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THE VIRTUAL TNTESOL 2020 CONFERENCE WAS HELD IN DECEMBER 2020. A SPECIAL THANK YOU TO HANNAH GRIBBLE, JOSEPH WHINERY, AND THE CONFERENCE COMMITTEE FOR A WONDERFUL VIRTUAL CONFERENCE.



Inside This Issue:	
1. TNTESOL 2020	10. The Meaningful Purpose of Self Assessment in Writing
2. Board Members	12. 6 Virtual Teaching Tips for Multilingual Learners
3. Message from President	15. Article Review
4. Publications Information	16. ESL Students and Writing
5. Teacher of the Year	18. Scholarship Opportunity
6. Teacher of the Year	19. Grant Opportunity
7. New Members at Large	20. Advocacy Begins with Empathy
8. Edie Berry Scholarship Winner	
9. Edie Berry Scholarship Winner	

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Contact the Treasurer with your questions or concerns.

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Message from the President

February 2021

It's that time of year. The wind is blowing, the sky is dark, and every teacher in school is praying for snow. Ok, historically, that would be the prayer. This year, teachers are praying for internet outages that last a week or a month. Of course, then we would have to play "catch-up" before the test. For the most of us, life has become extremely stressful. Change is always difficult. Change during a global pandemic that disrupts our lives is even more difficult. We fantasize about the "good old days" of students being tardy to class, lining up for lunch, missing hall passes, fights during recess, and the aroma of school lunch wafting through the halls.

Yes, change is very difficult. As we go through life, we realize that change is a constant. However, how we react to change is up to us, and can negatively or positively affect our outlook. According to an article by Colette Carlson, successful people are proactive in the face of change by following these steps:

Acknowledge that change is a part of life

Accept their emotions

Reframe the situation to see the positive

Make an "action plan," because decisions, not conditions, determine their paths

Now that I have imparted words of wisdom, I have a request. I am sure that many of you have developed strategies to deal with the ever-changing classroom- ones much more effective than mine. Would you please send these to our newsletter editor Dr. Tammy Harosky at trharosky@king.edu so she can publish these and provide much needed help for those of us still struggling. Tennessee has a long tradition of excellence in teachers, and in helping others in need- hence the nickname- Volunteers. I look forward to your excellent contributions.

Renee T. Combs

PUBLICATIONS



Journal Submission Guidelines:

The Editorial Board of the *TNTESOL* Journal seeks articles of general interest on any aspect of the teaching of English as a second or foreign language in elementary, middle high school, college/university, or adult/immigrant education. The topics can be varied and wide-ranging.

- Articles should be no longer than twelve pages, double-spaced, or no more than 4000 words.
- A section entitled “Classroom Practices” will allow a maximum of 1500 words.
- Articles should follow APA style format, use non-sexist language, and have bibliographic references for all citations or works referred to in the body of the article.

** Important note: All articles must be submitted electronically. To submit your article electronically, please do the following:*

1. Write and save the article as a Microsoft Word document.
2. Submit your paper as an attachment to an email in which you provide the following in the body of the email: your name, address, home phone number, school affiliation, email address, and title of the paper. Include a statement that your work has not been printed elsewhere and is not currently submitted elsewhere.
3. Email to paraisoj@rcschools.net and include the words “TNTESOL-J Submission” in the subject heading. You will be notified immediately by return email once the article is received.

**Note: We accept articles year-round.*

NEWSLETTER Submission Guidelines:

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 two (or 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 to:

Tammy Harosky, Newsletter Editor
trharosky@king.edu

<https://tntesol.wildapricot.org/>

Congratulations, TNTESOL Teachers of the Year !

Meghan Vigil

2020 TNTESOL Teacher of the Year – Middle Tennessee

Growing up, I always said I would never be a teacher. My grandmother had been a teacher, my mother is a teacher, and my two sisters were set to follow their lead. I felt adamant about doing something different and creating my own path. However, my path ended up taking me to teaching despite my reservations. After my first day in the classroom, I knew I was exactly where I needed to be. I am now in my 9th year of teaching ESL at Smyrna Middle School in Rutherford County.

