow professionally and would love to assist others achieve success with their ESL students.



TNTESOL Awards Criteria

For award nomination and application forms, as well as more details, please visit our website: www.tntesol.org.

Charles Gillon Professional Service Award

Each year TNTESOL presents a Charles Gillon Professional Service Award to a nonmember who has contributed significantly to or supported strongly the field of ESL/EFL and international education. Nominations are solicited from the membership by the Board and ultimately selected by the Board of Directors. The annual recipient is recognized and presented a commemorative desk item or plaque at the TNTESOL spring conference.

Gundi Ressin Award

The Gundi Ressin Memorial TNTESOL Scholarship was established by the TNTESOL Board of Directors to provide funds to affiliate members for activities such as special instructional projects, educational opportunities (*excluding tuition towards a degree*), and professional development (*excluding travel to educational meetings or conferences and the annual TNTESOL Conference*). The Gundi funds are provided by a yearly amount in the TNTESOL budget and by contributions from members and friends in Gundi's memory. TNTESOL members may apply for a Gundi Fund award by sending an application letter to the First Vice-President at least one month before the award is to be granted. The application should state the amount requested (not to exceed \$400), the purpose for which the funds will be used, and an agreement to submit an article for publication in the TNTESOL newsletter upon receipt of an award. Donations may be made to the Gundi Fund when registering for the annual TNTESOL conference or by mailing directly to the TNTESOL Treasurer.

President's Award

The TNTESOL Board of Directors established the President's Award in January of 1999 to recognize individuals within TNTESOL who have contributed to the field of ESL and the TNTESOL organization. The award may be presented annually to a person selected at the discretion of the President with the approval of the Board. The President's Award is presented during the annual TNTESOL conference.

TNTESOL Educator of the Year

TNTESOL will recognize an outstanding TNTESOL member at the annual conference. Nominees should be K-12 ESL teachers with distinguished careers in English-language teaching and a history of service to students, schools, and communities. A winner from each state region will be announced along with the state award winner.

TNTESOL Travel Grants

Every year, TNTESOL awards travel grants to send the three best sessions at the TNTESOL Conference to Southeast TESOL to represent our state professionals. Awarded sessions will each receive grants of up to four-hundred dollars (\$400). The goal of the TNTESOL Travel Grants is to provide a means of financial support for dynamic presenters who may have no other means to go to the Southeast TESOL Conference and to boost morale, build professional interest, and encourage excellent conference presentations every year. (*Vendors and professional speakers are ineligible.*)

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Edie Barry Scholarship

Edie Barry (1948-2013) was a dedicated teacher and a committed member of the TNTESOL organization. In addition to this professional service, she actively served as a volunteer in a faith-based organization which provided ESL services to her community. In memory of Edie, and to honor her service, TNTESOL has established a scholarship for those working in volunteer settings. The scholarship is awarded to one recipient per year; the recipient's organization will also receive a complimentary TNTESOL newsletter subscription.

Scholarship Criteria:

- 1) Applicants must be a volunteer (not paid) teacher or program administrator at a faith-based or community organization that provides ESL classes for community adults.
- 2) Must be a TNTESOL member (if not a member, you must register—paraprofessional level \$10)
- 3) Must plan to use funds within 90 days of receipt for one of the following (a detailed description must be included with the application):
 - o Materials to train volunteer teachers
 - o Training opportunities for volunteer teachers
 - o Teaching materials for the faith-based or community ESL classes
- 4) Upon selection, recipients must submit an article for the TNTESOL newsletter, describing the program and how the requested training or materials will serve the community and improve the quality of English classes. The TNTESOL board will forward communication to the Barry family.

Complete the application [here](#) or at <http://goo.gl/forms/n3FYQ9Kxqo>



Feedback Request from TESOL

TESOL is currently in the process of revising the existing TESOL/CAEP P-12 Teacher Education Program Standards and needs your feedback!

The standards address the professional expertise needed by ESL educators to work with language minority students. The [Commission for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation](#) (CAEP) uses these performance-based standards for national recognition of teacher education programs and can be used to assess programs that prepare and license P–12 ESL educators, as well as other teacher educator programs. The current set of [TESOL/CAEP Standards for P–12 Teacher Education Programs](#) were last revised in 2009.

TESOL now invites your feedback on the current draft of proposed standards. [Please visit the webpage](#) (www.tesol.org) for more information, including a copy of the proposed standards revisions, and a link to the survey where you can submit your comments and feedback.

All feedback must be submitted through the [online survey](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/Draft2017TESOLP12TeacherEdProgramStandards) (https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/Draft2017TESOLP12TeacherEdProgramStandards) no later than 11:59 pm EST on 1 March 2017.

