



WAESOL World Quarterly Summer, 2014 Issue

Editor, Kimberly Russell
Layout Designer, Julie Baumgartner

The *WAESOL World Quarterly* 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 WAESOL President, Bevin Taylor

Happy Summer! I hope the weather is warm and sunny where you are. Summer is a time for many of us (including me) to take a break from the classroom and spend some time reflecting on the past academic year and planning to make changes and improvements to our teaching practice come fall. Of course, it's also time to relax and rejuvenate as well, and I hope you are doing a little bit of both!



As you reflect on what worked this past year, I hope you'll consider sharing your insights with your WAESOL colleagues. You might want to post your successes and bounce around new ideas on the WAESOL Community Forum on our website. Or, maybe you'd like to publish an article here in the next issue of the *WAESOL World Quarterly*. Perhaps you'd even like to share your expertise with your peers at the 2014 WAESOL Conference, on October 25 – the deadline for submissions is August 18. These are all excellent ways to network with your colleagues from the Pacific Northwest and to start engaging in the wider field of ESOL. Now is the time to make your voice heard, and WAESOL can be your platform.

Speaking of networking and engaging in the field, registration is now open for the WAESOL Conference, which will again be held at Highline College in Des Moines, WA. Half-day pre-conference workshops will be offered again this year on Friday, October 24. These extended professional development workshops were so successful last year that we hope to be able to offer them every year from now on. This year, our four pre-conference offerings cover a variety of topics: games and activities, using "the cloud," the new K12 ELP standards, and using theater in the classroom. Too bad you can only pick one!

We are also looking forward to welcoming Dr. John Bunting as our keynote

speaker this year. Dr. Bunting teaches at Georgia State University and is the author/co-author of several grammar and vocabulary books, including *Grammar and Beyond* and *Vocabulary in Use*. His talk will focus on implementing technology and innovation in the classroom in ways that actually address teachers' needs, especially with regard to using corpus tools for vocabulary and grammar instruction.

Find out more about Dr. Bunting and our pre-conference workshops in the "[Conference](#)" section of the website – waesol.org. And don't forget to register for the conference while you're there too!

As you continue to enjoy the summer sun and fun, stay connected to WAESOL and your colleagues by visiting the WAESOL website and WAESOL Community Forums. You can also follow us on Twitter - @waesol – as well. We'd love to hear from you.

Have a happy and safe summer! I'm looking forward to seeing you in October!

Take care!

Bevin Taylor, WAESOL 2014 President

Call for Proposals, Grant and Awards Applications, WAESOL Pre-Conference/Conference

The Washington Association for the Education of Speakers of Other Languages (WAESOL) Conference planning committee invites you to submit a presentation proposal for the 2014 WAESOL Conference, to be held Saturday, October 25, 2015, Highline Community College, Des Moines, WA. This year's conference theme is "Cultivating Solutions." The deadline for proposal submissions is August 18.

This year, in addition to the regular workshops and presentations on Saturday, we will again provide professional development pre-conference workshops on Friday, October 24 from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. These half-day workshops are designed to provide opportunities to discuss and examine relevant topics and important issues in greater depth. <http://waesol.org/conference/preconference/> Regular conference sessions will follow on Saturday, October 25. Registration is now open for both individuals and exhibitors. We encourage you to register for the conference early. <http://waesol.org/conference/>

Additionally, WAESOL is again offering various Grants and Awards for its members. <http://waesol.org/conference/grants-awards/>

For the latest tweets and updates Follow us on Twitter @WAESOL.

United Way of Snohomish County Offers Scholarships to Attend WAESOL

These scholarships will provide one registration fee for the 2014 WAESOL Conference on Saturday, October 25, 2014 at Highline Community College in Des Moines, WA.

Guidelines

Applicant must currently *volunteer* to teach English Language Learners in Snohomish County.

The grant recipient must be in attendance at the 2014 WAESOL Conference.

Application Procedure

Obtain an application by emailing kelly.mazzola@uwsc.org.

Submit the application via fax, email or postmarked no later than August 15, 2014.

Winners will be notified no later than September 19, 2014.





Cultivating Solutions

Keynote Speaker

John Bunting
Georgia State University

Where

Highline Community College
Des Moines, Washington

When

Pre-Conference Workshops
Friday, October 24
1:00pm - 4:00pm

Conference
Saturday, October 25, 2014
7:30am - 4:30pm

Cost*

Through October 14: \$95
On-Site, after October 15: \$120

Pre-Conference workshops:
Friday, 1:00 - 4:00PM, only \$25.