My M.Ed in English Language Learning is from Lipscomb University. My B.A. in Environmental Policy and Analysis is from Bowling Green State University in Ohio. This unique background prepared me to teach English Language Development, ELA and Science to English learners. I have had many opportunities to grow as a teacher. For four years, I led an ESL summer program. The past three years I have been the lead of the ESL department at my school. I know that I am always learning in these new roles and every year I am becoming a stronger teacher. I am incredibly honored to have been nominated, let alone win, TNTESOL teacher of the year awards. During a year that has been challenging it is encouraging to receive this recognition.



Amanda Stewart

2020 TNTESOL Teacher of the Year – East Tennessee

I have served the EL community in Loudon County and Lenoir City as an itinerant teacher since 2005, simultaneously supporting as many as five schools during my tenure. A native of Bristol, Tenn., I am honored to represent the region as the East Tennessee Teacher of the Year. It is a privilege to build relationships with language learners and their families, as well as assist their classroom teachers. I would like to thank TNTESOL for their support and resources for EL teachers. I also would like to acknowledge Loudon County Schools for their commitment to our language learners. I received my Bachelor of Arts in Teaching with a minor in English and Master of Education in Curriculum & Instruction from the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. I continued my education at Brenau University in Gainesville, Georgia, receiving an Educational Specialist degree in Early Childhood Education, but the pride of my academic career was an ESL endorsement from the University of Georgia.

Continued on page 6

Continued from page 5

Tanya Hill **2020 TNTE SOL Teacher of the Year – West Tennessee**

Tanya Hill is a National Board Certified Reading and Language Specialist with over 20 years of teaching experience. Mrs. Hill is a 4th grade ESL teacher with Shelby County Schools at Willow Oaks Elementary in Memphis, TN. She is currently pursuing a Doctor of Education in Instructional Leadership from Union University.

Mrs. Hill has an Educational Specialist degree in Instructional Leadership from Union University. Originally from New Orleans, LA, she received her Bachelors in Elementary Education and her Masters in Curriculum and Instruction specializing in Reading and English as a Second Language from The University of New Orleans. Mrs. Hill relocated to Memphis, TN in 2007, where she found her love for teaching English as a second language. Mrs. Hill has

served as an Instructional Peer Coach and Mentor for ESL teachers. A two-time TNTE SOL travel grant winner, Mrs. Hill presented professional development on effective instructional practices for ELLs at the district, state, and regional levels. Mrs. Hill also served as a Tennessee State Teacher Fellow for the Hope Street Group, where she advocated to include teacher voice with educational policymakers. Mrs. Hill's passion for teaching was featured in Chalkbeat Tennessee as part of their "How I Teach" series in October 2016.



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


- ◆ ***Andrea Bontemp, Newsletter Editor***
- ◆ ***Michael Thompson, Webmaster***

Members at Large

- ◆ ***Michelle Sluder (West)***
- ◆ ***Tiffany Wilson-Mobley (Middle)***
- ◆ ***Christy Duncan (East)***

Thank you!

Newly Elected Members-at-Large

WEST	MIDDLE	EAST
<p>Michele Pope</p> <p>Michele Pope is the daughter of a Puerto Rican father and Nicaraguan mother. She began her career in education as a school-based, bilingual speech-language pathologist in Houston, Texas and then at the district level. In 2007, Mrs. Pope received her Master of Arts in Education with a concentration in teaching English as a Second Language from the University of Alabama at Birmingham. Mrs. Pope has been an ESL teacher in the Memphis area since 2010 and currently works at Bon Lin Elementary in Bartlett, Tennessee. In May 2020, she was awarded her Education Specialist degree in Instructional Leadership from Union University.</p>	<p>LeNaye Pearson</p> <p>Since 2011, LeNaye Pearson has advocated for the Cheatham County EL community serving as an itinerate EL teacher. She has helped unite teachers by streamlining countywide processes and establishing the county's EL Livebinder which gives stakeholders access to relevant educational resources. Last year, LeNaye was promoted to Lead EL teacher. She expands her students' horizons by collaborating with EL leaders around the world, including from Taiwan and Bhutan. LeNaye also hosts tutoring sessions and family nights to supplement students' learning journeys, connecting them with EL families in the community. LeNaye has presented her experiences at TNTESOL Mini and State Conferences.</p>	<p>Inna Slisher</p> <p>Mrs. Inna Slisher is an ELL teacher at Adrian Burnett Elementary, Knox County Schools. Previously, Mrs. Slisher was invited to participate in the Youth for Understanding Exchange Program/Freedom Support Act by the U.S. Department of Education. Mrs. Slisher continued her professional education and pursued a MA in CI/ESL from Carson-Newman University. In 2020, Mrs. Slisher was selected to be part of the Professional Learning Advisory Network of the KCS, as well as the TNTESOL conference. Recently, Mrs. Slisher has been selected for the 2020-2021 cohort of the TN Educator Fellows with SCORE (State Collaborative On Reforming Education). Currently, she is training for the TESOL's Leadership Development Program, in addition to attending the TESOL Virtual Advocacy and Policy Summit in June, 2020. Mrs. Slisher has been accepted to the EDD Program in Instructional Leadership at Lincoln Memorial University.</p>
		