Thank you in advance for taking this opportunity to provide TESOL with your feedback and helping to improve these critical standards!



Language Learning Autobiography

Aldonza Olivo
King University

I am linguistically inspired by the vernacular of the hills and hollers of Southwest Virginia. The language bred into me was that of the poor workers who live in the area. The majority of the people in my very large family did not go to college or dropped out; the only people in my family with a college degree are my parents, and my father received his well after I had developed my language skills. I am not trying to say that any of my family members are of lesser intelligence, just that their use of language is not necessarily highly-developed. I would say that my linguistic heritage is greatly inspired by the verse of southern Christianity and the jargon of social work and technology. My grandparent and parents all speak English except for my father's father, who speaks Spanish. However, my grandfather lives in San Antonio, Texas and I have only met him twice when I was about seven. My academic experiences and variety of interests have broadened my linguistic capabilities. As long as I continue to learn, my language skills grow.

Because of my name, many people often assume that Spanish is my first language or that I am at least fluent in it. I always thought it was a shame that my father never learned to speak Spanish, so I became determined in middle school to bring the language back into our family. I took every class my middle school and high school offered; in fact, I took so many that my high school Spanish teacher invented a new Spanish course for me to take – an act that made me the first and only Abingdon High School student to take six different Spanish classes. When I started my career at King, my first class was a senior level Spanish literature course. My intention was to major in Spanish and become a translator or something similar. I was extremely motivated. However, my next semester put me in a class with multiple native speakers. I was partnered with a hateful Venezuelan boy who made me feel like an idiot whenever I made a mistake. I am 100% sure this is what caused my interests in Spanish to decline rapidly. I felt too much pressure to succeed not only because of my name, but also because I went from being confident and at the top of my class to a scared student who lost her ability to speak without the crippling fear of ineptitude. I lost sight of my goal and was so discouraged in my studies that I also lost my mastery of the language I had worked so many years to become fluent in.

Knowing more than one language is almost a necessity because of the way society is progressing. There are numerous advantages to being bilingual and even multilingual. For example, it will always give a person a lead in the job market. It also makes traveling, as well as any foreign correspondence, easier. I consider myself bilingual to an extent. At my current confidence and capability levels, I would not go to a Spanish-speaking country and feel completely at ease – in fact I would most likely have a panic attack. But I consider this issue a result of laziness in my practice of Spanish. Honestly, whether I consider myself able to speak in Spanish conversationally completely depends on how outgoing I feel on a given day.

Earlier I spoke a little of my success and frustrations in learning Spanish as a second language. I have had great success if you look at my academic record by the grade book. I have taken ten different Spanish courses in the past seven years and I have received a letter grade of an A or A+ in all of them. Most years I even won awards for having the highest grade percentage in the class. Although I have had success in all aspects of Spanish, my greatest struggle is speaking. I am much better at reading and

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writing. I think this is because with reading and writing I can take my time and double-check myself, whereas with speaking I am on the spot. This past academic success is encouraging to me, but it is also a great source of pressure to live up to these expectations now that I do not have the same passion for the language as I once did. All of my past and current teachers expect me to continue with the language with the same success, and I hate to disappoint. However, this pressure causes the study of the language to be more of a chore than an enjoyment. This gives me great heartache because I love Hispanic culture and the language, but the stress is causing me to resent it.

One of the reasons, and perhaps the biggest reason, that I study Spanish is because I love understanding how things work. I do not speak of the grammar and conventions of the language, but rather the cultural and historical influences that tie in with the language. Everything that shapes the language intrigues me. Because of this, the more formal strategies that involve grammar and conventions bore me deeply. I prefer a hands-on, applicative approach. When it comes to learning the basics of a language, much of the instruction is formal. This includes copying notes from the board and repeating rules and conjugations over and over. One particular informal practice I have enjoyed is conversing in the language over dinner. Many of my Spanish teachers provide ethnic food-eating opportunities that gave us a way to use the language in a fun (and fulfilling) way.

It is absolutely necessary for students to feel comfortable in the classroom. It is very hard to progress through the first two stages of language development if the student is not comfortable. I felt most comfortable in a small classroom setting with students my own age. Whenever there were students who were older than me or who were native speakers, I felt more self-conscious in regards to my abilities and critiques from the teacher. I prefer not to repeatedly make mistakes, so I like when the instructor corrects me immediately. This preference holds true in instructional settings mostly; I do not like when I am corrected while I am presenting in front of the class. When the teacher gives critiques and feedback, it is always nice for them to tell me something I did well and then to tell me what to improve on. All of my instructors have been friendly and have encouraged communication and aid outside of the classroom when necessary. This not only showed me that they cared, but it also made me feel more comfortable being in their classes. Group interaction was used to give the class different viewpoints on the material. It also gave a chance for the material to be described in different ways than the teacher initially taught it.

