



The *WAESOL World* is an electronic publication of the Washington Association for the Education of Speakers of Other Languages. It provides information about the world of TESOL by sharing new teaching practices, addressing current issues, and collaborating with each other. WAESOL encourages all ESL and bilingual professionals and graduate students in Washington state to submit an article.

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A Letter from 2014 WAESOL President, Bevin Taylor

Greetings from WAESOL!

I'm very honored to be your 2014 WAESOL President. Thank you very much for your support!

I'd also like to say a big thank you to Ron Belisle, our Past-President (twice over!), for getting

WAESOL and the Board into good shape. Ron's

leadership has guided the organization through some very positive changes in the last few years, including moving all our systems online, revising our constitution and by-laws, and revamping the WAESOL World Quarterly.

When Ron's term as Past-President/TESOL Liaison concludes this year, we hope he will continue to be involved in WAESOL for many years to come. Thank you, Ron!



I also want to recognize our fantastic 2014 Board members. Continuing the upward trend of 2013, this year's Board is very strong in their commitment to the organization and to bringing you quality professional development opportunities. I want to thank our sitting members for continuing their service, and I want to give a warm welcome to our new members, Adam, Annike, Martha and Megan! You can learn more about our new members later in this issue. To find out more about your all your Board members, or to learn about becoming a Board member yourself, please visit the WAESOL website.

It's hard to believe that May is here already, and summer is just around the corner. While your thoughts are no doubt turning to a well-deserved summer break, on the Board, our minds are busily working away to plan this year's WAESOL Conference. Mark your calendars now so that you can join us on October 24th and 25th. Our theme is *WAESOL 2014: Cultivating Solutions*. We have a few new things planned for 2014, so stay tuned for more details. Our pre-conference workshops were very successful last year, and we will be offering them again on Friday, October 24. For a very small fee, you can attend a half-day workshop led by well-known local practitioners. Keep an eye on the website for upcoming information about our workshop facilitators.

In addition to attending the conference, we invite you to submit a presentation proposal. The call for proposals will open very soon, and the deadline to submit is August 18 – plenty of time! We know you are doing many innovative things at your own sites; please take this opportunity to share your knowledge and experience with your peers from around the Pacific Northwest. We encourage submissions from all areas of practice, including (but not limited to) adult education, K-12, IEPs, and community-based programs. So please, show us what you've got!

Finally, I am very pleased to announce that we are working with BC TEAL and ORTESOL to try to bring you another Tri-TESOL Conference in 2015! Ever since the last Tri-TESOL in 2011, you've been asking for more, and we are happy to oblige. Watch for more details about this exciting news in the coming months.

Thank you for your support of WAESOL and for all you do for our speakers of other languages in Washington and beyond. We are at your service here on the WAESOL Board, so let us know what we can do to continue to make WAESOL great.

Sincerely,

Bevin Taylor, WAESOL 2014 President



Letter from 2013 WAESOL, Past President, Ron Belisle

Greetings WAESOL members and friends,

The 2013 year was a very good year for WAESOL. First of all, thanks to you, your participation and your feedback as well as the hard work of the WAESOL Board, we had another successful conference. (Read more below for further conference details.) This past year we instituted some new Pre-Conference Workshops on Friday, which were held the day before the conference. For the first year, they were fairly well attended and we were pleased. We hope to continue them into 2014 and beyond. The Saturday conference was very well-attended with about 445 registrants. Many thanks to those who presented and to Pearson for sponsoring our keynote, Christina M. Cavage, who spoke on *Blended Learning: Deconstructed*.



Another highlight of the year was presenting our updated WAESOL Grants and Awards at the October conference. Congratulations to Adeyinka Kayode-Popoola of the American Language and Culture Program at the University of Idaho who was nominated by one of her colleagues and was presented with the WAESOL Excellence in Teaching Award. In addition, Eugene Shen of Highline Community College was awarded a WAESOL Project Funding Grant . Both Nadia Nsir of Washington State University and Rachel Grisham of Mount Vernon High School were awarded WAESOL Professional Development Grants. Check our web site soon as we will open application of these grants and awards early in 2014.

Welcome to new board members and the new WAESOL officer positions in 2014. Our new WAESOL President will be Bevin Taylor of Highline Community College. Bevin has served on the WAESOL Board since 2009 and has chaired two conferences and served on many committees. The President-elect position will be filled by Kimberly Russell of Clark College. Kimberly joined the board in 2013 and has served as the WAESOL World Quarterly editor. Our new Recording Secretary will be Anne Drobish-Shahat of WSU. Completely new to the board will be our Assistant Treasurer Megan Nestor, who teaches at Highline Community College, Kaplan, and Seattle Central Community College. Martha Savage of Gonzaga University, Anikke Trier of Mukogawa Fort Wright Institute and Adam Sweeney of WSU will also serve in new member-at-large board positions.

Many thanks to those are leaving the Board: Jamila Barton of North Seattle Community College served two

years in a member-at-large position. Lina Older of Columbia Basin College served as the 2013 Recording Secretary, and Ani Derderian of WSU served as the Assistant Treasurer. Many thanks to all of them for all of their volunteer service.

We are moving forward, and I am very thankful for all those who participated last year at many levels in WAESOL!

