

# CATESOL NEWSLETTER

SERVING TEACHERS OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE



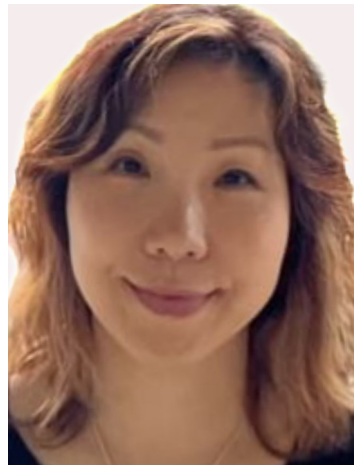
## *Letter from the CATESOL President*

Dear CATESOL family,

It is my honor to start serving CATESOL as your president. Last year has been about learning the ins and outs of CATESOL, and I would like to thank Anthony and the CATESOL Leadership team for the guidance to make this transition smooth. And please join me in welcoming our new board members and leadership team for 2023- 2024.

As many of you experienced, the CATESOL 2023 State Conference, *Breaking New Ground* at the College of Alameda, was a true testament to what CATESOL is: a community of professionals and educators serving to bring diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility to the students and communities we serve. After the conference, I am more inspired than ever to carry our mission and legacy by the enthusiasm and commitment of our Conference Committee members, volunteers, presenters, and conference attendees. We could not have done it without all of you.

I am excited to share that CATESOL now offers a low flat annual membership rate, which makes becoming a CATESOL member accessible and equitable. We are working closely with the CATESOL Education Foundation to cover the membership fee for those who need financial support to become CATESOL members. We will be working on implementing new member orientations, professional development (Cont.)



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certificates, and outreach processes to recruit new members.

My CATESOL journey started as an online MA TESOL student in 2012. One of my assignments was to attend a conference related to the TESOL field. My research started then, and I found CATESOL. It was a guiding light for me as I started my teaching profession in adult education. It has fueled me to move forward, following the footsteps of visionary mentors, selfless leaders, and collaborative colleagues.

Many opportunities are coming to get involved in CATESOL in the New Year. CATESOL appreciates your continued support and dedication.

As we reflect on 2023 and greet 2024 with gratitude and hope, I wish you fantastic holidays and a happy New Year!

Sincerely,  
Song Hong  
CATESOL President 2023-2025

Kara Mac Donald

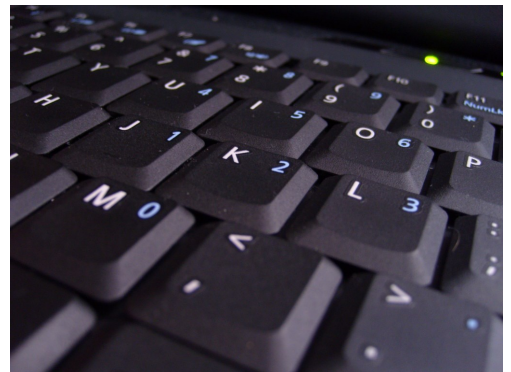
### *Words from the Editor*

The issue is opened by our incoming president, Song Hong. This issue then highlights the successes of the 2023 CATESOL Conference, Breaking New Ground, with a new model for hosting annual conferences at academic institutions, rather than hotel/conference venues, in northern and southern California, alternating as the association has done in the past. The issue shares 4 articles that share presentations from CATESOL23. The editors are opening a call for submissions on CATESOL23 presentations for the CATESOL Newsletter for Issues 57-1 (March 2024), Issue 57-2 (June 2024) and 57-3 (September 2024). You did the work, turn your presentation into a publication to share with CATESOL members. The remainder of articles in this issue is amazing. You, members, have engaged with the publication as a forum of communication over the past years, growing its contributions and relevance to membership. For example, the Refugee Concerns Interest Group (RC-IG) has three articles in this issue due to their networking at the conference, and they prompted the coordination for the CATESOL23 Focus Feature regarding the Paper Airplanes plenary sessions.

The RC-IG leadership shared with the newsletter editor team: "We have gone from no representation in the newsletter to three articles this issue?!" Newsletter Editor Team: "Yes. The work of IGs is not linear nor regular across a time line." **The CATESOL Newsletter is here to support and share the work of all CATESOL members. Reach out when it makes sense to you. [newsletter@catesol.org](mailto:newsletter@catesol.org)**

**The CATESOL NEWSLETTER** accepts member and non-member submissions on topics related to ELT and related issues. The newsletter is published quarterly. There is no submissions deadline. Submissions are accepted on a rolling basis. Submissions received by the 30th of the month prior to a publication month (March, June, September & December) will be included in the coming issue.

**Have an idea, email [newsletter@catesol.org](mailto:newsletter@catesol.org)**



# CATESOL23 Conference Feature Article – Looking

Conference Co-Chairs- Talley Caruso & Dr. Sedique Popal

In late October, we were blessed with 3 days of gorgeous weather at College of Alameda. Over 600 educators attended 150 sessions, fueling up with unlimited coffee and tea, and feasting on tacos, poke, falafel, and sliders. Exhibitors came from both near and far to share the latest technology, tools, and resources to use both in and outside the classroom.

Rooms were abuzz with the energy new and returning CATESOL members brought as we navigated the hallways, sharing the insights gleaned from one session to the next with each other.

- We learned about AI and technology, neuromyths, and *Leading from Where We Stand*.
- We discussed pedagogical approaches, pronunciation, and *Oral History* as a tool for empowerment.
- We engaged in *Breaking Down Barriers* through understanding how the language we use and the language we teach support the fight for justice, empathy, and accountability in our communities.

Let's keep the momentum going!

"So what should we do next?" you might ask.

- Go to [catesol.org](https://catesol.org) and sign up to attend an online or in-person event that sparks joy.
- Attend Song's *New Member Orientation* meeting to learn about ways to get involved.
- If you took photos during the CATESOL23, you can share them here: [bit.ly/catesol23photodrop](https://bit.ly/catesol23photodrop). We'll be reviewing them in December and will post a selection of them in the new year. Follow CATESOL on social media for the latest updates!