Edie Berry Scholarship

The Buffat Heights Baptist ESL ministry

Thank you so much for selecting our church for a grant! We started our ESL program in January of 2019 with no idea what to expect. The Lord blessed us with an amazing team of teachers and workers. On our first night we were so excited as students began to show up.

We have been blessed with students from countries literally all over the globe....students that the Lord brought to our “doorstep” for us to teach and minister to. Our group has grown, although Covid has taken its toll. We have some of our students who have stayed with us during this entire two years and seeing their progress is amazing! We are so thankful to have these funds to use to purchase more curriculum and to help us explore more options for Virtual teaching.

With grateful hearts.
The Buffat Heights Baptist ESL ministry



KNOXVILLE INTERNATIONALS NETWORK - KIN
P.O. Box 31052 | Knoxville, TN 37930
www.kin-connect.org

Nine new ESL teachers are now ready to put their skills to work after another successful training weekend.

With a recent grant from **Tennessee Teachers of Speakers of Other Languages (TNTESOL)**, KIN continues to train volunteer instructors who then guide hundreds of internationals toward proficiency in English--a foundational skill for thriving here in East Tennessee. To date, we have trained well over 400 volunteers!

Next ESL teacher training: April 9-10.



The Meaningful Purpose of Self-Assessment in Writing-

Caitlin Underwood, Student, Tennessee Technological University

Self-assessment is assessment with the aim of achieving collaboration, representation, and shared power between students and the teacher. Students appreciate holding the power of creating rubrics and receiving the opportunity to choose which points of their work will be assessed; they are able to grasp a better understanding at how grading will be done. By giving students the ability to collaborate with educators in designing rubrics, we are feeding into their understanding of grading and the purpose of rubrics.

A common belief amongst some educators is that providing assessment criteria to our students beforehand (rubrics, checklists, etc.) will compromise the learning process for them. “In order to facilitate the learning process, assessment criteria should be provided to L2 writers in advance to ensure that students compose their written assignments to meet the goal of the composition courses” (Chamcharatsri, 2016, p. 55). It’s important that we teach our English language learners to assess their own writing because in the end, it helps them to become better writers. Self-assessment in writing to me is kind of like “checking your work” in math. For example, if a teacher gives their students the problem ‘10-6’ the student may work out the problem to get the answer ‘4’. In math, most educators teach their students an additive way to check their work. In this example, the student will take the answer and add it to the smaller number in the original problem, $4+6$, and get the answer ‘10.’ Just like checking our work in math, self-assessment with ELLs allows for them to go through their work and see if they are meeting the goals they (and often times the teacher) have set for themselves. Also, by providing ELLs with the ability to read review the assessment criteria prior to performance of the assessment, they will have in their minds what they need to do in order to achieve success.

When it comes to developing assessments tools such as rubrics and checklists, allowing students to collaborate on the creation of the assessment tool can help guide the assessment to reach it’s goal of validity and reliability. That said, many educators ask questions regarding the validity and reliability of a student-made assessment tool. Often, assessment tools are used repeatedly and over a wide-range of areas; “writing instructors have forgotten that different assignments require different rubrics and that one rubric cannot be used in assessing every piece of writing (Crusan, 2010b).” By giving students the topic of assessment and collaborating with them to create goals that they believe the assessment should reach, we are creating an assessment tool that is both valid and reliable. When allowing students to participate in creating assessment tools, they are more likely to become engaged with the assessment and hold higher expectations for themselves.