Sincerely,

Ron Belisle

2013 WAESOL President

<http://waesol.org>

Letter from the Editor

Hello,

I want to thank everyone for their support of submissions of articles, materials reviews, notices, announcements, WAESOL information, conference reports, and the like over this past year. 2013 was an exciting experience editing this long-standing publication this year. I look forward to another year as serving as editor. Many thanks as well to our fantastic publication layout designer, Julie Baumgartner. This publication wouldn't be possible without her fine work. We have brought on a few new members to our volunteer staff here at WAESOL Quarterly, Katie Johnson, Martha Savage, and Adam Sweeny. Thanks again to all of you, and keep the writing coming my way. Enjoy the issue. Best to you in 2014!

Kimberly Russell

Editor

WAESOL World



Election results and new board members

The WAESOL Board welcomes new members and new officers for 2014.

The new 2014 President is Bevin Taylor. Bevin has been working in the TESOL field for 11 years. She was born and raised in the Midwest and received her MA-TESL from Bowling Green State University in Ohio. She is currently the Coordinator of the ABE/GED/ESL Department at Highline Community College, where she also enjoys teaching ESL in the college's non-credit ESL program, serving immigrant and refugee students. She is especially interested in helping immigrant and refugee adults reach their goals of transitioning to college classes. Bevin has served as Member-at-Large on the WAESOL Board for five years, where she has been instrumental in planning the annual conference for the past several years. She looks forward to continuing to serve the organization in a leadership role.

Kimberly Russell will serve as the 2014 President-elect moving from her position in 2013 as a member-at-large position. Kimberly has been teaching English as a Second Language for over twenty-five years. She is a faculty member of Clark College in Vancouver, WA, working with IBEST programs, teaching ESL and ABE/GED courses as well. She has taught in the US and internationally, in Japan, and has taught all levels of ESL as well as ENL. She has taught in community education, as well as at colleges and universities. Helping adults achieve their goals- academic, work, and personal- is her passion. She has presented and published in the field and believes in supporting faculty professional development. She enjoys working with others in the profession and supporting WAESOL in its work.

Ron Belisle, the 2013 WAESOL President, will serve as the 2014 TESOL Liaison. Ron received his MA in TESOL from Washington State University in 1987. He taught in Japan for four years at a private language program, two public high schools and at the university level. Since 1990, he has taught at Mukogawa Fort Wright Institute in Spokane as well as in summer intensive English programs at Gonzaga University and Washington State University. He has previously served as the 2011 WAESOL President, the 2011 Tri-TESOL Conference Chair, and the chair of five Spokane Regional ESL Conferences. He has also been on the planning committee of the 2012 and the 2014 TESL Canada Conferences. Ron has presented at 13 national TESOL conferences and numerous WAESOL and regional conferences on issues related to technology in education and program administration. Ron lives in Spokane and is married to Kathy (29 years) and has three great kids, Matt, a software engineer who donates programming services to WAESOL, Andrew, who just graduated from

Bangor University in Wales, UK and Jessica who went to Carroll College in Helena, MT and now is involved in the theater scene in Spokane.

Our new Recording Secretary is Anne Drobish-Shahat. Anne has been a WAESOL Board member-at-large the last few years. Anne has enjoyed serving the WAESOL community for the past few years as a member-at-large. She has been teaching at the Intensive American Language Center at Washington State University for the past 6 years, while also serving on the Faculty Development, Educational Technology, Scholarship, Faculty, Materials, and Hiring committees. Anne's master's is in TESL from the University of Idaho and she loves teaching students of diverse backgrounds, languages, and cultures. On the weekends, Anne and her husband Samir have a booth at the Moscow Farmer's Market selling authentic Egyptian food. She has found that serving on the WAESOL board has been rewarding on many levels and has felt honored to have had the opportunity to do so.

The 2014 assistant treasurer is Megan Nestor. Megan has been teaching ESL to immigrants and international students for the past 9 years at Highline Community College, Kaplan, and Seattle Central Community College, and received a Master's Degree in TESOL from Seattle University. Originally she went into teaching because she loves linguistics and learning about different cultures, but now she also loves it because of the relationships she builds in the classroom. She has always been interested in training teachers mostly because she would like to share the wealth of classroom ideas she has learned over the years, and she feels like being on the WAESOL board would be a good step in that direction.

We welcome Martha Savage to a new WAESOL member-at-large position. Martha teaches at Gonzaga University in the ESL and MA/TESL programs. Her research agenda involves collaborative teaching and research with the School of Education on campus with pre-service teacher training. She is interested in linking the K-12 teacher training with teaching ELLs content-based instruction. Her focus examines more effective strategies for developing critical thinking and academic language. Her experience includes teaching/administration in higher education, adult education, and K-12 in private/public institutions. She is a grandmother of two wonderful little boys and is expecting two more in 2014. She lives in Spokane with her husband.

Also, Anikke Trier will serve as a new member-at-large board member. Anikke has worked for Mukogawa Fort Wright Institute (MFWI) in Spokane since 2006 and recently returned from teaching for 2 years at its

main branch, Mukogawa Women's University, in Japan. In addition to teaching in Japan, Anikke has taught English overseas to various levels of adult learners in Germany and Bosnia. Anikke received her MA-TESL from Eastern Washington University where she was a teaching assistant for the English Department. She later worked as a Responder in Eastern Washington University's Writers' Center for a number of years in addition to her teaching job at MFWI. Anikke takes every opportunity to go to conferences to meet and learn from others in the TESOL field. She was a member and volunteer coordinator of the Spokane Regional ESL Conference Committee for 2010-2011. Additionally, Anikke has presented at many conferences including both San Antonio and New Orleans TESOL Conferences. She was able to attend international TESOL conferences in Japan, Croatia, and Bosnia where she learned a lot about English teaching overseas. Anikke is committed to people, diversity, and the sharing of ideas, and hopes to translate this commitment to being a member of the WAESOL Conference Committee.