Before signing off for the year, we would like to thank the conference committee, all the volunteers, the invited speakers, the exhibitors and sponsors, our suppliers, and all the members of CATESOL that make this such a vibrant community. We appreciate your support and flexibility in this year of "Breaking New Ground" at CATESOL. Thank you to all who provided their feedback through the conference evaluation form. Your responses will help us make the CATESOL24 State Conference even better than this year. ✨ ✨ ✨



(Cont.)

# CATESOL23 Conference Focus Feature I – Corsages for Past CATESOL Leaders

Marsha Chan

Since its establishment in 1969, the CATESOL\* has been a leader in advancing the quality of English language teaching and learning through professional development, research, standards, and advocacy. It has become a productive and vibrant organization because of passionate, dedicated, and hard-working teachers. While CATESOL has built a sturdy foundation and enjoys an excellent reputation among TESOL affiliates—given the theme of the 2023 State Conference, *Breaking New Ground*—the conference committee created a new tradition of publicly recognizing and honoring former presidents and others who have provided sustained service to the organization. Past leaders who have worked energetically to develop, nurture, and grow our organization include Past Presidents and those chosen by the Board to receive the Sadae Iwataki Award.

All Past Presidents and Sadae Iwataki Award recipients were invited to attend this year's conference at the special conference committee member rate. Several notable means of honoring those who attended were as follows:

- All Past Leaders were pinned with a corsage, which they wore during the several days of the conference.
- A group photo of all Past Leaders in attendance was taken on Saturday.
- Past Presidents and Sadae Iwataki Award recipients were presented for recognition to the audience at the Sunday plenary with TESOL President-elect Debra Suarez.

Honored at CATESOL23 "Breaking New Ground" with a new tradition: CATESOL Past Presidents and Sadae Iwataki Outstanding Service Award recipients are pinned!

Past Presidents wear white carnations and S.I. Award winners wear fuchsia carnations. Several wore two carnations due to their service to CATESOL in both roles.



*Front row:* Susan Gaer, Ellen Lange, Lydia Stack, Karen Dennis, (attending but not pictured: Danielle Pelletier)

*Back row:* Donna M. Brinton, Sidney Rice, Marsha Chan, K Lynn Savage, Jeffrey Mattison, Gretchen Bitterlin (attending but not pictured: Margi Wald).

(Cont.)



The President is the chief executive who supervises and controls the affairs of the organization and the activities of the board members.

The Sadae Iwataki Award represents the highest honor of the CATESOL association. This award, initially established in 1987, was named in 1991 in honor of Sadae Iwataki, who worked tirelessly for excellence in education for English language learners and promoted a high-quality professional environment for their teachers. The recipient of this award is carefully selected at the discretion of the CATESOL board of directors and is usually announced by the CATESOL President at the annual state CATESOL conference.

Presidents and Sadae Iwataki Award recipients receive lifetime membership in CATESOL.

[#catesol23](#)

## Past CATESOL Presidents

2019-2021 Susan Gaer	1993-1994 Natalie Kuhlman
2017-2019 Danielle Pelletier	1992-1993 Katheryn Garlow
2016-2017 Karen Russikoff	1991-1992 K. Lynn Savage
2015-2016 Sydney Rice	1990-1991 Steve Sloan
2014-2015 Kimberley Briesch Sumner	1989-1990 Sharon Seymour
2013-2014 Ellen Lange	1988-1989 Beverley McChesney
2012-2013 Nina Ito	1987-1988 Alice A. Addison
2011-2012 Margaret Teske	1986-1987 Rita Wong
2010-2011 Lynne Diaz-Rico	1985-1986 June McKay
2009-2010 Belinda Braunstein	1984-1985 Steve Ross
2008-2009 Kathleen Flynn	1983-1984 Lydia Stack
2007-2008 Dan Fichtner	1982-1983 Tippy Schwabe
2006-2007 Karen Cadiero-Kaplan	1981-1982 Sadae Iwataki
2005-2006 Karen Dennis	1980-1981 Cliff Rodrigues
2004-2005 Julia Jolly	1979-1980 Penny Larson
2003-2004 Lynne Nicodemus	1978-1979 Kent Sutherland
2002-2003 Lia Kamhi-Stein	1977-1978 Don Mills
2001-2002 Chan Bostwick	1976-1977 Betty Poggi
2000-2001 Linda Sasser	1975-1976 Anne Terrell
1999-2000 Carol Bander	1974-1975 Perry Akins
1998-1999 Sara Fields	1973-1974 Adele Martinez
1997-1998 Gari Browning	1972-1973 Aaron Berman
1996-1997 Kara Rosenberg	1971-1972 Serafina Anfuso (Krear)
1995-1996 Gretchen Bitterlin	1970-1971 Robert B. Kaplan
1994-1995 Dorothy Messerschmitt	1969-1970 Gloria Jameson

(Cont.)

## Past Sadae Iwataki Award Winners

2022 Marsha J. Chan	2004 Linda Sasser
2019 Jeffrey Mattison	2003 Robby Ching and Donna Brinton
2018 Nina Ito	2002 Kara Rosenberg
2017 Sandy Silverstein	2001 Gretchen Bitterlin
2016 John Liang	2000 Ann Creighton
2015 Judith O'Loughlin	1999 Natalie Kuhlman
2014 Monica Snow	1998 Steve Ross and Terri Ross
2013 Dan Fichtner	1997 Lynn Savage
2012 Mark Roberge and Margi Wald	1996 Katheryn Garlow
2011 Don Sillings	1995 Steve Sloan
2010 Mark Lieu	1994 Sharon Seymour
2009 Karen Dennis	1993 Alice Addison
2008 Margaret Teske	1992 June McKay
2007 Sara Fields and Lynne Nicodemus	1991 Denise Murray
2006 Carol Bander and Susan Gaer	1990 Lydia Stack
2005 Chris Bunn	1987 Sadae Iwataki and Penny Larson

## *Call for Submission: Past Presidents' Insight for Future Leaders*

Being part of an organization often places us as part of a community, and sometime we find a family. Being and feeling part of a community is beneficial on many levels, but looking back to those that led the organization and community to where it is today is beneficial for veteran and novice members.