Check out the WIDA 2020 Standards at:
<https://wida.wisc.edu/teach/standards/>

“Assessment should not be a mystery to our students; students should have active participation in creating writing assessment tools (Spandel, 2006).” Giving ELL students the authority to govern their own writing provides them with more confidence when engaged with the writing task. Self-assessment allows for students to understand the reasoning behind the grades they receive, therefore pushing them to become better, self-sustained writers. When ELLs are provided with the opportunity to help create assessment tools and assess their own writing, they develop more understanding of the expectations due to their involvement in creating the criteria. “Rubrics provide concrete revision plans for students to pay attention to in order to receive higher grades. Students not only learn how to revise their papers, they also learn to set higher expectations in their learning experiences” (Chamcharatsri, 2016, p. 58).

Resource:

Chamcharatsri, B. (2016). Student-Generated Rubric Assessment: A Meaningful Literacy Practice. *Journal of Assessment & Teaching of English Language Learners*, 50-58. Retrieved July 16, 2020.




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6 Virtual Teaching Tips for Multilingual Learners

Brianna Gargano, Multilingual Specialist, Rocketship Nashville Northeast Elementary

“Okay so we are going to start something new. It is called Virtual Learning. Let’s start by practicing how to mute and unmute. Okay, everyone unmute in 3,2,1. Great! Rodrigo gets a dojo point, Amiah gets a dojo point. Derek, unmute, please. Try it. Derek, yes, the button that looks like a microphone? Oh, nevermind. Forget it. You’re okay!”

This is the sound of zoom classes all across the country.

For the last seven months, we have experienced teaching in a new, creative way that has opened up the box of possibilities for this next generation to use the skills of technology and apply it through academics like never before. However, to say this is equitable for all learners would be a fallacy.

As an English as a Second Language Specialist, I find myself researching where my students fall in the data concerning US Schools. An average of 10.1% of students are multilingual students, formerly known as English Language Learners (ELL) or English Second Language students (ESL). For teachers in Tennessee, 4.6% of students are multilingual. A small amount, perhaps, but what happens when we leave the 10.1% percent behind due to a language barrier?

Here are a few tips to ensure your distance learning lessons are accessible for multilingual learners.

1. Identify a Language Barrier

How do you identify a language barrier, and contrast that barrier from an academic hold-back? Simple. Ask in their language, use visuals, or reword the task to be more student-friendly with tier 1 words to ensure the student understands what they’re being asked to do. If the task becomes more accessible, it is a language barrier. If the task is harder or stays the same, it is both. We often see students struggle in class when their English-speaking peers are working on a task. Then, the camera pans to the multilingual student who is silently doodling their name over and over because it is, quite literally, the only thing they have access to on the paper. When I walk over, I notice that there are several eraser marks and faded writing of another language written in the answer box, but had been erased prior to me hovering over.

2. Use Cognates to Create Clarity

I notice two things: 1) this student has no idea what has been put in front of them, and 2) this student can read and write in their first language. This pushes me to ask the student to use cognates (words that share the same parent language and thus look similar on paper due to spelling or sound the same phonetically). This strategy is best used for students who are new to our country and can read and write in their first language. 40% of words

in English have Spanish cognates and while this only works for some languages, this is helpful for the 80% of Latinx students that comprise our 10.1% overall multilingual student population in the US.

3. Use Total Physical Response (TPR) to Make Concepts Stick

Another strategy that is a favorite of all theatre majors is TPR or Total Physical Response. This strategy has three parts and has to meet the criteria before being used in a rigorous, inclusive setting: manageable, meaningful, and joyful.

To start, pick a set of words or just one word, think about the definition, choose a small (waist up) movement, move no more than 3 seconds, and make sure it is taught in the most joyful way possible. “Okay, show me osmosis in one, two, three!” Osmosis means.....moving through water...” all while doing the movement. When a student is wanting to use a word, cue them up by doing the movement. Then, their brain will activate the meaning of the word, while meeting them where they are linguistically. A good example of this is a letter names and sounds video created by one of our teachers that has been used throughout our school and has a proven success rate of 40% LNS (letter names and sounds) mastered in September through virtual learning alone.