My favorite way to learn Spanish is through cultural means. I find it best to set a purpose for what is being taught. This is due to my love of knowing the “why” behind instruction. It is easier for me to become interested in studies if I have some background knowledge and understand the importance behind material being taught. One of the ways this was done in my previous Spanish classes was to watch a historically and culturally accurate film of a certain area. This set the stage for learning vocabulary, culture, history, and geography. It made learning interesting and relevant.

Being familiar with the processes and struggles of learning a second language will aid me greatly in ESL instruction. The ability to relate with ESL students could earn trust and help me understand what they are going through in their studies. I think having knowledge of the grammar and conventions, as well as cultural backgrounds for the Spanish language will be of much use considering the large number of ESL students who speak Spanish as their first language. I believe the same considerations hold true for teaching Spanish as a second language as well.



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WIDA 2017 Call for Proposals!

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New! State Checklists

To inform educators about local requirements related to testing, WIDA is working with your state education agency to develop an ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 checklist. This list highlights all tasks that need to be completed before, during, and after testing within a school or district and shows who typically completes those tasks in your state. It also provides guidance that your state education agency expects you to follow as you prepare for and administer the test. These checklists will be available in the online training course and on [your state's page](#) by October 2016.

Manuals


See Key Resources box at right. Each manual now covers all four assessments in the ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 suite to acknowledge that many educators are involved in administering several tests.

Webinars

A calendar of free weekly webinars covering a range of pre-, during-, and post-testing

Key Resources

- [Test Administrator Manual](#)
- [District and School Test Coordinator Manual](#)
- [Accessibility and Accommodations Supplement](#)
- [WIDA AMS User Guide](#)
- [Technology User Guide](#)

 **Face-to-Face Workshops on ACCESS for ELLs 2.0**

Free Webinars

[View full webinar schedule through June 2017](#)

Do you know that WIDA has updated the training requirements to include quizzes instead of checklists?

There are many new changes this year to WIDA and WIDA AMS. Go to www.wida.us >> Assessment >> ACCESS 2.0 >> Preparation & Training. Notice the Free Webinars on the right. If you cannot participate in a live webinar, you can watch it after it is archived.



Spotlight on Professional Development



Hannah Bueso, ESL Teacher in Rutherford County Schools, presents a two-hour after school session, "An Introduction to SIOP (Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol)" for general education and ESL teachers at Roy Waldron Elementary School. (Photos courtesy of Joann Runion, TDOE)

Purposes and Procedures of ESL Assessment: A Lit Review

Mackenzie Murray
King University

Classroom assessments are key in determining not only what works instructionally but also the influences that help increase student achievement. Throughout this study, six key aspects were observed: assessment planning for courses that were taught, relative weight given to coursework and tests, types of assessment methods used, the purpose of the assessments used, the source of each method used, and when each method was used. Also, the advantages and disadvantages of these methods were examined. All of the findings contributed to a better understanding of ESL classroom assessments.

This study focused on ESL/EFL instructors in colleges and universities. At the beginning of the study, an interview was given which consisted of six sections: Developing and choosing methods for classroom assessment, judging and scoring student performance, reporting final course grades, impact of external testing, education and training in classroom assessment, and background knowledge. Along with these sections, interviewers were asked to indicate both advantages and disadvantages of the methods that they used in their classrooms. The participants of the study included 74 instructors from a wide range of locations around the world including Canada, Hong Kong, Beijing, Tianjin, and China.

The results from the study showed a difference of influence throughout the diverse assessment practices. In fact, a final conclusion was made that assessment practices differ among university instructors within and between each context for a given purpose. Assessment choices were chosen based on the combination of knowledge, beliefs, experiences, values, and interaction with students. Regardless of assessments chosen, whether it be standardized tests, teacher-made tests, or the procedures in which these tests are administered, the results of whether the assessments were successful or not comes from the abilities, background knowledge, and success of the students within the classroom. Also, it was mentioned that further research would be needed to see the attributes and effect that would come about if students were allowed to choose the assessment method they wanted to use.

Cheng, L. c., Rogers, W. T., & Wang, X. (2008). Assessment purposes and procedures in ESL/EFL classrooms. *Assessment & Evaluation In Higher Education*, 33(1), 9-32. doi:10.1080/02602930601122555



Rotation of Southeast TESOL Conferences

Fall 2017 — AMTESOL

Fall 2018 — The SETESOL Conference is cancelled because
GATESOL will host the TESOL Convention in Spring 2019.