**The registration fee includes lunch, snacks, and a one-year WAESOL membership. Clock hours are available.*



For more information, visit waesol.org

WAESOL is the Washington Association for the Education of Speakers of Other Languages

Tri-TESOL 2015 SAVE THE DATE



The respective Boards of Directors of WAESOL, BC TEAL and ORTESOL have agreed to collaborate in offering a joint two-day professional development conference. Tri-TESOL 2015 will be held October 3 & 4, 2015 at Highline Community College in Des Moines, WA. The expected outcomes of such an event are to broaden the professional experience and network of members from the three associations, to expand participants' knowledge of professional issues relating to theory and practice and to share and develop a greater understanding of the different education policies and procedures followed in the different states and province.

We are very excited about this upcoming opportunity. Be sure to check <http://tri-tesol.org> for updates and the latest information.

Sincerely,

Ron Belisle (WAESOL) Conference Chair

Shawna Williams (BC TEAL) Assistant Chair

Eric Dodson (ORTESOL) Assistant Chair

Bevin Taylor (WAESOL) Assistant Chair

TESOL Advocacy & Policy Summit 2014 Report **by Adam Sweeney & Julie Baumgartner, WAESOL Members-at-Large**

Every year TESOL holds an event known as the Advocacy & Policy Summit. This event invites educators from around the U.S. to come to Washington D.C. to be briefed about federal legislation and policy related to the ESL educational field. Educators then schedule meetings with their elected federal legislators and advocate for legislation and policies that will benefit our field. WAESOL is fortunate enough to get to send two delegates to this event every year. This year, members-at-large, Adam Sweeney and Julie Baumgartner were chosen to represent WAESOL and the states of Washington and Idaho.

To prepare for the TESOL Advocacy Policy Summit, we contacted the offices of Idaho and Washington State representatives and senators to ask if they would be available on June 24th to discuss issues regarding the teaching of English to speakers of other languages. About half of the congress people we contacted responded that they would like to meet, although only an education legislative assistant would be available to take the meeting and then pass our information along to the legislator.

On Sunday, June 22nd, we arrived in Washington DC and met the other delegates from other TESOL

affiliated organizations or school systems attending the summit. There were at least seventy total educators present, representing many states, U.S. territories, and a few other countries. After introductions, a summary of current legislation affecting ELL's was presented.

On Monday, June 23rd, the day was spent receiving more in-depth presentations on current legislation and other issues/policies affecting English language teaching. The majority of the topics were related to K-12 education, although some adult education issues were also discussed. Presentations included an overview of the newly-formed Office of English Language Acquisition (OLEA) in the Education Department, the experiences and observations of one teacher who has been working within the Department of Education as a Teaching Ambassador Fellow, ways that the civil rights of ELL's may be violated, an explanation of how student visas are processed, ways Common Core may be implemented with ELL's, and an update about some adult education programs being funded by the Department of Education. After lunch, Diane Staehr Fenner discussed techniques for how educators (especially K-12) can advocate for their students at various levels within the educational system. Following that, a grassroots advocacy training exercise was given and we spent the remainder of the afternoon preparing for the visits with the assistants of the congress people.

In preparation for these meetings, we read the responses to the survey e-mailed to WAESOL members. There were many common themes among K-12 educators – lack of professional development, large class sizes, lack of class rooms, lack of personel, and general lack of resources to cope with an increasing number of ELL's. A common theme among higher ed educators was a lack of full-time jobs with benefits that forced teachers to work multiple jobs and question the viability of remaining an English language teacher. There was one major bill (ESEA) addressing the K-12 issues mentioned in the survey, but there was no federal legislation addressing the issues mentioned by higher education teachers. There was a bill (WIOA) that gave funding to adult education programs that prepared ELL's for careers. We decided to ask that our congress people support WIOA and ESEA. Additionally, the current TESOL president, Yilin Sun, became a member of our team. As a former WAESOL president and current Washingtonian, it was only natural that she would join us in attending the meetings with the Washington legislators that we had scheduled.