4. Invite Alternative Ways to Learn with Thinking Maps

There are 8 ways our brains process information in eight different ways: defining, describing, comparing/contrasting, sequencing, cause, and effect, identifying, and analogies. Multilingual students are making room for a new language to be acquired while still developing their first language. This is why we introduced thinking maps into our curriculum. A third-party study showed that using thinking maps in elementary and middle school had evidence of 1.8 times more likely to surpass district growth in reading, and 2.7 times more likely in math. Every week I’m given the opportunity to showcase a strategy to use with our multilingual students each week. During the month of September, we incorporated thinking maps into grade levels K through 4. Here we distributed [imagery thinking maps](#) where students could dissect and map out words from a text they had read. Each bubble represented a sense used in each word. This changed the game for teaching the unit that was meant to be given orally. This gave students the hands-on experience they deserve in learning-even reading! In math, students used [a tree map](#) to break down numbers to expanded form. There are many ways to utilize thinking maps. Thinking maps have transitioned from being “another thing” to “the thing” for teachers, and that is how you know you have truly collaborated with your school team. Overall, multilingual students come to us from different countries, carrying baggage from whatever they left behind. We know that in this political climate, they enter the country feeling unwelcome, and in school, carry an even heavier suitcase as they yearn to fit in while not yet feeling comfortable speaking the language. Using terms such as “multilingual” instead of English Learner changes the narrative from “This is the language of learning.” to “This is another language you get to learn while you’re here.” So, when I think about the 10.1%, I don’t see a number. I see names and faces, and I won’t leave them behind.

5. Use color coding to help students differentiate content.

Associating colors with certain content helps students quickly distinguish between different concepts and ideas. How does this work? Fill in words, numbers, and shapes particular colors that will help students remember the concept.

6. Use virtual cooperative strip paragraphs in your lessons.

A virtual strip paragraph is a paragraph composed of sentences created by student groups, where the students piece together one paragraph on a certain topic. How does it work? Students create a sentence in their groups on a topic, and when they are brought back together they determine which order the sentences will go in for the paragraph to flow best. Why is it effective? Well, all domains go to work when working with an intentional group. Writing practice, and explanatory speaking. It's also accessible for all students and engaging.

I hope these tips help! If you want to explore more ways you can make lessons accessible for students with exceptionalities and diverse needs, check out this webinar below.

Anonymous. (2020, February 18). Language Acquisition: An Overview. Retrieved October 12, 2020, from <https://www.colorincolorado.org/article/language-acquisition-overview>

English Language Learners in Public Schools. (2020, May). Retrieved October 11, 2020, from https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator_cgf.asp

The Effects of Thinking Maps in Raising Student Achievement: A Retrospective Study of Outcomes from Implementing Schools. (n.d.). Retrieved October 12, 2020, from <https://www.thinkingmaps.com/effects-of-thinking-maps/>

Published at <https://www.rocketshipschools.org/virtual-teaching-tips-for-multilingual-learners-teacherpd/> on December 7, 2020

**The next SETESOL conference will be held in
Atlanta in Fall 2021 and hosted by Georgia
TESOL (GATESOL).**

*TNTESOL is your organization. Please get involved.
Submit an article. Network. Grow professionally.
Thank you!*

Article Review

Kaitlyn Overstreet

East Tennessee

Chang, A., & Hu, H. (2018). Learning vocabulary through extensive reading: Word frequency levels and L2 learners' vocabulary knowledge level. *TESL-EJ*, 22(1), 1-20. <https://zproxy.king.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?ec=true&db=eue&AN=129533177&scope=site>.

This study focused on the effects of having the participants read, test their knowledge after reading, and then testing to see how much knowledge they lost after a three-month period. In total, there were 62 participants, 31 to be in each group (high and low) for level of proficiency/comprehension. This study was conducted overall to see how much vocabulary word frequency and knowledge levels of the participants would effect. The method used in the study was based off each group's proficiency level. They both were given words at a slow rate to begin with and then progressively the vocabulary word frequency and difficulty of the words got harder/faster as the study went on. As expected the lower group's score did come out lower than the higher proficiency participants. When words were given off at a rate of one to two thousand the higher proficiency groups lowest score was 30% better than the lower groups highest score. The same things happened with the words got faster, although the higher group's number went down by more than 25% from the first round. In the study, it found that the higher the proficiency the more words will be retained and understood, although when the proficiency gets higher and more words are being presented it is very difficult to learn all of them.