This four-part series in the 2024 issues (i.e., 57-1, 57-2, 57-3, 57-4) will offer input from past CATESOL presidents on how current member can and/or should step up.

Rita Wong

## In Memoriam: Sandra Lee McKay



**Sandra Lee McKay**

February 9, 1945 – September 11, 2023

As with many of us, some of our collegial acquaintances have evolved over the years to become life-long friendships. In my case, I met Sandy almost 40 years ago when she was a professor in the English Department at San Francisco State University, and I was an assistant director of the American Language Institute on the same campus. Although our offices were close to each other, the seeds of our friendship were sown when we were invited to be academic specialists by the U.S. Department of State. We shared two assignments: three intensive weeks each in Hungary and later, in Morocco, during which we were inextricably engaged for nearly 10 hours a day. In retrospect, I don't think I have spent this much time with many other people in my life.

In all of the time I knew Sandy, I was continually awed by her energy. She was always on the move: swimming, running, hiking, traveling, teaching, giving speeches, or writing. She wrote articles for professional journals and edited the TESOL Quarterly for five years. She wrote books for an international audience of teachers, researchers, and students. These were a few of her publications:

*At the Door: Selected Literature for ESL Students*

*Writing for a Specific Purpose*

*International English in its Sociolinguistic Contexts*

*Sociolinguistics and Language Education*

*Teaching English as an International Language: Rethinking Goals and Approaches*

The latter won the Ben Warren International Book Award.

(Cont.)

While juggling all of these efforts, she was also a spouse (her husband Gerald McKay predeceased her while scuba diving in Bali), a mother of two sons Jerry McKay and Michael McKay, and more recently a mother-in-law to Ana McKay and a grandmother to Maya McKay.

As for me, Sandy was always a good friend, from those early days in our career, up through our respective retirements. I guess I should not have been surprised that even in retirement, Sandy continued to apply her energy to serving on the board of Puente San Mateo County, an organization advocating for equitable access to education, health, and economic security.

Sadly, her life was cut short when she was taken ill and passed away on a trip to Croatia in September of this year. In remembrance, we recognize the rich legacy she has left to our field of teaching English as an international language. She will be sorely missed by those who have been touched by her: her family, friends, colleagues, students, all.

**In her honor and memory, donations can be made to:**

**Puente de la Costa Sur: [mypuente.org](http://mypuente.org)**

<https://www.catesoleducationfoundation.org/donate>

or any of the institutions where she taught.

Rita Wong

San Mateo, California

December 2023



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**PUENTE**



# CATESOL23 Conference Presentation I-Four Engaging Activities to Help Build Community in a Post-Pandemic Class-<sup>9</sup>

Michael Akard, Sara Shore-Berger, Gilda Ehktiar and Kate Hey

As a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic and the shift to remote learning through Zoom and online instruction, many returning students seem inattentive and disengaged in face-to-face and hybrid classes. This, along with the social anxiety that many may feel after becoming accustomed to online learning, can lead to classroom challenges. At our community college, Modesto Junior College (MJC), although we have shifted to a mostly hybrid and online model of course offerings, we have felt the effects of low retention and student engagement post-pandemic.

Research suggests that students are more engaged in school and more likely to succeed if they feel a strong sense of belonging (Murphy et al, 2020). To help students feel connected, we need to create a classroom community in whichever course modality they take, where students feel empowered to share experiences and common goals, trust one another, and feel understood by others. Our students need a safe space where they are willing to interact with one another while engaging in creative assignments and learning English.

In this article, we will share community-building activities that four MJC instructors have utilized in their new post-pandemic hybrid courses.

## Using Themes and Study Groups to Build Vocabulary

Michael Akard

This vocabulary-building activity is very flexible. It can be used with a small group of four or five words, or with a larger word bank. It can be done in a single day as a small group class project, or over a longer period of time. The vocabulary items can be chosen entirely by the instructor, or individual students can be allowed (i.e. required) to select one or more words. The “theme,” or reading passage, can be as short as a paragraph, or as long as several pages.

The activity is based on the principles that vocabulary is the single most important element in language development, that there is no single best way to teach or learn vocabulary, that lexical items must be taught and learned with intentionality, and that for building language, extensive reading should be combined with vocabulary exercises. (For specific studies and research I recommend Keith Folse’s *Vocabulary Myths: Applying Second Language Research to Classroom Teaching*. Michigan, 2004).

To apply these principles, I use a document called a “vocabulary log.” I create the log on a single page, on which I insert a table with five columns. These columns are labeled respectively as New Word, Meaning, Form, Sentence Where Found, and New Sentence. In the first column, I list a group of ten new words students are to learn (it’s alright if some students already know some of the words). I always choose most or all of the words. For in-person classes, I also model pronunciation of these words, with the class repeating after me.

New Word	Word Form	Meaning/Definition	Sentence Where You Found It	Your Own Sentence
1. synthetic				
2. worn-out				
3. perfectly				
4. tried on				

Figure 1. Sample vocabulary log with four new words

## Weekly Check-Ins to Promote Sharing and Community in the Classroom

Sara Shore-Berger

Although this activity can be used in various classroom modalities, I have incorporated this low-stakes online activity into my hybrid class (asynchronous online and face to face) courses that meet once a week to promote community building and encouragement in the class. In this activity, I use the Canvas discussion as a 'check-in' to pose various weekly questions to students. Because this is a low-stakes activity, I do not check spelling or grammar, I keep the point value low, there is no minimum word required, and the content is typically about students' personal lives rather than course content. Students seem to write more freely, and although they are not required to respond to each other, I encourage them to do so. To keep interest each week, the questions change - sometimes the focus is more 'serious', such as 'How is your week?' 'What is something that has been challenging for this week?' 'Is there anything that you want to share that was difficult with you this week?' and other times, the focus is fun and lighthearted - 'What is your favorite restaurant in town?' 'What is your favorite thing to do to relax?' 'Where would you go if you could travel anywhere?'