Welcome as well to Adam Sweeney. Adam received his BA in English from Penn State in 2003. In 2005 he went to South Korea to teach ESL at private academies until 2008, when he returned to the US to complete a secondary English-teaching certification program at Clarion University. He taught 7th and 9th grade Language Arts at Clarion High School in Pennsylvania and 9th grade English at Flowing Wells High School in Tucson. Adam completed his Master's Degree in TESOL at the University of Arizona in 2011, focusing on CALL and the use of computer games in SLA. He continued this work while he taught ESL at Shantou University in China. Adam came to WSU in 2012, where he has been teaching ESL at the IALC until the present. Adam has taken part in programs that allow him to help disadvantaged populations, including working with African refugees, adults in Mexico, and elementary students with learning disabilities. Adam has been an active member in the ESL profession, presenting at and helping to organize an international CALL conference in China. Adam now hopes to take a more active role in the TESOL community here in Washington.



Attention WAESOL World Readers!

There is a new spot in the WAESOL Community Forum to discuss topics brought up in this issue of the WAESOL Quarterly. Visit the forum at <http://waesol.org/community/> and click on the category *Thoughts after reading the WAESOL Quarterly* to share your thoughts and see what others are thinking.

The Summer I Learned to Teach

By Scott Morris
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Years ago I was a kindergarten teacher during the academic year, and did various types of work during my summers. One summer, to make ends meet, I signed on with a contractor as a framer. I want you to understand, I did not know the first thing about framing, but there was a housing boom on and they were signing all comers. I walked out of my world in which I was an insider; I knew all the ropes and was even the “go-to-guy” for some of the other faculty.

I entered into a strange new world where I was an outsider; a scary place many of our students find themselves in when they wander into our classrooms for the first time. Somehow I managed not to cut off any digits or fall off any roofs that summer, but I did learn a lot about teaching reading and writing. I will give you several examples.

Work is easier, safer, and more fun in community. There were more insiders (all the other guys) than outsiders (me). Those insiders, although a little profane for my sensitive nature, were all about looking out for the rookie. I took that lesson to heart, and today I make sure that the “rookies” in my adult basic education classes are connected to an insider or two. Often I will have students who have been in classes for English language learners, and have just made the transition to Adult Basic Education. Some are native speakers but are attending their first ever classes since they were last in the k-12 system. Regardless of one’s academic history, whether experienced or rookie, insider or outsider, we all learn best when we are in community, and our students perform better and stick with the program longer and with greater success when we make the effort as teachers to foster community in our classrooms.

Scaffolding helps us accomplish tasks that are difficult or at a higher level. One day it was time to put siding on the house we were building. We started at the bottom, working on our knees. It was easy. After a little while we were working waist high. When we were working chest high it started to get difficult. Then one of the guys took a sawhorse he’d made earlier from scrap lumber and cut it right in two! He leaned the cut ends against the house with the legs on the ground. A few pieces of lumber between them and just like that we had a stable place to stand a few feet off the ground, and the work was almost as easy as before, but at a higher level. What my insider saw as an obvious solution, I found amazing. It is the same for our students. Sometimes we are so in tune with the academic challenge at hand, we do not even recognize it as a challenge. My insider did

not ponder what to do – he likely did not even see it as a challenge – he just took what was for him the next logical step.

When we ask our students to do more difficult work, it is essential, first, that we understand that it may indeed be a huge challenge to them, and second, that we give them the tools they need – and a solid place to stand. We must not assume they have that prior knowledge in their own schemas unless we have provided it to them beforehand or helped them uncover it on their own. If we do a really good job of providing scaffolding for them, our students might even think *we* are amazing.

Adapt tools to the task at hand. That sawhorse was only one example I saw of insiders using tools in unique ways. They were problem solvers; if the tool that was made for the job did not solve the problem, they tried adapting another tool, or made one from materials at hand. We need to equip our students to be problem solvers too. Teaching them discrete skills has value, but teaching them strategies will help them become problem solvers. No matter how big your hammer is, there are some framing situations in which that nail isn't going to go in straight; it may be necessary to look at that framing challenge from a new angle.

In the same way, my students may have great decoding skills, and their vocabularies and spelling may be improving every day, but can they construct meaning when they encounter a text full of passive voice? Are they able to identify that the textbook authors are presenting multiple theories, not just contradicting themselves? When they find themselves confused, can they tell me it is the metaphor they don't understand, or the vocabulary, or the author's use of non-standard spelling and grammar? Here is a workable definition of metacognition: my students are not simply confused; they can identify the reason for their confusion. That brand of confusion is the foundation for learning.