TPS-TN@LISTS.MTSU.EDU

Kira.Duke@MTSU.EDU

Over the last year, our staff has participated in a number of different professional development sessions exploring civil rights, racial justice, and new scholarship in African American history. In this issue of our newsletter, we share with you some of the resources, approaches, and strategies that we have learned as you think about celebrating this year's Black History Month - https://library.mtsu.edu/ld.php?content_id=59716332. You will also find two lesson ideas on Highlighting Local Voices and Stories and Teaching about Black Abolitionists.

If you would like to hear more about some of the resources and strategies shared in this issue of the newsletter, join us on Thursday, February 11th at 4 p.m. for our Digging In webinar. To register, email me at kira.duke@mtsu.edu.

We also have several other professional development opportunities coming up include:

February 24 (Online) - "Democratizing the Historical Narrative with Primary Sources" Session at [Tennessee Council for Social Studies](#) virtual conference at 7 p.m.

March 9 (Online) - "Tracing the Trail of Tears through Tennessee" part of the [Discover Tennessee History webinar series](#) at 4 p.m. To register, complete this [Google form](#).

March 11 (Online) - "Digging in with TPS-MTSU: Scientific Advancements" webinar at 4 p.m. To register, email [Kira Duke](mailto:Kira.Duke).

March 18 (Online) - "Ask TPS-MTSU: Discussion Session" at 4 p.m. with East Tennessee Historical Society. To register, email [Lisa Oakley](mailto:Lisa.Oakley). To submit a question in advance for this session, please email [Kira Duke](mailto:Kira.Duke).

ESL Students and Writing

Stephanie Mann

Writing. The very word instantly produces negative emotions with most people whether they are native speakers of English or are learning English as a second language. For this long-term project, I decided to focus on reasons students learning English as a second language may avoid or fear participating in writing assignments, as well as writing activities that are fun and engaging for the students. In the end, teachers of students who are learning English as a second language want their students to find writing enjoyable and fun and not produce a feeling of fear and dread. Teachers also want their students to be able to communicate their thoughts, feelings, and information in a clear, comprehensible, and confident way.

In the article *Improving Writing Skills: ELLs and the Joy of Writing*, Robertson provides sound, rational evidence as to why English as a second language students would fear and avoid writing assignments. Robertson states, "Writing requires a lot more processing of language in order to produce a message. First the student must have an idea, then think of the appropriate way to say it, then start to write it and spell it correctly, and then create another sentence to continue to communicate the idea. If we add the students' worry that they are making huge, embarrassing errors or that their ideas aren't very good in the first place, then we begin to understand the complexity involved in writing in a second language. In fact, the way we communicate, or the way students put their ideas on paper, is largely influenced by their culture." While in the article *Improving Writing Skills: ELLs and the Joy of Writing*, Robertson provided the why students avoid writing, she also provided sound advice to the teacher on how to make writing engaging and fun. In the article *Five Things Teachers Can Do to Improve Learning for ELLs in the New Year*, Robertson states, "There are two key items ELLs need in order to improve their English – time and practice. There is nothing teachers can do to rush English acquisition, but there are many ways to provide opportunities to practice English in the classroom. If activities are structured to support student-to-student or group interaction, ELLs are required to use English to explain concepts and contribute to the work. This gives teachers an opportunity to gauge what the student has learned, and it demonstrates student progress in English language development." Both articles *The Writing Road: Reinvigorate Your Students' Enthusiasm for Writing* and *Five Things Teachers Can Do to Improve Learning for ELLs in the New Year*, Richards and Robertson provide similar strategies teachers can incorporate into their lessons that will help to alleviate anxiety and dread associated with writing. The first strategy both authors address is students having a clear understanding of all academic and content vocabulary that will be used within a lesson. Richards suggests teachers make a connection between new vocabulary words with words and information that are already familiar and known to the student. It was also recommended that words should not be taught in isolation, but that vocabulary should be taught in clusters according to themes. This allows students to be exposed to words more than once and the repetition is what allows students to make the connection between words and their meanings. When teachers make connections between what students already know and the new learning that is about to take place, teachers are implementing the second strategy recommended by Richards and Robertson which is using students' background knowledge to increase their