Fall 2019 — Sunshine TESOL

Fall 2020 — VATESOL

Fall 2021 — GATESOL

Fall 2022 — TNTESOL

Fall 2023 — Carolina TESOL

Fall 2024 — ARKTESOL

Fall 2025 — LATESOL

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Grade Inflation

Claire Walter
ESL teacher
Sevier County Schools

The myth of grade inflation is that we should design assessments not to measure criteria but to rank students: some students receive higher grades, others lower grades. However, criterion-referenced* classroom assessments cannot norm students; they were not designed for that purpose. Skewing assessments to norm or rank students undermines the criterion validity and does little to inform teachers or students about how well they are working toward learning goals.

Telling children they are working toward goals, then surprising them with a competition is so obviously unfair, even children sense this instinctively. As Rick Stiggins explains, "If you want to see students rapidly become hopeless failure acceptors, just set up an environment in which they actually learn a great deal but still receive low grades. In a healthy, success-oriented classroom, if everyone succeeds, everyone receives a high grade" (297).

If the concern is that the assessment was too easy or too hard, the teacher should revisit the curriculum as a whole; then create authentic assessment that is aligned to the goals of the course and the way the instruction was presented. Assessment, instruction, and curriculum should align (Biggs). Simply making assessments harder cheats every child out of real curriculum. The all-too-common problem of an ELL placed in the wrong course with ability-inappropriate curriculum is fixed not by shaming students with bad grades, but rather with modifications to curriculum as a whole.

*Note: This excludes norm-referenced tests which have very large student samples, are summative and infrequent (ex. annual), and help design local programming as well as state and national standards. While there are issues with over-use of such tests, the principle applies: assessment fits a purpose within a holistic, aligned curriculum.

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TNTESOL would like to thank the outgoing members of the Board of Directors for their dedication and service.

Trends in Identifying and Supporting English Learners: A Review of Literature

Dr. Michael Thompson

Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools



A Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools (MNPS) school board member recommended, "...a resolution to establish an English Learner Innovation report...to identify best instructional practices, budgetary needs for more resources and ways to engage immigrant communities," according to an article in *The Tennessean* (Garrison 2014). Attention has been placed on the English learner (EL) population in recent years due to the large influx of immigrants. The school district now has about 150 languages represented. Out of 86,000 students, more than thirty percent speak a language other than English as a primary language at home, and one out of every five students enrolled there is Latino.

According to a 2010 *Education Week* article written by Mary Ann Zehr, some school districts are "overzealous" about identifying ELs. This can cause frustration to come to schools, assessors, families, and students. One of the things that causes frustration is when districts insist on assessing students when parents indicate their child's first language was another language, but they were adopted from that country as a three-year-old...10 years ago. The district will test the student even if he or she doesn't even remember two phrases from their birth country. Zehr writes about a couple of things that districts have done to remedy this frustration, while keeping with the spirit of federal guidelines to provide assistance to students who need it. In the article, which is titled, "Home-Language Surveys for ELLs Under Fire," Zehr explains that school districts in Arizona have been allowed to revise the home language survey to ask just one language question instead of three language questions. This is one example of attempts districts have made in order to reduce the over-identification of ELs.

Another example is at a school district located in Iowa, where the school district had to create a comprehensive policy as it relates to identifying ELs. This district will be able to share the policy with all stakeholders. People involved with the home language survey process, including parents, will have the same information.

In order to avoid much of this frustration, some parents simply lie on the home language survey. They will indicate that only English is spoken by the student and parents outside school. In these cases, nothing can be done unless the parents are confronted about obvious learning difficulties the student may be having.

In an article by Emily Scheie titled, "Parents Lie About Kids' Language Skills to Get Them a Better Education," Scheie explains that changes in how a student is being assessed have taken place. Many states have accepted the common core curriculum and there are now new tests that identify English learners. This test is published by WIDA.

In summary, the articles allow the readers to see what schools face when it comes to identifying and assessing English learners. From the growing population of English learners to frustration by parents, one can see how important it is to establish clear procedures for aiding students who need it. The Office of English Language Acquisition (OELA) at the U.S. Department of Education publishes the Eng-

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lish Learner (EL) Tool Kit. The tool kit is designed to help states and school districts identify and support all ELs. In November 2016, chapters in the tool kit were updated to include references to the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015 (ESSA). The newly revised federal tool kit can be found at this link: <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oela/english-learner-toolkit/index.html>.