Foster a sense of agency. As the summer passed, I became more confident in the use of tools (my discreet skills improved). Finally, the insiders decided it was time for me to use my strategies. They gave me a framing problem to solve. I was terrified; I had to think and make decisions; I had to measure, cut, and build, and it had to pass inspection. They gave me a sense of agency. I want to make clear that I was not predisposed toward becoming my own agent. The insiders fostered my disposition. They patiently taught me how to measure and cut and think, and encouraged me in my efforts. Years later the experience, skills, and sense of agency those other men patiently built up in me that summer gave me confidence to design and build a toolshed, and later still, build a garage from plans I purchased from the internet. I was just as terrified at the beginning of each of those projects as I was on that fateful summer day, but I had a new disposition toward taking the risks and accepting the rewards and consequences of doing so.

Our students need the same things from us that my insider friends gave me. They need opportunities to think and express themselves, to look through their toolboxes and choose what they think will solve the literacy challenge they are facing at the moment. They need both the opportunity to fail and the tools needed to avert failure, and we need to offer them both simultaneously. Then perhaps down the road a year or two or ten, those very people who were my students will have the confidence, disposition, and agency to tackle new challenges that come their way – no matter how terrified they may be.



Tune Up Your Speaking Class with Ideas from Learning to Play a Musical Instrument

by Diane Tehrani
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As ESL teachers, we all design activities to get students to speak using the English they are learning, and we need to hear their repetition or creation of a new expression. We consult our many books and material resources to plan our lessons, and practically stand on our heads to get the response we need. I myself had this experience, and then it dawned on me that in musical performance studies, students work on and perform pieces of music. I asked myself if ESL students could not work to ‘recite’ in the same way as students of music give recitals. I had help in answering this question through observation of PSU (Portland State University) music professor, Connie Tittingerton, and her following successful pedagogical formulation of a method of instruction. Mrs. Tittingerton’s approach offers ample individual attention, accountability for effort, a rubric for self- evaluation, appropriate attention to brain-based learning, and use of developmentally appropriate materials. Her music pedagogy also includes learning rhythm, notes and fingering, dividing a piece of music to learn to play it, and finally joining all elements and even dancing. I have been successful in applying her method to teaching spoken English in the following manner.

Ample individual attention includes students meeting each other the first day of class to establish a community of learners. Having many listeners in addition to the instructor gives student the opportunity to get more feedback as well as have more speaking opportunities. Students are made to feel comfortable to perform their speech in what has been termed ‘nesting’ before being asked to perform.

Accountability for effort includes encouragement for regular practice through journaling about their daily language use as well as periodic (daily) reflection about how speech is developing with a thorough

consideration of rewards, challenges, and learning achieved. This student self-reflection gives the instructor clues about where instruction should most profitably be headed or tailored to fit. Here is an example of a journal template for student use.

ESL Level 3 Journal

1. Where did you use English? What were you doing?
2. What English skills did you use? Speaking____ Listening____ Reading____ Writing____

What was most difficult for you?

What was most satisfying for you?

Practice Days – Enter the skill (A, B, C, D) and total time spent each practice day.

Mon	Tues	Wed	Th	Fr	Sat	Sun
10/7	10/8	10/9	10/10	10/11	10/12	10/13
10/14	10/15	10/16	10/17	10/18	10/19	10/20

A rubric for self-evaluation establishes speaking performance expectations and goals for students.

Here is a sample of what could be used for student self-evaluation regarding the recited text task.

ESL Level 3 Self-Evaluation

Yes	No	Comments:	Assessment
			Ergonomic Use of the Body
			Solid Start
			Solid End
			Convincing Dynamics
			Correct Alphabet Sounds
			Correct Place and Manner of Articulation
			Correct Intonation
			Continuity of Speech (Linking)
			Pauses for Punctuation
			Text Directions – soft, slow etc.

Appropriate attention to brain-based learning uses repeating assignment directions or speaking to other students for reinforcement of new learning. Additionally, students have regular chances to stand up, exercise limbs, head, and torso to keep oxygen flowing to the brain for optimum learning. ⁽¹⁾

Using developmentally appropriate materials for the students' level, students practice sections of speech, dialogue, conversation, or narrative that they then perfect for a "recital", which is assessed by a rubric of expected performance criteria. Students practice as many such speaking "recitals" as they are able, without undue expectation or pressure from the instructor. Through recitals, students are able to show and exhibit speaking, which is actually beyond their current level of spontaneous speaking.

Just like in music, where quarter, half, or whole notes have different lengths and there is variation in pitch based on location on the musical scale, the length and pitch of the word 'happy' is not the same as the word 'meet' in the following sentence: "I'm very happy to meet you." To start with, *happy* has a short, stressed first vowel in its two syllables, and *meet* is a one-syllable word with a long vowel. Also word order, rather than inflectional ending, creates a specific order of intonation from high to low. This is because English is a word-ordered, rather than inflected language, and determines the basis for understanding and communication with a specific order of intonation from high to low.

For ESL, first, we want to address intonation, or the rise and fall of pitch to express meaning and stress for emphasis. Studies have shown intonation to be the most important determining feature of speech for optimizing understanding by native speakers.⁽²⁾ Second, we want to make sure all letters and words are pronounced correctly--giving close attention to place and method of articulation. Third, we attend to phrases and sentence units. And finally, we want to make sure all words and sentences join and link together and contribute to the import and significance of a piece.

Attention to intonation, which corresponds to rhythm in music, gives the scope of text, the length and extent of it—the highs and lows of it so that students can see where they are going and what they have to do in order to 'accomplish' a piece of language. Here we want to consider the rise and fall and the "jump-up-step-down" pattern ⁽³⁾ as Dr. David Stern terms it. We want to consider stress on crucial pieces of information conveyed in nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, and negatives. Moreover, we consider syllable stress by patting or tapping out these rhythms.