However, as this particular class is a listening/speaking class in which students present in front of their peers, sometimes our weekly check in question is related to the following week's presentation. Here is an example of the weekly directions, with the specific question for the week:

### Directions:

Our class meets **in-person** only once a week, and the rest of the class is online. I want us all to feel connected in and out of the classroom, so let's do a weekly check-in (*a check-in is when you contact someone to see how that person is doing*) to share with each other.

- You are not required to respond to other classmates, but you can! It's a great way to get to know your classmates. I might also share something that I learn in our in-person class.
- Sometimes I might also post, but I will always respond to you when I grade in a separate comment.

### Week 11 Check-In Questions

*Next week, you are going to present in front of the class! How are you feeling about that and about your semester? We're in Week 11 and things are getting busy!*

Having done this activity with multiple sections during a semester, I have been pleasantly surprised to find that students readily respond and share about their lives, but also that several respond to other classmates even though they are not required to do so. Many students (especially females) are ready to give words of encouragement to others. It is heartening to see that as their instructor, and I know that if I were a student, I would appreciate these words as well! At times, I respond to the discussion board as well, and I have also received encouraging words from my students!

(Cont.)

As a classroom extension activity, I sometimes show the previous week's discussion board on the overhead during our face-to-face class and choose a few students' posts to highlight. I did this recently before an in-class presentation; the previous week's question asked how students were preparing and how they felt about this presentation. As I read a few discussion posts to the class where students shared that they were feeling nervous, I pointed out that almost everyone feels nervous and that it was normal! We all laughed, and I could feel the room relax. That is the goal of this activity - to show students that are in this journey together and here to support each other.

## **Tell Me About Your Country: Engaging ESL Students through Google Slides Presentations** by Gilda Ekhtiar

In my ESL classroom, I have successfully implemented an activity called "Tell Me About Your Country," which can be adapted to "Tell Me About Your City" if many students are from the same country. This activity is designed to enhance students' engagement and speaking skills through the use of Google Slides, making it versatile and suitable for various proficiency levels.

Before diving into the speaking presentations, I lay the foundation by teaching a lesson on "How to Greet Visitors to Your Country." We explore diverse places to visit worldwide, exploring the vocabulary associated with travel, cultural exchange, traditional foods, and greeting customs. This lesson also incorporates the learning of participial adjectives as a grammar point.

To reinforce their understanding, students participate in two preparatory activities. First, they play bingo with the newly acquired vocabulary, and second, they pair up to compose sentences using the words. These exercises set the stage for their Google Slides presentations.

When introducing the presentation guidelines, I instruct students to use Google Slides to present their chosen country or city. Their slides should include pictures, artifacts, and be used as a natural speaking aid, discouraging reliance on notes. I provide a comprehensive list of slide content ideas, such as country or city name, location on a map, seasonal weather, notable places and monuments, traditional foods, souvenirs, traditional holidays, and customs.

Additionally, I give students a list of vocabulary and grammar points to incorporate into their presentations. To facilitate the technical aspect, I offer written instructions on creating Google Slides and share a video tutorial link for additional guidance.



Image 1. Sample Student Google Slides

Following the presentations, students bring in a sample of their traditional food and copies of the recipe, fostering a sense of community. This food-sharing activity encourages students to talk about their countries and facilitates recipe exchanges and cultural learning.

In summary, using Google Slides in ESL classrooms offers several advantages, including content reinforcement, increased engagement, enjoyable picture-finding and slide creation, and the opportunity for students to confidently introduce their city or country to their peers, eliminating nervousness associated with public speaking.

Lastly, I encourage educators to adapt and customize this Google Slides presentation for their specific audience and classroom needs. Adding a personal touch enhances engagement and effectiveness. Best of luck in implementing this interactive and enriching activity!

## Developing Descriptive Writing by Creating Stories

Kate Hey

This last activity can be used in a writing class and can help students develop their descriptive language skills while engaging everyone in class. I teach a low intermediate reading/composition class where students learn to write a paragraph and then progress to writing an essay by the end of the course. At this level, I often notice that students' paragraphs tend to be underdeveloped with low word count due to lack of descriptive language.

Before introducing this activity, I cover the basics of descriptive language such as the importance of details, adjectives, adverbs, and senses. I also do a short activity, where I give students a sentence, for example: *He has things in his backpack*, and I ask them to make it more descriptive by applying what they have just learned. A sample of a student's response could be: *An ELIC 20 student whose name is Jose is carrying two books and a pencil in his small black leather backpack.*

To start the activity, I play sounds for students from a YouTube video titled "Storytelling through Sound Effects." There are other videos with great sounds, but what I like about this particular one is the fact that it only has audio and no visuals. It is important to me to have only audio as I want the students to be able to focus on the sounds and use them to create images in their mind rather than having the images from the video do it for them.

After listening to the sounds, students are encouraged to work in groups and list the sounds they heard. I then list the sounds on the whiteboard and we listen to the sounds again and put the sounds in the order they occurred in the audio. Depending on the students' language level, I sometimes go over the meaning of the new words like *thunder, engine, windshield wipers*, etc.

And, here is where the fun begins. The students are asked to work in groups and create a story based on the sounds they heard using descriptive language skills. I encourage the students to talk in groups and plan out their story before they start writing. This eliminates stories that begin with sentences like this one: *She left the house and got in a car.* It is important to address a group that might start a story this way and encourage using the descriptive language by asking questions such as: Who is 'she'? Why did she leave the house? What car did she get into and why? When was this? Yesterday? A hundred years ago? Where did this happen? Big or small town? These types of questions usually prompt students to think and use details that help to make their stories interesting, fun, and most of all descriptive.

I usually have students write their stories on big sticky notes and hang them on the walls in the classroom. Students are then encouraged to walk around and read each group's story. To practice their descriptive language skills further, students fill out a form that asks them to find and list adjectives, adverbs, senses, and certain details about the story (Who? Where? When? Why?). Here is an (Cont.)