understanding of new information. Richards refers to this as “priming,” because teachers are “priming the brain to anticipate critical features or ideas that will be forthcoming.” Some ways teachers can activate students’ prior knowledge is by asking questions, using a K-W-L chart, providing pictures, or props. The last strategy I will discuss, as well as the one I believe is the most important is increasing opportunities for students to write. Teachers need to provide students with non-threatening ways to engage in all forms of writing. One form of writing was through journal writing. In the article *Journal Writing*, Cox provided modifications and ideas for journal writing for grades kindergarten through second grade and third through fifth grade. For all grade levels, Cox suggested using and provided names of picture books that can be used to model journal writing and placed in a center for students to read independently. Cox states that, “journals offer many English language development strategies for ELLs. Journaling taps into each student’s prior experiences and knowledge and is therefore context-embedded communication.” Along with journaling, teachers could provide cloze passage for students to complete. By providing cloze passages, students are not overwhelmed with the number of words they need to think of in order to complete a paragraph. Providing students feedback was also discussed within the articles. I liked Robertson’s suggestion of the teacher choosing one error they would be focusing on in each writing or identifying only a limited number of errors for the student to correct. I like this idea for providing feedback to students, because it can be individualized for each student. While one student may be working on plural nouns another student may be working on improving on past tense verbs. Also, by limiting the type or number of errors, the feedback and corrections will not be as overwhelming for the student, and it provides the teacher an opportunity to point out students’ strengths in their writing. When a teacher takes the time to point out strengths in students’ writing, students then know what they can continue doing on future writing assignments.

After reading these articles, I have a better understanding of why students are reluctant to engage in writing assignments. While native speakers of English are having to activate multiple processes in order to produce a written piece of work, they are not having to activate those processes in a language they have not been speaking since birth. Activating these processes are more natural and fluid. However, for the English language learner they are activating the same process through a language they have not acquired since birth. I found the articles very beneficial in regard to the strategies and activities that were recommended to be used with English as a second language students to help make writing more enjoyable, engaging, and fun. I plan to use several of the ideas to improve my students’ writing this school year.

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



References

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Grant Opportunity for Volunteer ESL Programs: 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.

Edie Barry Scholarship Criteria:

Must be a volunteer (not paid) teacher or program administrator at a faith based or community organization which provides ESL classes for community adults

Must join TNTESOL (paraprofessional level)

Must plan to use funds within 90 days of receipt for one of the following (a detailed description must be included with the application):

Materials to train volunteer teachers

Training opportunities for volunteer teachers

Teaching materials for the faith-based or community ESL classes

Prior to receiving funds, 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. They must also write a letter to be sent to the Barry family.

Gundi Ressin Memorial Scholarship

The TNTESOL Gundi Ressin Memorial Scholarship was established by the TNTESOL Board of Directors to provide funds to affiliate members to support their continuing commitment to the teaching of English to speakers of other languages in the following areas:

Special Instructional Project

Educational Opportunity

Professional Development

The Gundi funds are provided by a yearly amount in the TNTESOL budget and through contributions from members and friends in Gundi's memory. Five (5) Gundi Ressin Scholarships will be awarded on a yearly basis. There is no deadline for applying. Donations are accepted to the Gundi Fund year-round when registering for the annual TNTESOL conference or through the Donations link on our website.

TNTESOL members may apply for a Gundi Fund award by completing the application form. All applications must be submitted electronically to 1vicepresident@tntesol.org. In addition, award recipients must submit an article to the TNTESOL newsletter. Before applying, carefully review the criteria for eligibility. Applications must be received two (2) months prior to event deadline in order to be considered for the award. Applicants will be notified within four (4) weeks of application submission.

Criteria for Eligibility

Applicant must be a member of TNTESOL for a minimum of 1 year to be eligible.

Application must reflect the immediate impact provided to the English language learning community

Tuition for degree-seeking students will not be considered for this scholarship

Recipient must agree to submit an article for publication in the TNTESOL newsletter. Article submission deadline will be provided once scholarship has been awarded.