For sounds, we consider place and manner of articulation. These correspond to musical fingering and notes. We include the sounds of letters, long and short vowels, and consonants. The Stern video *Sound and Style of American English* goes into more detail of the sounds. ⁽⁵⁾ Here we go into greater depth of the sounds of individual letters with graphics showing the letters and their various sounds. The Lynch video (1991) is especially good at illustrating the sounds and giving word and sentence practice. ⁽⁶⁾ I also like to show students the vowel chart from Joan Morley. ⁽⁷⁾ I go over the letters and point out and demonstrate the ones that have more than one sound. I introduce them to Morley's keywords and places of articulation of the vowels. These are "see it say yes a fat bird a bus stop two books no law my cow boy". I may also do something more with pictures of long and short vowels and ask students to group words according to sounds and so on. I prefer to use a textbook which gives a description of particular places and methods of articulation for each sound, followed by words with the sound in initial, medial, and final position before beginning to work first on sentences and short paragraphs illustrating, using, and demonstrating the sound. ⁽⁸⁾ As students progress, thought groups are the next level of work. Students work through these using the method of 'divide and conquer' to analyze connected words include subject-verb, nouns plus modifiers, verbs plus modifiers, prepositional phrases, and clauses. Finally, they work on linking sounds or 'join and dance' for the CVC pattern, and reductions of the Weinstein (2001) 'whaddaya say' and 'hafta gotta' type, ⁽⁹⁾ and sections of speech from any text such as *Comp/Comp*. ⁽¹⁰⁾

The intonation, sounds, meaningful phrases and thought units are then joined for the final production. Students mark a paragraph 'I' for intonation, 'S' for sound, 'TG' for grammatical thought units such as subject-verb, adjective-noun, adverb-verb, or prepositional phrase, and 'L' for linking to let the instructor know that they have practiced that aspect of the speaking process. The instructor then asks each student to demonstrate one of the four aspects and the instructor gives feedback and suggestions for further learning in an area, if needed. To build quantity, students prepare several selections and the instructor chooses one to hear. If they want, students can choose to record their selections to be presented to the class. As in any recital, these class presentations are applauded. Another way to have a recital is to group students, and then ask them to decide, using the rubric analysis, on the best of their group to present in front of the whole class. Some of the worksheets adapted from music pedagogy are the bi-weekly daily practice journal, self-evaluation rubric, self-assessment.

In my use of this formula with thirty lower-intermediate ⁽¹¹⁾ community college students from predominantly Hispanic background, but with representation of other minority immigrant populations from China, Iran, Moldova, Russia, Ukraine, and Vietnam, my observation is that meta-cognition and self-monitoring is at an

introductory rather than mastery level. With this said however, I did observe benefit from requiring joint teacher-student monitoring through recording speech and biweekly journals of language usage outside class. Also, students who previously could hardly utter a sentence, now are able to manage a longer stretch of speech of some ten to twelve sentences about their study and make requests in English of the teacher for additional audio or video recordings, indicating that they were rolling up their sleeves, pencils sharpened and ready, to take on and report on their own learning.

The meta-cognitive skill of attention to specific aspects of skill such as intonation or dynamic use of mouth muscularity may serve as an introduction to the concept of self-monitoring with the use of formative rubric and summative assessment. Nevertheless, to keep students empowered and in control to sustain learning with journal and self-evaluation rubrics seems to offer promise to build responsible learning. I will continue to apply some of these principles from instruction in learning to play an instrument in my practice of teaching English as a second language.

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Speaking assessment at this level usually revolves around understanding questions, giving appropriate answers, using complete sentences (perhaps with prompt to do so), correct grammar with appropriate verbs, and using comprehension strategies such as asking for repetition, and asking or demonstrating the need for clarification. Additionally, are using eye contact and body language to help communication, and using body language and/or words to show question understanding.



Using Journals in ESL Academic Writing Classes

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This article covers journal writing in teaching advanced academic writing classes to international ESL students, recommendations on optimal ways to use journal writing and formulating a plan for journal writing implementation in future classes.

Examples of Journal Writing in Upper-Level Academic Writing Classes

I am an ESL instructor at the community college level, and I have taught many advanced academic writing classes to international students. I have always thought of journals as a "warm-up" method, beginning most classes (especially in the first half of the quarter) with a journal entry.

At the beginning of each quarter, I explain my expectations for the journals: The focus is on quick brainstorming and articulation of ideas--not on mechanics. I give examples of "Perfect", "Good/Acceptable", and "Unacceptable" journal entries. I require students to keep their journal in a separate small notebook or blue book, apart from where they keep other class notes, so that their journals can be turned in, and also bearing in mind that such a journal may be a valuable keepsake of their time as a student in the US.

After the first day, I show a PowerPoint slide at the beginning of each class with an image and a prompt (usually one to three questions). I try to clarify that the prompt is just a starting point: They do not have to answer each question. They should answer whichever question they have ideas about, and/or write whatever they want to write about the topic. The questions are open-ended, inviting students to write about their opinions and experiences. I usually spend a few minutes after each journal entry on discussion; students close their journals, but share their ideas with the class.