*“And, here is where the fun begins.  
The students are asked to work in groups  
and create a story based on the sounds  
they heard using descriptive language skills.”*

example of a story created by students based on the sounds from the YouTube video:

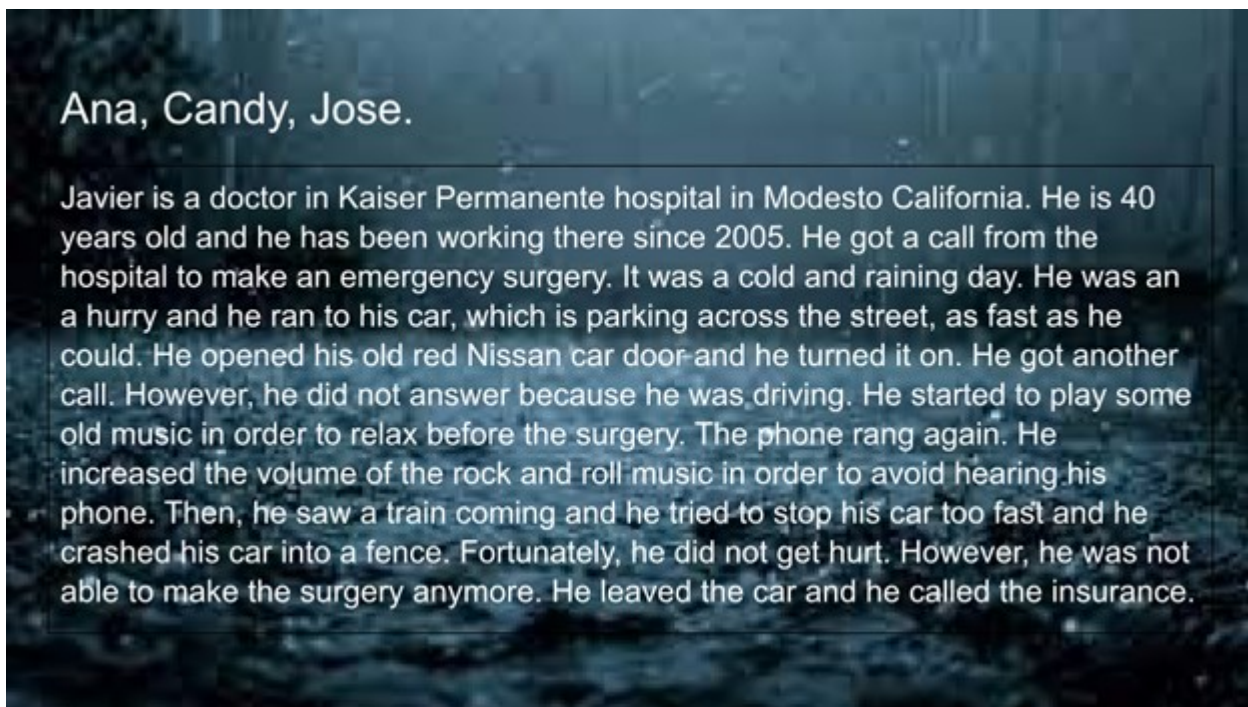


Image 2. Example of Student Writing

I have used this activity in synchronous and asynchronous writing courses. In a class where students do not meet face-to-face, I utilize Google Slides and have students share their stories there.

The four activities described above give students an opportunity to collaborate with classmates which, in result, helps to create a community in the classroom. With collaboration and engagement, students are more likely to persist and succeed in our courses.

**References:**

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Murphy, M. C., Gopalan, M., Carter, E. R., Emerson, K. T., Bottoms, B. L., & Walton, G. M. (2020). *A customized belonging intervention improves retention of socially disadvantaged students at a broad-access university*. *Science Advances*, 6(29), eaba4677.

# CATESOL 23 Focus Feature – A Message from Paper Airplanes

Ibrahim Alaboud, Executive Director, Paper Airplanes



Paper Airplanes is dedicated to using the power of the internet to extend accessible, quality education to those affected by conflict. While the organization began as a response to the Syrian diaspora, we are committed to empowering vulnerable communities across the globe in their pursuit of learning and growth. In particular, Paper Airplanes is founded on a commitment to English language education. English is the most common language in the world and opens doors to education, employment, and higher earning potential. We strive to equip our students with the English and professional skillsets they need to abound in their passions.

Owing to our remote format, Paper Airplanes occupies a unique space at the interface of technology and English education. This model of operations, coupled with our target audience of individuals in conflict zones, presents unique challenges. For example, we must account for technical difficulties that may disturb lessons. Additionally, we anticipate – and welcome – cultural differences between our tutors and students, but navigating these often sensitive differences through the online format is challenging. At the deepest level, it can be emotionally challenging to witness the hardships that our students face while feeling powerless to help them: the computer screen a painful reminder of the distance that separates us. While we are still learning how to adapt to these challenges, we provide robust training for all incoming tutors and commit to a growth mindset in our work, ensuring we do our best with the resources we have. Thanks to the shared passion that radiates throughout our staff and volunteers, we have been fortunate to serve over 3,000 students since our inception in 2014.

The importance of our volunteers in generating this impact cannot be overstated. Thanks to their compassion, empathy, and patience, our volunteers manage to traverse language and cultural differences to forge meaningful relationships with their students. The trust that underlies these bonds creates a healthy environment for learning; students eventually confide in their tutors and share their aspirations, which tutors gear them to achieve. In addition to the students' language gains, tutors grow immensely through this process as they step into the world of a new culture, language, and perspective: all encased within the stories their students share. As a tutor myself, I often find myself learning more from my students than what I can impart to them. This, to me, is the beauty of Paper Airplanes: continuous, mutual growth.



It has truly been an honor to use the platform that CATESOL has afforded us to share our work. We are especially appreciative of those who worked tirelessly to actualize the CATESOL conference and were so generous to extend an invitation to Paper Airplanes. CATESOL's commitment to amplifying diverse voices within English education speaks to the organization's pivotal leadership and passion within the field. We look forward to continue nourishing this collaboration and learning from the brilliant minds at CATESOL. And, we would be honored for CATESOL members to join us in

empowering conflict-affected individuals, if our cause speaks to you!

(Cont.)

## Focus Feature – Paper Airplanes (Cont.)

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Finally, this write-up would be incomplete without a word from our students and tutors. Seeing them grow, build confidence, and transform their dreams into reality is the fuel that sustains our drive. We hope you share our enthusiasm.