On Tuesday, June 24th, our team of three was able to meet with the legislative assistants of ten congress people: ID Rep. Simpson, ID Sen. Risch, ID Rep. Labrador, ID Sen. Crapo, WA Rep. Kilmer, WA Rep. Smith, WA Rep. Doc Hastings, WA Rep. McMorris Rodgers, WA Sen. Cantwell, and WA Sen. Murray. In addition, WA Rep. Herrera-Beutler's office contacted us too late to schedule an appointment, but requested an information packet, which was delivered. Sen. Risch, Sen. Crapo, and Rep. Labrador were the only Congressmen the team was able to meet briefly. The message all the legislative aides sent was nearly the same: they



WAESOL Board Members Adam Sweeney & Julie Baumgartner, joined by TESOL President Yilin Sun outside the legislative offices of Rep. Harrara-Butler in Washington D.C.

personally supported ESEA, but the bill wouldn't see the floor this year due to the deeply divided nature of Congress. Most were unfamiliar with WIOA, but agreed that it was a positive bill and was likely to pass.

This event was very successful, and we were able to make and hopefully will be able to keep contact with the legislative aides of these legislators, and we intend to keep them apprised of ESL issues and legislation.

Is It Just a Matter of Words?

Elena Smith, PhD

Instructor/Graduate Student Advisor/Global Learning
Intensive American Language Center
Washington State University|International Programs
Pullman, Washington

Just recently, at TESOL Italy 2013 in Rome, my co-presenter Pamela Duran and I found ourselves in a peculiar situation right in the middle of our presentation on activities for ESL students to master English sentence structures. In the audience of over fifty people, an English professor at one of the universities in Italy, raised his hand and asked, "What exactly do you mean by the Simple Sentence Structure?"

Fortunately, not much can surprise us; being ESL instructors with over twenty five years of teaching experience. Pamela and I quickly explained "our" understanding of the simple sentence as defined in the curriculum at the Intensive American Language Center in Pullman, Washington, where we both work. When we had been preparing our presentation, we had assumed the simple sentence structure definition was pretty much standard and universal. However, the all-time wisdom "never assume" proved to be true again. Our definition did not match what that professor thought it was. In fact, English teachers worldwide systematically, though unintentionally, confuse their students by using different definitions and terms explaining similar topics in English grammar, phonetics, syntax, and morphology.

Not only do English teachers in various countries, but even in the same country or university, often refer to the same language topics using completely different terms. For example, not long ago, I asked my Level 3 (intermediate) students to come up with antonyms to the word *advantage*, but none of them seemed to understand what they were supposed to do. When I wrote *disadvantage* and *obstacle* on the board, one of the students said, "Teacher, do you want us to find *opposites*?" Obviously, I would not have lost some valuable class time if the teacher who had taught this class in Level 2 (high-beginner) and I had been using the same terms. It would not matter whether we used "antonyms" or "opposites" as long as we just used one and the same term.

There are several reasons why English teachers use a wide variety of terms to refer to the same concept. One of them is because they were taught by their teachers who used completely different textbooks and had their own teachers with various educational backgrounds. This is something that we really cannot avoid.

However, there are other, quite shocking reasons as well. For example, some teachers make up terms when they either do not remember the right one or do not know it. Other instructors are such deep diggers into the essence of a grammar problem that they may be dissatisfied with the standard (and seemingly dated) term and create their own, which in their opinion helps explain the function or the concept of a grammar phenomenon. For instance, in one ESL blog, a teacher shared her new creation “Iterative Use” substituting for the “Present Simple.” She assured it was well received by her students at an advanced level of learning English. Finally, some English teachers deliberately refuse to use confusing terms in class and appeal to their students to come up with their own names for the language regularities they try to understand and memorize, such as “Past before Past” for the Past Perfect or a “dictionary verb form” or a “base verb form” for “the infinitive.” This could be an explanation for the fact that I often hear from my students sentences such as “I want go to Seattle.”

Some of these teaching endeavors may facilitate the student learning process, but some may make it much more confusing. What is certain is that we as teachers are dwelling in a terminology jungle. One way out of it is to continue to stick to the old fashioned “standard” terms till they become extinct among the new generation of teachers with new approaches and methodologies they use to tackle the English grammar instruction problems. Or do they? More and more often do I hear at conferences and read on the Internet that grammar instruction is unnecessary. Supporters of this viewpoint claim that all our ESL students need is “exposure,” “being immersed in the language,” “keen attention to grammar forms,” “being corrected as often as possible,” “memorize and store what they noticed,” and “practice.”