Journal topics can be a good opportunity to expose students to aspects of culture; many journal topics I have used are connected to holidays, current events, or famous English-speaking people's birthdays on or near the date of the journal entry.

Here is one example:

Image: Charlie Chaplin caught in the machine (from *Modern Times*).

Prompt: Write a summary and/or response to this short video. What happens? Who are the characters? What is the situation? <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DfGs2Y5WJ14>

When the class covers summary writing, it is useful to start by having them summarize short film clips rather than texts. Students have been very successful in recognizing key points and in disregarding unimportant details in writing about such scenes. Writing a summary in a journal entry is a good way for students to practice summarizing as it removes some of the pressure to write a perfect summary as a graded assignment.

I collect students' journals after they complete the last journal entry of every week. In grading, I do not consider mechanics. Length is a necessary component of the journal grade. I encourage students to keep writing, even if they feel "stuck"; if I see students hesitating to write their journals in class, I talk to them and try to get them to articulate their ideas.

Journal Writing: Recommendations by Scholars and Textbook Authors

How and why do scholars recommend journal writing for the classroom, and how do textbook authors recommend using journal writing?

Here are a few benefits of journal writing outlined by scholars:

A. Reduction of fear.

Many ESL students may experience anxiety when they are required to write in English, and regular journal writing can help students overcome this fear (English and Gillen 91; Reid 55; Koffolt and Holt 56-7).

B. Opportunity for reflection.

Richard A. Orem recommends journal writing for both students and teachers as it "can provide the vehicle for reflection that leads to more effective practice" (77). Rebecca Williams Mlynarczyk writes about the benefits of allowing students to reflect on their ideas or experiences in writing. By turning an experience into text, they step outside that experience and can view it more objectively (21 and 66).

C. Informal initial exploration of ideas.

Ann Raimés discusses freewriting as a way to treat subjects that then serve as a "basis for other more focused writing tasks" (7). Kimberly Koffolt and Sheryl L. Holt suggest that before students begin a formal writing assignments, they write their ideas in a journal entry (57).

D. Opportunity for meaningful communication.

Lorene Reid writes about the positive effects of dialogue journaling, in which students write journal entries that receive written responses from a teacher or teacher's aide: "I now know the value that these students place on writing for an authentic audience and the positive effect that modeling has had on their writing" (55). Mlynarczyk took a similar approach in her study of journal writing and notes that her students' journals were written "with more power and directness" than their formal essays (2); she also connects their journal writing with improvements in their timed writings (39).

How are these recommendations incorporated into ESL writing textbooks? As a small sample, I examine here three textbooks that I have used in writing classes.

In *College Writing Skills with Readings*, John Langan calls journal writing an "excellent way to get practice in writing...Writing in a journal will help [students] develop the habit of thinking on paper and will show...how ideas can be discovered in the process of writing" (14). These ideas can then be a source of essay topics.

In *Writing Academic English*, Alice Oshima and Ann Hogue also focus on the journal as "a very rich source of ideas" (266). They classify journal writing as a prewriting technique, grouped with listing, freewriting, and clustering (266).

Again similarly, in *Refining Composition Skills*, Regina L. Smalley, et al. describe journals as "a storehouse for future writing material" (3). Like Langan, they urge students not to focus on mechanical errors, but rather on

expressing ideas. In addition, they use journal activities throughout the textbook to help introduce new ideas and have students explore their ideas about them.

Incorporating Scholars' Recommendations in Future Journal Writing Activities

A key point from my research on this topic is the idea of journals as a point of connection. Students could benefit from connecting journal writing to other classroom activities--for example, instruction on mechanics (such as grammatical structures) could be reinforced by journal prompts that elicit those structures in a meaningful way.

Also related to the idea of connection: I could incorporate journal writing as a starting point of more formal writing projects. Writing journal entries on essay topics could help students articulate ideas in early stages of the writing process.

My students would benefit from using journal entries as an opportunity to connect to an authentic audience. Students could dialogue with each other by reading classmates' journal entries, by writing responses, and in turn reading and responding to those written responses. As the instructor, I could also take more time to respond to students' entries.

Finally, students could use journal entries as a means of self-connection--to reflect on their own work, including timed writings, formal writing assignments, and previous journal entries. When graded assignments are returned to students, assigned journal entries may be an excellent way to encourage them to respond to the instructor's criticism and to recognize the strengths and weaknesses in their work. This may help prevent repeated errors of the same type which often occur from one assignment to the next, and which lead teachers to wonder if their comments have been read and/or understood by students.

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TESOL Liaison Report from the International TESOL Conference 2014

By Ron Belisle, Past WAESOL President/ TESOL Liaison

More than 7,000 teachers, administrators, publishers and others gathered at the Oregon Convention Center for four days at the Annual TESOL International Convention in Portland, OR from April 26-29, 2014. I had the privilege of representing WAESOL as the TESOL Affiliate.

Did you know that TESOL has more than 105 global affiliates around the world? Check out this link below.
<http://www.tesol.org/connect/affiliates-regional-organizations>

I also recommend the video at the following link by the former outgoing TESOL President is fantastic. It will give you an overview of the mission of TESOL. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vSXzDHCvhvI>

The new officers for TESOL International began their new term right after the Portland conference, and a former WAESOL President (2007), Yilin Sun, is now the TESOL President. Our best wishes to Yilin as she serves in this new capacity!