Click [HERE](#) to hear from Paper Airplanes Students and Tutors.

Check out the following links to learn more about Paper Airplanes and to join them in their mission to empower conflicted-affected individuals:

- Read more about the author of this article and Executive Director of Paper Airplanes, [Ibrahim Alaboud](#)
- Learn more about Paper Airplane's [English Program](#) and the [Women in Tech Program](#)
- Support Paper Airplanes! [Donate](#) or [Volunteer](#) with Paper Airplanes.
- Watch or rewatch the [CATESOL23 Featured Session: Paper Airplanes: Advancing English & Tech Education for Conflict-Affected Communities](#). Passcode: P#oMTr4t

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# *CATESOL23 Conference Poster Session Write Up –* 16 **Spanish in Spain: Linguistics, Education, and Interculturality**

Noemí Castelo Veiga with Ondine Gage

**Abstract.** Spain has experienced many immigrant, refugee, and asylum seeking populations, which has prioritized research in language teaching. This paper provides a systematic qualitative review of the literature on the teaching and learning of Spanish as a target language for emergent bilinguals and international students in Spain. Analyzing the literature published between 2019-2023 in 34 scientific journals, including qualitative, quantitative, mixed methods, revisions, and proposals, the author's main findings indicate four key topics: Teacher training, goals, didactic resources, and methodology.

**Keywords:** Spanish language; Language teaching; Learning process; Foreign student; Spain.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Migration is a structural phenomenon, not a cyclical one. More than three percent of the world's population lives in a country other than its country of origin, with Spain being the second largest recipient of immigrants in absolute terms among the countries of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the leading recipient country of non-EU migratory flows in Europe (Regí and García, 2022). According to data from the Spanish National Statistics Institute (INE, 2023b), the foreign population has grown exponentially over the last twenty years in this territory, from 1,737,972 people in 2002 to 5,402,702 people in 2021. This is certainly a welcome reality in itself, but very complex in terms of its management – even more so considering the existence not only of Spanish-speaking immigrants, but also of foreigners who lack any cultural or linguistic ties to their new country. For the latter, the lack of knowledge of the language becomes an added obstacle of special importance, especially in the labor and school environments because they face difficulties of participating in the labor market, low participation of these families in school related activities and lower academic performance on the part of their children (Abad, 2022; Escarbajal et al., 2019; Quintas-Quintas et al., 2022). Thus, in the climate refugee societies of the 21st century, characterized by the multicultural nature of their members, guaranteeing language learning to the entire population is a priority matter if they wish to advance from mere reception to societal integration. Specifically, the teaching and learning of Spanish as a second or foreign language has become a major theme in the inclusion agenda in Spain.

Taking into account all these issues, this research is carried out with the twofold objective of:

1. Identifying training and pedagogical needs in the teaching and learning of Spanish as a second or foreign language.
2. Making known useful didactic resources and innovative proposals for learners and teachers of Spanish.

## **METHODOLOGY**

In order to try to respond to the above objectives, a systematic review of a qualitative nature on the teaching and learning of Spanish as a target language in immigrant, refugee, asylum and international student populations in Spain during the years 2019-2023 is carried out. Specifically, the procedure followed can be summarized in the following five steps (Egido, 2020):

1. **Sample to be reviewed.** Papers published in scientific journals that report quantitative, (Cont.)



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qualitative, mixed, review and proposal studies on the teaching and learning of Spanish as a target language in Spain.

2. **Identification of the papers.** The review was carried out using the Web of Science (WoS) database.
3. **Search strategy.** The general search terms applied were “Spanish”, “Second language”, “Foreign language”, “Teaching”, “Foreigners”, “Immigrants” and “Spain.” These terms were combined using the Boolean operators “AND” and “OR.”
4. **Selection criteria.** The inclusion criteria for the selection of the publications under review were as follows:
  - Type of publication: Articles.
  - Language: Spanish.
  - Publication date: 2019-2023.
  - Availability: Open access.
  - Research areas: Education and linguistics.

In relation to the exclusion criteria, those studies that did not meet the previous inclusion criteria were eliminated from the sample, resulting in an initial sample of 207 scientific articles. Subsequently, a second review was carried out, eliminating research that did not adequately report on the sample studied and papers that were carried out in a context other than Spanish. The final sample consisted of a total of 34 articles.

5. **Data analysis process.** The content of the 34 articles was recorded on the basis of an inductive process of analysis, organizing the information according to eight criteria: Title, Year, Journal, Author and affiliation, Subject of the article, Methodology, Main findings and Belonging to a research project.

## RESULTS

From the inductive analysis it found 19 journals that have published on this topic (see Table 1), most of them belonging to the field of linguistics.

**Table 1**  
*Journals with publications on this topic.*

Journals	Publications
Revista Signos. Estudios de Lingüística	1 article
Onomázein. Revista de Lingüística, Filología y Traducción	1 article
Didáctica. Lengua y Literatura	3 articles
Sintagma. Revista de Lingüística	1 article
Círculo de Lingüística Aplicada a la Comunicación	3 articles
Foro de Profesores de E/LE	5 articles

(Cont.)

Revista de Lingüística y Lenguas Aplicadas	1 article
Revista Tradumàtica. Traducció i Tecnologies de la Informació i la Comunicació	1 article
Verba. Anuario Galego de Filoloxía	1 article
Edmetic. Revista de Educación Mediática y TIC	3 articles
Porta Linguarum. Revista Interuniversitaria de Didáctica de las Lenguas Extranjeras	3 articles
Lenguaje y Textos	1 article
Magis. Revista Internacional de Investigación en Educación	1 article
Tejuelo. Didáctica de la Lengua y la Literatura. Educación	2 articles
Moenia. Revista lucense de lingüística & literatura	1 article
ELUA. Estudios de Lingüística	2 articles
Estudios Filológicos	1 article
Innoeduca. International Journal of Technology and Educational Innovation	1 article
Lengua y Migración	2 articles

*Note. Own elaboration*

In relation to the geographical context, a greater interest in this subject is observed in Madrid, Catalonia and Andalusia. This fact is easily explained, since these are territories with great multicultural richness, heading the first, second and fourth place of the Spanish autonomous communities with the largest foreign population, respectively (INE, 2023a). Some research was also reported in Aragon, Valencian Community, Castile and Leon, Autonomous Community of Navarre and Balearic Islands, in addition to other works that are not framed in any context.