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How do I get my students to Carnegie Hall?

Joseph Whinery
TNTESOL Board Member
ESL Supervisor
Williamson County Schools

Travel ahead a few months: June 2017. You have just downloaded your students' WIDA ACCESS 2.0 scores and are pleased with all of the growth and proficiency these remarkable students have made. You dig down into the results and everything looks to be pretty much what you expected. Except... the few students who should have met the exit criteria but they did not. Drilling a little deeper, you notice a pattern that had caused you to wince during the administration of the assessment: Students who are actually very fluent have deflated Speaking scores. And you suspected this might happen because, although the students are perfectly capable of a very thorough response, they uttered only a few words at the Speaking prompts. Just enough to respond. Just the amount and manner a native-speaker student would likely have spoken. But not enough to demonstrate Level 5 or 6 proficiency as defined by the WIDA Speaking Rubric.

What happened? Despite their near-fluent participation in class during your best instruction, did they simply freeze on the test? Were they unfamiliar with responding to an on-screen prompt? Or using headsets? Whatever happened, what can you do about it? In short, the same way to get to Carnegie Hall: practice, practice, practice.

Practice #1: Make your instruction explicit.

Use the [WIDA Speaking Rubric](#) actively and purposefully during your instruction. Show students, at all proficiency levels, where they are right now and where their next steps toward proficiency need to go. For lower proficient students, use illustrations or demonstrate examples of a typical response at the current level and how it needs to change to reach the next level. Upper proficiency students, as well, may not understand how "a variety of sentence lengths of varying linguistic complexity in extended oral discourse" should sound. Show them, either by your own examples or from the WIDA ACCESS 2.0 [training resources for paper-based Speaking](#) assessments, the differences in responses between Levels 4, 5, and 6. (Note: Tennessee is fully online for WIDA ACCESS 2.0 and not paper-based. However, the test preparation resources for paper-based states include pre-recorded and scored examples of various proficiency levels across several grade clusters.)

Practice #2: Make the setting explicit.

WIDA and the testing arm (DRC) have limited, but useful, [demo, practice, and sample test](#) items. Make full use of these. Yes, students may get bored if they see the same item more than once (and there really is not much variety) so be sure they understand the purpose of repeating is to become very familiar with something they will see in the same format on the actual test.

- During instruction (and not just with WIDA/DRC practice content), use the exact same device -- laptop, desktop, tablet, iPad, Chromebook -- which students will have on the assessment. The same goes for the headsets. If you do not have equipment dedicated for ESL use, reserve the mobile cart and headsets for your class times not less than once a week.

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Watch and take notes of the [WIDA tutorials](#) and [practice items](#) to figure out how much time is typically allotted for a student's response at a given proficiency and grade cluster. Use the same timing with other speaking prompts and scenarios you develop for your lessons. If you have students with the Manual Control, Repeat Audio, or Extended Speaking accommodation (must be on the IEP), do the same with the accommodated [practice items](#). Hint: add "acc" to the end of the given username to display the accommodated test version. For example, the username for Grade 4-5 Speaking is "speaking2". Change this to "speaking2acc" and the accommodations MA, RA, and ES are all delivered.

Practice #3: Make the content explicit.

Given the limited and redundant practice items within WIDA/DRC, here are some resources for finding ready-made or creating ACCESS-like speaking items. (Note: some of these suggestions require paid subscriptions or licenses. This is not an endorsement of any particular products over others.)

Resource	Fee	Description	Pros	Cons
Imagine Learning	Paid	Interactive content, videos, songs, games...	Requires headsets for listening and speaking; very similar to ACCESS	Appropriate up to Grade 5; older students will not enjoy the interface.
Vocaroo	Free	Online voice recording and (temporary) storage.	Super easy: just click to record, click to save. (Be sure to grab the saved URL!)	Uses Flash, will not work on phones.
StoryCorps	Free	Recorded interview session between two people	Works on all devices including phones; interview Qs can be chosen from a bank or created.	All stored recordings are available for anyone to listen, anytime. Follow FERPA to protect student identities.
AAPPL Conversation Builder	Free and paid	Designed for World Language communication practice; highly adaptable to ESL	Create your own content with a "Full" subscription (free) or search the Public bank for ESL.	An ACTFL membership (paid) is required to set up classrooms with assignments.

The more opportunities your students have in speaking with explicit instruction, setting, and content, the more prepared, confident, and thorough they will be on this domain of ACCESS 2.0 for ELLs. Who knows? Someday, your student may invite you to her performance at Carnegie Hall. The invitation will include a map and a note: "This is how YOU get to Carnegie Hall!"



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