

# Letter from the President

Greetings,

Working on behalf of English learners around the state is the ideal job. We get to connect cross-culturally on a daily basis and see progress in areas of academics, pragmatics and basic communication. By pushing into the comments of our students, we are able to explore together with people who hold a different lens on life. It is an enriching experience to see beyond my white American-born perspective.

Now with online teaching, it can be challenging. Programs are shifting and we face multiple new areas of need in classrooms and policies. We find ourselves teaching online currently, often for the first time. Advocating and working proactively is not easy, and it involves our hearts and our time.

How do we grow resiliency in this time of great angst and change? For me the answer has multiple options.

*Gathering with like-minded professionals:* I see conferences as a tool for growth in stamina and hope and innovation. We have to be inventive to do this at this time. Meeting virtually is not the same, but it offers connection. WAESOL has offered some online resources and we plan to offer more for this reason. I believe connection is key. Hearing others' ideas and insights allows us to envision how to apply those thoughts into our teaching and/or conversations. It encourages us to persevere. It helps me to persevere.

*Reading what others have written:* Chatting with a colleague over a zoom connection about a research article is a step that can have significant impact over our lens on teaching. Just bring the cup of your choice to your laptop and zoom with someone. The act of discussion often is the genesis of hope and creativity.

What we do each day matters to the lives of students. Having the right pedagogical stance is not enough. We have to have space in our hearts for the care and diligence necessary to move forward. It can be especially challenging currently when our hearts are filled with personal concerns and personal changes. I encourage all of us to be *proactive about resiliency*. It can be as simple as asking a colleague to connect with you. We are so good about caring for the whole student. My hope for each of us is to take intentional steps to care for ourselves. Attend a conference or read a book with a colleague. Meet to discuss over a virtual platform. Sometimes a conversation is all it takes. Listen to a webinar. WAESOL is hosting several currently that are free. Hearing the passion and excitement of another professional can be so invigorating.

Let me know how it goes. I will be at the 2020 WAESOL conference in October. It will be either in person at Renton Technical College, virtual, or a hybrid. In any case, look me up and we can practice together.

Warmly,

**Martha Savage, Ph.D.**

2020 WAESOL President



**Martha Savage**  
*is an Associate Professor in the MA/ TESOL program at Gonzaga University. She has been on the Board since 2014 and was active in the Spokane Regional ESL conference committee before that.*

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