In terms of methodology, there was a preference for quantitative studies (ten) and proposals (nine), but qualitative, mixed and review studies were also found (five of each). Likewise, only 12 of the 34 articles analyzed are associated with regional and national research projects, three of them being part of the same project.

Considering its content, four main thematic lines include:

1. **Teacher training.** This section includes those papers that study the training, beliefs and attitudes of Spanish teachers. Specifically, a total of three articles have been identified. The first of these focuses on the actual ability of future teachers to teach Spanish to non-native students, while the other two analyze the beliefs and attitudes of teachers about the academic language and the variables of Spanish.
2. **Goals.** This section groups together all the research that deals with different aspects that should be considered in the teaching and learning of Spanish as a second or foreign language. It is composed of a total of five articles that analyze the influence of emotional intelligence and working memory in the written expression of Spanish as a foreign language; the transfers that

(Cont.)

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occur in situations of second language acquisition in the narrative, discursive and pragmatic planes of language; the language gap from digital competence and autonomous learning; the language brokering carried out by immigrant children who linguistically and culturally mediate in Spanish for the members of their linguistic community; and the lexical availability of foreign women students of Spanish.

3. **Didactic resources.** This section gathers those studies that focus on didactic materials that facilitate the teaching and learning of Spanish as a second or foreign language: Grammar checkers (CorrectMe) for learning writing, pastimes in general and cryptograms in particular for learning lexical-semantic competence, augmented reality stories for improving motivation and language learning, digital stories as tools for developing narrative competence in international students, metadiscursive markers and their relation to formative and summative assessment, and figures and taxonomies for decomposing and intra- and interculturally comparing emblems or autonomous gestures (nonverbal communication: Kinesics). There are also works that examine evaluation instruments, pedagogical and technical contents of web pages, Spanish manuals (linguistic varieties, social class and methodological strategies), and paper and digital dictionaries of the Spanish language. This is the most numerous section, as it is made up of a total of 15 articles.
4. **Methodology.** This section is composed of 11 articles that report on innovative methodologies and good practices to improve the teaching and learning experience of Spanish as a second or foreign language. Among them are didactic sequences of classroom activities for the development of reading comprehension and lexical comprehension based on the Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) model; for the development of intercultural mediation skills; for the teaching of conceptual metaphor and the treatment of metaphorical language; for vocabulary learning following the IBI (input-based-incremental) method and gamification or Game-Based Learning methodology; and applying Genius Honor, the Research-Based Learning (RBL) approach and the Project-Based Learning (PBL) methodology. Also highlighted are action-research proposals to develop a critical attitude in students of Spanish and didactic proposals aimed at teaching how to detect and correct certain types of errors produced by machine translation (machine translators and post-editing).

Finally, there are didactic reflections aimed at improving the teaching of Spanish to asylum seekers, as well as good practices for the prevention, detection and channeling of conflicts arising from the use of the Spanish language (Centers for the Participation and Integration of Immigrants).

### CONCLUSIONS AND PROSPECTIVE

In view of the above results, the two objectives set for this work recommend the following.

First, the findings in regards to the training and pedagogical needs of the teaching and learning of Spanish as a second or foreign language, note the thematic areas of “Teacher training” and “Goals”, where there is a notable imbalance and lack of specific teacher training for teaching Spanish to foreign students. There is a scarcity of research on this issue and on others related to the beliefs and attitudes of teachers toward the academic language and different varieties of Spanish.

It also highlights the need to reform language teacher training to emphasize language learners’ strategies for emotional regulation and multimodal input. Moreover, teachers must consider the lexical availability of learners and the influence of the native language on the learning of the target language, since it is very likely that people belonging to the same linguistic community make similar mistakes.

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In addition, it is urgent to address two problems present in the multicultural societies of the 21st century:

1. The lack of access to autonomous language learning due to socioeconomic conditions; in other words, access to the digital tools for language learning and assessment.
2. The frequency of linguistic intermitigation; that is, language brokering carried out by immigrant children in host societies.

Second, the useful didactic resources and innovative proposals for learners and teachers of Spanish are grouped in the thematic areas “Didactic resources” and “Methodology.” In this regard, there has been a constant evolution of theories, approaches and methods in the teaching and learning of Spanish as a second or foreign language in Spain, especially since the second half of the 20th century. For example, the Grammar-Translation method, Direct method, methods based on Structuralist Theory, Nocio-functional programs, Communicative Language Teaching, Task-Based Language Learning and Action-Oriented Approach have evolved. Today, Communicative Teaching is fully established and the Task-Based Learning is one of the most recurrent methodologies, even though Spanish teachers do not usually follow a method in a pure form, preferring to opt for an eclectic modality (González, and Andi3n, 2021). Despite this diversity of teaching options, boredom and lack of intrinsic motivation become a common factor in Spanish classrooms, as learners feel a disconnection between what they do there and their lives (Bieger, and Caballero-García, 2019). In this sense, the didactic resources and methodological experiences collected represent an enormous pedagogical potential, even beyond Spain, because, although the practices cannot be transported, the ideas developed in one country can become seeds that bear fruit in another.

To conclude, the limitations of the present paper are the selection criteria used and the use of a single database. In addition, due to the large number of studies handled, it has also made it difficult to present their conclusions in depth, which suggest further research in this line of study, by adding other geographical contexts and, of course, broadening the range of publications that can be analyzed.

### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Interested persons can scan the following QR code and access the 34 references used in this qualitative systematic literature review.

Those who want to leave their opinions, can also do so by accessing this QR code.



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During the months of September, October and November 2023 she has made an interna-

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-tional stay at CSU, Monterey Bay thanks to a mobility grant from the Ministry of Spain. Her sponsoring professor was Emeritus Professor Dr. Christine Sleeter and her point of contact with the university was Dr. Ondine Gage.