Unfortunately, when sharing these ideas, their proponents usually do not explain how this process takes place in the real world, if at all. So I decided to experiment and when I went to China and immersed myself in Mandarin, nothing was happening to my “keen attention to grammar forms,” and no progress was made in my acquisition of this language—simply none. No matter how much I tried to pay attention or memorize words and phrases, I could not put them together to construct a legible sentence. I did the same in Italy trying to “master” my Italian, and then in Argentina, I hoped to pick up some Spanish; the result was the same. None of these foreign languages came to me. I desperately needed help— instruction, explanation, and guided practice—before I could start using a foreign language consciously.

Of course, it could be also my age and younger students have a better grasp of everything. In addition, the theory of multiple intelligences proves we all learn in different ways. However, I am sure a significant number of learners have a very similar brain wiring as I do, so “we” do need instruction, and we need terms, and we prefer them unified and clear, and as standard as possible. In this way, both teachers and students, no matter in which educational setting—at an ESL school or an American university –would “speak the same language” during the intricate process of learning.

Finally, before I finished writing this article, I had a conversation with a colleague who is also a professional editor. Apparently, the terminology jungle has been expanding to punctuation and capitalization. As an example, some businesses require that the “Internet” is always capitalized but others insist on the lower case, and commas that have always separated a prepositional phrase from the subject of a sentence are consistently following a new trend of disappearing. Definitely, the dilemma under discussion is not “just a matter of words.”

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Authentic Assessment for the ESL/EFL Classroom

Aaron David Mermelstein, Assistant Professor, TESOL
School of Education and Applied Languages,
Ming Chuan University, Taiwan

In order to better assist learners to engage in real world problems or situations, several educators and researchers have been advocating the use of authentic assessment for the past few decades (e.g. Darling-Hammond & Snyder, 2000; Hirvela & Pierson, 2000). However, one obstacle to overcome is that many schools are not actually conducive to the authentic learning process. One might argue that the public schools themselves, especially high schools, are actually designed to minimize the amount of authentic learning taking place, since life doesn’t usually take place 50 minutes at a time. Therefore, there is a need to better prepare our learners for a much more real world, with real world tasks, and real world assessments.

What is Authentic Assessment?

Basically, an assessment can be considered authentic if it requires the learners to engage in some sort of real-life problem or task where the end result can have a real world effect and/or when there is someone who has

an investment in what the learners actually learn. Authentic tasks allow learners to use critical thinking to apply what they have learned in school and make connections to the real world. The following are examples of authentic tasks that could be used in various levels of ESL/EFL classrooms:

making bank transactions	measuring objects
self assessment	reading fluently
creating a class/task rubric	creating an advertisement
doing online web searches	utilizing library services
letter/email/resume writing	job interviews
posting online “for sale” ads	oral presentations/power point

What are the Qualities of Authenticity?

According to Martin-Kniep (2000), there are eight distinct attributes that authentic tasks should possess, although not all are required for each task:

- ◆ They should have a real purpose and a real audience. Learners should be solving a real problem for an invested audience beyond the classroom in ways that allow the learners to see the benefits and consequences of their work.
- ◆ There should be an integration of content and skills. Learners should be building on their prior knowledge and applying knowledge and skills from at least two or more related fields.
- ◆ There should be disciplined and/or academic inquiry. Learners should search for a deeper understanding of issues and information using systematic methods incorporating varieties of primary and secondary resources.
- ◆ There should be explicit standards and/or scoring criteria. Using rubrics that distinguish and describe each level of performance can be useful and help guide learners to reach their goals. Teachers can make the learning task more student-centered by allowing the learners participate in identifying performance standards for the grading rubric.
- ◆ There should be extensive communication within the task. Learners should be communicating what they know, what they can do, and how they think through a variety of outlets, including: written, oral, artistic, or through teaching others.
- ◆ The task should involve various levels of thinking incorporating basic through higher level thinking. Requiring a combination of thinking skills and various forms of knowledge creates more authenticity.
- ◆ There should be some sort of reflection connected to the task. Reflection is important to the learners’ growth and can take the form of self- and/or peer-assessment. Feedback from various sources offers better understand and perspectives beyond their own.
- ◆ Tasks should be flexible in content, strategies, products, and time. Learner are unique and tasks should be student-centered to accommodate for their differences (Mermelstein, 2010), and the differences among their products and performances.

How is Authentic Assessment different from and/or Similar to Traditional Assessments?