During the conference in Portland, we as Affiliates gathered for special meetings and workshops. The first, on Wednesday, was an all day workshop titled “CTRL+ALT+Believe: Rebooting Thoughts & Inspiring Action in Your Association” by Holly Duckworth of CEO Leadership Solutions International. She talked about the importance of vision in an organization and of regularly revisiting one’s mission and vision statement in addition to strategies to grow the association. On Thursday, there was an Affiliate business meeting discussing various aspects of governance and policy.

Also on Thursday, I attended a session on how to organize conferences which is something I have been doing to do the last nine years. It was led by a member from Kuwait who had served as the chair of the 2012 TESOL Conference held in Philadelphia (which incidentally, I attended as well as the TESOL Liaison). I was impressed with her energy, enthusiasm and dedication to the profession. While she was working full-time at her university in Kuwait (with no release time), she volunteered over a 2-year period to serve in this capacity. I’m well aware that chairing a conference is a big task. My hat is off to her and to the many other volunteers who work to put together a conference of such magnitude.

On Friday morning, the current WAESOL President, Bevin Taylor, and I hosted an Affiliate Booth in the main registration area. Many people stopped by to learn about WAESOL and what we offer. We were able to discuss the many things we provide: Annual Conference, Pre-conference Professional Development, WAESOL World Quarterly Newsletter, WAESOL Community Forum, Grants and Awards.

For me, the highlight of the conference was individually talking to other state Affiliate leaders about various aspects of how they operate their local associations. I learned how state Affiliates manage their newsletters/journals, how they handle membership and exclusive content for members, how they organize conferences, how they communicate with members and other aspects of their operation. Most importantly Bevin and I talked with the Presidents of ORTESOL and BC TEAL about another Tri-TESOL Conference in 2015. Stay tuned for more on that later!

Finally, speaking of upcoming conferences, we would like to give you a heads up that WAESOL will host the 2017 TESOL International Conference in Seattle. We will need many volunteers for this large conference. We hope you will be able to help when the time arrives.

I am very grateful for the opportunity to represent WAESOL at this conference. We will continue as a board to work hard to serve you our members.

Don't forget to visit the WAESOL
Community Forum at [http://
waesol.org/community/](http://waesol.org/community/) to share your
thoughts after reading WAESOL
World.



2013 Grants and Awards Recipients' Letters and Reports

Each year WAESOL gives out grants and awards during our WAESOL annual conference. In 2013, we were able to award \$2750 in grants and awards for excellence in teaching, project funding and professional development. In this issue, we are including follow-up reports and letters from the recipients. We encourage WAESOL members to apply for grants or nominate others for awards at www.waesol.org Detailed information and online applications will be available online soon. Grants and Awards are given out as part of the WAESOL annual conference, to be held this year at Highline Community College October 25, 2014.



2013 WAESOL Grants and Awards Recipients with WAESOL BoardMembers:

Bevin Taylor, Eugene Shen and Rachel Grisham, Ron Belisle

Letters from Grant & Award Recipients 2013 & 2012

Nadia Nsir - Recipient of WAESOL Professional Development Grant for 2013 (\$750)
College of Education, Washington State University, WA

I am grateful to the WAESOL Board and WAESOL membership for providing me with this award and feel honored to be selected for it. I was also very lucky to get the right support in the right time to achieve one of my professional dreams with the help of this grant.

My research interest is how Libyan students learn English as a second language. I had a pilot study about the use of social media in the Libyan uprising in 2011. Then, I extended the study to involve the role of social media on the professional development for teachers of English as a Second Language (ESL) in Libya.

Moreover, I am interested in Arabic Libyan oral interviews and written assessments and I have been awarded a certificate as an oral proficiency interviewer (OPI) in Arabic Libyan dialect from American Council on The Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACFTL) after joining two courses in Yew York. It was a big achievement, but I kept looking forward to be a reviewer for the listening and writing, too.

The WAESOL 2013 grant was a priceless opportunity to help me join a professional workshop in Monterey and get to be certified as an Arabic-Libyan test item reviewer. This chance added a lot to my professional skills as a tester/reviewer/interviewer for both oral and written forms of the language. The workshop also helped me to get a strong theoretical understanding of testing second-language abilities and skills and to understand what it means to be professional in a language and the get the appropriate assessment background to construct valid language tests.

I hope to contribute to the Libyan community's learning and WAESOL grant added to my contribution a meaningful recognition.



Adeyinka Kayode-Popoola - Recipient of the WAESOL Excellence in Teaching Award 2013 (\$500)
American Language and Culture Program, University of Idaho, Moscow, ID

My name is Adeyinka Kayode-Popoola. I am an ESL teacher at the American Language and Culture Program at the University of Idaho. My teaching experience in America is completely different from the almost fifteen years experience that I had in Nigeria. The differences range from student-teacher relationships, to curriculum development and professional development. My teaching experience over the years has reinforced the fact that a teacher needs to be well informed about current teaching methods and theories. The conference was a gathering of great minds, and it exposed me to many current issues in ESL teaching. I learned new teaching methods for grammar, listening, speaking and reading/writing. At the conference, the presenters also shared their experiences including the challenges that both ESL students and teachers are facing and how these challenges could be overcome in various courses. This well-organized conference proffered a lot of directions to the way forward for me as an ESL professional teacher and my program. Winning the “Excellence in Teaching Award” at the conference was the highlight of the year 2013 for me. The award showed me that there is always a better way to teach, to relate with my students and my colleagues. I am happy that my contribution as a teacher is appreciated and I will continue to pursue excellence in teaching.