Guidelines for Applying

Requested scholarship amount may not exceed \$400

Application must be completed in electronic format and submitted to the email address provided above

Application must address one of the following areas: Special Instructional Project, Educational Opportunity, or Professional Development. ****Please note that conference-related travel expenses are NOT eligible for this award.****

All sections of the application must be completed in order to be considered for this award. Part 1: Demographics and Part 2: Application Type.

Using the following document, please submit your application.

[Click here to apply.](#)

Annual Conference



SAVE THE DATE

October 26-29, 2021
Louisville, Kentucky

<https://wida.wisc.edu/grow/us-based-pl/2020-wida-annual-conference>

Check the website: wida.wisc.edu for opportunities for virtual professional development.

Advocacy Begins with Empathy

Abasi McKinzie, Ed.D.

TNTESOL Advocacy Representative

In reflecting on my final year as TNTESOL Advocacy Representative, I want to admonish every member to really think about how we can make our students' lives better and give them an opportunity to succeed where they or their cultural group may not have been afforded that opportunity in the past. I want us to be empathetic, not sympathetic because empathy causes a person to put themselves into the place of the other person. According to the website, <https://grammar.yourdictionary.com/>, empathy “goes beyond feeling compassion for [someone’s] loss. It is the ability to put yourself in the place of another and understand someone else's feelings by identifying with them.” However, to identify with them, we have to engage with them and learn their history—their story. We have to open our eyes to inequities that exist in our society and work as a team to fix them.

This is where contacting our senators and representatives at the state and federal level becomes a critical component to influencing them to enact laws that address those areas. Just this past week, TESOL sent emails out to encourage their advocates to call their senators about providing money for adult education. Each person reading this article I would presume has had an opportunity to be educated. However, there are those of us who have worked with adults who have myriad stories about how and why their students were not able to complete their education. One speaker for this past TNTESOL conference recounted her story of not graduating and having to go to adult classes to try to better her position in life.

So, I am asking each of us to have empathy- to “put [ourselves] in another's shoes and view the situation through their eyes to get a real sense of what their experience is like.” We should ask ourselves the following question: If I were born to different parents, at a different time period or in a different country, would I still have the same opportunities I do now? My last article in the Winter-Spring 2020 edition included information about how to download the VoterVoice app to become involved. It talked about going to the TESOL Advocacy Action Center and signing up for different campaigns so that you are always kept abreast of what legislation is being put forth. This edition I am including a portion of the email that gives links that will allow you to be a vocal agent of change. Finally, I would like to conclude with a quote from Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr’s book, *Strength to Love*, that encourages us to work to better the plight of our brothers and sisters:

“The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy. The true neighbor will risk his position, his prestige, and even his life for the welfare of others.”

Information on contacting your senators and representatives:

Senator Jack Reed (D-RI) is [organizing a sign-on letter for his U.S. Senate colleagues to join](#) that outlines the importance of adult education programs. The letter also asks President Biden to include \$1 billion in supplemental funding in future relief proposals and his FY 2022 federal budget request.

**TESOL is asking you to take action!
Send your senator a message asking them to sign-on to this letter today!**

Click the link below to send your message.

[Tell the Senate to Support Adult Education Funding](#)

Advocacy

Do you know of issues that need to be brought to the attention of political leaders? The TNTESOL Advocacy Representative, Abasi McKinzie will listen and bring your concerns to Washington. Contact Dr. McKinzie at mckinzieah@scsk12.org



Bristol TN City Schools ESL Teacher Laura Taylor and daughter Elizabeth welcome back the English Language Learners in BTCS.

TNTESOL
Tennessee Teachers to Speakers of Other Languages
is an affiliate of TESOL International Association
and SETESOL (Southeast TESOL)

Why become a member of TNTESOL?

TNTESOL Newsletter

TNTESOL Journal

Networking and collaboration with ESL peers across the state

Access to "Members Only" website pages and forum for

WIDA Standards and Lesson Plans

TNTESOL Advocacy Representative in Washington, DC

Discounts on conferences

Jobs postings

TNTESOL is YOUR organization -- the place for TN teachers of ESL guided by teachers of ESL!

Be active! Be a voice! Be a member of TNTESOL today!!

Annual membership dues are just \$15.00!

www.tntesol.org

SAVE THE DATE!

TNTESOL 2021

October 2021

Memphis TN

See the website for details.

<https://tntesol.wildapricot.org/>