Here, traditional assessment refers to multiple-choice tests, fill-in-the-blanks, true or false, and matching tests. All of these assessments are commonly used in educational environments throughout the world. Normally, the students choose answers by recalling information, the process of elimination, or simply by guessing. These forms of assessment can be standardized, created by the teacher, or part of a package provided by publishers to go along with their textbooks.

Essentially, the primary goal of both traditional and authentic assessments is to match up with the primary goal of education systems, to develop and create productive citizens for our society. However, a large divergence exists between the two. Perhaps this divergence can best be explained by Mueller (2014). He states that traditional assessment is grounded in the educational philosophy that adopts the following reasoning and practice:

- ◆ To be a productive citizen, an individual must possess a certain body of knowledge and skills.
- ◆ Therefore, schools must teach this knowledge and skills.
- ◆ In order to determine if the school is successful, the school must then test the students to see if they've acquired the knowledge and skills.

In the traditional assessment model, classrooms are curriculum-centered and/or teacher-centered. Generally, the *knowledge* to be learned is determined first, and then becomes the curriculum given to the learners. Subsequently, assessments are administered to determine if acquisition of the curriculum has taken place.

In contrast, Mueller (2014) also explains the reasoning where authentic assessment comes from:

- ◆ To be a productive citizen, an individual must be capable of performing meaningful tasks in the real world.
- ◆ Therefore, schools must help the students become proficient at performing real tasks they'll likely encounter after graduation.
- ◆ In order to determine if the school is successful, the school must ask students to perform meaningful tasks that replicate real world challenges they'll face in the future, in order to see if students are actually capable of doing them.

Therefore, in the authentic assessment model, assessment is what drives the curriculum. Teacher first determine which tasks learners will need to be able to perform and then develop the curriculum around the needs and abilities of the learners, which should also include the acquisition of the essential knowledge and skills necessary to demonstrate mastery. Authentic assessment is, therefore, more complimentary to a student-centered teaching approach.

Why use Authentic Assessment?

This is not really a question towards the abandonment of traditional assessment, which may be necessary in certain situations. Rather, it's intended to elicit reasons for incorporating authentic assessment into the classroom. As teachers, we should not just be content with what learners know, or may not actually know, as demonstrated by a traditional test. We really should know if learners can apply what they know in real situations. For example, knowing math well enough to pass a test may be acceptable, but it doesn't necessarily mean that a student can manage a household budget or a bank account. Being able to pass a multiple choice vocabulary test doesn't mean a student will choose the correct vocabulary usage in a real conversation. In fact, many professions require a demonstration of skills before one can be employed (e.g. doctors, teachers, computer technicians, and electricians). Therefore, authentic assessment can offer a more direct measurement of learners' actual abilities with authentic evidence that acquisition and learning has taken place.

Other key reasons to use authentic assessment is because it's based on constructivist beliefs that we need to construct our own meaning of the world using information that we've been taught, gathered on our own, and also with our own personal experiences. Assessment shouldn't simply ask learners to repeat back what they've been told; it should demonstrate that they've constructed meaning to what they've been taught. It also allows for multiple methods of demonstration, which is essential because we all have different strengths and weaknesses in the way we learn. We also have different preferences for how we might demonstrate our learning. Test taking is a skill that not everyone possesses, but everyone can demonstrate learning in alternative ways.

How Can I Create Authentic Assessments for My Students?

The first step is to identify exactly what you want your students to know or be able to do. These become your standards or goals for your students. Step two would be determining how your students can indicate or demonstrate they've learned these skills or abilities. So, the next step is to create or use authentic tasks that demonstrate whether or not your students have met the standards. To do this, you will need to establish criteria of what a good performance of this task should look like. In order to discriminate among the students across the established criteria, you need to create a grading rubric that designates how well the students actually performed or completed the task. It's important to remember that the rubric needs to be designed with very specific and understandable criteria which should be shared with the students when the task is first assigned. Further, the highest level of your rubric needs to match the standard you've created or what is considered to be the "norm". Of course, some students are exceptional and may achieve at a higher level or go beyond the standard.

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bevin@waesol.org
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Affiliation: [Washington State University](#)

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caroline@waesol.org
Affiliation: [University of Idaho](#)

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martha@waesol.org
Affiliation: [Gonzaga University](#)

Anikke Trier
anikke@waesol.org
Affiliation: [Mukogawa Fort Wright Institute](#)

Adam Sweeney
adam@waesol.org
Affiliation: [Washington State University](#)

**Next Board Meeting—August
16th @ Highline Community
College, 9:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m. in
Building 14, Room 105**