Rachel Grisham - Recipient of WAESOL Grant for Professional Development 2013(\$750)
Mt. Vernon High School, Mt. Vernon, WA

In Fall 2013, I was lucky enough to receive the WAESOL grant for professional development. With this grant, I chose to go to the WABE conference in Tacoma.

The theme for this year's conference was "Culture and Content Connections: Keys to Academic Success," which, as a high-school social studies teacher at a school with a large percentage of English Language Learners, I felt was very relevant to the everyday challenges that arise in my classroom. Among the many different sessions I attended, standouts were those focused on helping ELLs succeed in high-school and beyond, methods of vocabulary instruction, ELL strategies for student discussion aligned with the new

Common Core speaking and learning standards, and ways of integrating questions and encouraging student talk in the classroom.

I came home energized and implemented some of what I learned at the conference in my classroom the very next day! Next year I'll be teaching U.S. History for newcomers and beginning English speakers and the conference was a way to network and connect with other teachers. It was a great experience and I am so thankful to WAESOL for providing me with the grant that covered the cost of the conference, substitute arrangements, lodging, and food!



Eugene Shen - Recipient of project funding grant (\$750)

Highline Community College, Des Moines, WA

I am honored to have been a recipient of the WAESOL research grant for the 2013/2014 year. Thank you once again for the opportunity to bring light from students' lives as they move towards their goals, once they complete the GED.

Since the issuance of this grant, I have asked students to provide their heart-felt stories of what the completion of their GED will represent for themselves and/or for their families/loved ones. There is a transition from last year to 2014 given the fact a "GED essay" is no longer required; however, the skills and practice of completing a "GED-like essay" can only benefit each student towards their required "short responses" in the language arts testing arena.

Currently, I have 5-7 student stories. I am continuing to collect the stories of GED students. I will continue to work with students to provide opportunities for students to share their stories. In addition to the GED stories, I also purchased a Google tablet. The tablet is an excellent resource tool for students to utilize given the fact that there are no computers in the classroom. Also, the tablet is a useful tool to directly link students to GED resources. My class is only able to get one session a week in the computer lab to practice GED testing, thus the tablet comes in very handy to get to students to view resources during each class and to do testing as the need arises.

We will continue to collect the stories of our GED students over the next two quarters and “publish” them in a bound copy for all our participants. There will also be additional copies at the Highline Community College library to help inspire other prospective GED students to pursue their dreams.

I look forward to providing a final report to you by fall quarter 2014.

Thank you once again, on behalf of the past, current and future GED students for the opportunity Caroline and WAESOL board!



Angela Forwood and Theresa Howlett - 2012 Recipients of project funding grant
Gonzaga University, Spokane, WA

Gonzaga’s ESL Community Outreach class, or GECO, was simultaneously designed to meet the needs of Spokane’s diverse immigrant and refugee population as well as to provide a hands-on, unassessed practice experience to accompany the semester-long assessed practice experience required of all students in the graduate program. Within Spokane, there are a variety of ESL services provided by organizations like IEL and World Relief, but there is a limit to the amount of services they’re able to provide. In creating GECO, our goal was specifically to serve that segment of Spokane’s ESL community that has reached the limit of services available to them. As an inclusive program, we also welcome other English language learners who are interested in attending.

GECO is taught by small teams of graduate students who are responsible for developing their own lessons and content for the class. Because the class was intended to create a flexible space in which teachers could practice and experiment, there is no established curriculum. Instead, teachers are encouraged to work together to plan lessons based on student need. GECO teachers can request observations and feedback from more experienced teachers, but they are not required to. Reflection and collaboration are encouraged. Teams teach for two weeks at a time and are expected to share experiences about the class with one another.

There are several key challenges inherent in GECO. As a free, open enrollment class, attendance changes frequently. One day a teacher may have 9 students, while the next day they may have only 3. In addition, the

class often has students at multiple levels of ability, with some students taking their first formal English class and others preparing for exams like the TOEFL.

Since the initial start of the open-enrollment class in March 2012, we have received positive feedback from our ESL students, as well as the graduate students who have taught the course. After a brief hiatus during the Fall 2013 semester, we offered the class again in Spring 2014.

To date, GECO has operated on a very low budget. With the grant, we plan to purchase 5 conversation strategy books to augment texts that we currently borrow from Gonzaga University's English Language Center (ELC). The new texts are intended for teacher use with the goal of allowing continuity in conversation skill lessons. We also plan to buy individual white boards for student use in class. In a recent survey, GECO students requested increased writing instruction, and the white boards will help us provide this instruction. The grant will also partially fund a curriculum development workshop for volunteer teachers with the goal of establishing a more cohesive curriculum. This will be held may 19th (tentatively) and all teachers who have taught GECO will be invited.



TESOL Advocacy & Policy Summit 2014

WAESOL is proud to announce that it will be sending two board members again this year to represent the state of Washington at the TESOL Advocacy & Policy Summit this June in Washington D.C. This summit provides a way for your board member to connect with your elected federal officials and advocate for policies that can benefit our profession and students.

Please check you email and the WAESOL Community Forum (<http://waesol.org/community/>) soon for a survey and to leave comments that will help the chosen board members bring your specific concerns and information to your legislator.



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