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Ondine Gage is an Associate Professor of Education in the Department of Liberal Studies at CSU, Monterey Bay. She earned an M.A. in Linguistics as well as a Ph.D. in Education. Her areas of research include the development of vocabulary and language awareness within elementary and middle school classroom contexts. With a specialization in language acquisition and language awareness, Ondine's current interests include using linguistics to enhance pre-service teachers' Language Awareness and Word Consciousness, concepts which are central to language development and comprehension for literacy development.



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## Turn Your 2023 CATESOL Conference Attendance into a Publication

### Beyond Writing Up your Conference Presentation

There are many events you may have hosted as a Chapter or Interest Group Leader.

There are numerous sessions you attended and maybe a particular one or two were highly very impactful on your professional development and/or instructional practice.

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**Share the content to keep your IG members up to date.**

**Did you participate in an plenary or other session that made an impact on you?**

**Share what you learned.**



**Share your conference experiences and learning with other members!**

# *Special Column Series Submission – Digital Storytelling,*<sup>23</sup> **TESOL, and...**

Brett Pierce

This is my fourth and final blog for the CATESOL publication. I am an educator, story developer, and media producer who has worked mostly in the international realm of what would be called the ‘media for social change’ sphere. From my years working in this realm – mostly with Sesame Workshop out of NYC – I developed a passion for and expertise in the power of digital storytelling as a full-fledged academic and societal literacy, in which our students need to be trained. My objective in these series of blogs is to energize you, TESOL educators, to pilot integrating digital storytelling into your courses. The reasons why have been articulated in my earlier blogs, but fundamentally it comes down to this: digital storytelling is the ‘writing’ part of today’s literacy and with digital storytelling, I would argue, comes greater student engagement, deeper content learning, better preparation for a tech-infused future, and more educational parity in what must seem like, to the students, a deeply inequitable arena for learning.

Sounds hyperbolic, but if you have actually brought digital storytelling into your classroom, you’ll agree, it’s not. In this final article, I want to dig into some of the practical details of this fun and strategic pathway, to make this choice seems as intuitive and seamless as possible.

There is a long-running debate in education about the tension between the values of outcomes vs. processes. While I think it’s fair to say that the majority of educators value process over outcome, formal education as an institution is driven more explicitly by outcomes. Therefore, we tend to teach to outcomes – to the test scores.

Here’s a phrase I discovered in a remote corner of educational academia about this very issue:

“...a key part of education, ... is that it seeks to develop new knowledge rather than just mastering what is already known. It seeks creativity and originality.”(Creasy 2018)

Such a majestic, powerful statement: seeking “new knowledge.” I love the simplicity of that. Mastering content is a part of education. That is related to outcomes. Fine. Cool. We are all in. But seeking “creativity and originality” – “new knowledge” – is about process.

And while seeking “new knowledge” may be setting the bar high for our students, we do want to lay the foundations for them to do so. That’s how humanity progresses.

But does this ambition apply to students learning a second or third language? Is ‘outcome’ more or less everything in this academic niche? As viewed from outside the circle of TESOL educators – which is my perspective – how can learning a new language result in ‘developing new knowledge’ when, in fact, what you are really focused upon is delivering to your students the tools to simply communicate cogently inside of a predominantly English speaking environment? And if this conjecture is correct – that TESOL learning is primarily geared toward outcome and not process – then... is that an organic problem within this educational sphere that makes your work doubly challenging?

Digital Storytelling, as a learning strategy, is 75% about process. Digital Storytelling is invested in the Human Skills that my previous CATESOL blog was about – creativity, problem-solving, decision-making, flexibility, presentational confidence, ...the list goes on.

So, where does that leave us? *If* it’s *process* that holds most of the educational value in any given formally educational endeavor; and *if* it’s *process* that delivers best on the Human Skills that students need to succeed in life; and *if* it’s creative and logical *process* that engages students the most;

(Cont.)

and *if* digital storytelling is mostly a *process-driven* educational strategy whose end goal aligns with the statement, “to develop new knowledge rather than just mastering what is already known”; and *if* TESOL, as a subject, is deeply and fundamentally about “mastering what is already known” and, by extension, more outcome-oriented than process-oriented, *THEN*, is TESOL constantly fighting an uphill battle to both engage and educate students meaningfully and impactfully?

OK, agreed: that run-on sentence is a tad histrionic. But the final question is not irrelevant or misplaced. What I would like to proffer in this final blog for CATESOL are ways to explicitly invest your curriculum in the process portion of Digital Storytelling.

Here’s the thing. In Digital Storytelling, there is a clear process that can be applied in the classroom across the board. It follows an intuitive Research/Create/Develop/Produce model.

The Digital Storytelling process begins with the content. You can’t tell a story about something you know nothing about. So, you need to know the content. You research.

In the Creative Step, the decisions are made about story structure. The digital storytelling prompt should provide a lot of guidance here because the students need to be answering questions about characters, tone, story genre, use of graphics, setting, casting, language choices, sound design and visual design. The creative step – like all four steps in the digital storytelling process – doesn’t have a clear start and finish: creativity is occurring throughout. But it does erupt here, after the research, when the team needs to decide: how are we going to use sound, imagery, words and music to tell a compelling story about the content that we have just researched?

Development is what, in the media industry, is referred to as pre-production. This is about the logistics of planning the shoot or recording session. As just mentioned, there are still creative choices being made throughout development. Costuming can shift. Locations can shift. Scripting is a fluid process. In fact, the whole thing is a fluid process and that is what makes it so compelling and rich educationally.

But the essence of development is in the planning and organization – rehearsing, prop gathering, location scouting, blocking, just getting all the team in the same place at the same time...in costume.

If Development is planning, then Production is executing. It’s the shoot. The visual edit. The sound edit. It’s the part where students must work together to bring their vision from the paper to the screen.

So, you are thinking, how does my content, my outcomes, become enmeshed in this complex and creative process? Begin with research: the story needs to be about your designated outcome – the creation of a menu, body anatomy, a simple story told in the past, present and future tenses, two fashion designer characters describing two outfits that they have created, etc. I recommend making their stories 2-3 minutes at most and if you have a narrative framework you want to give them (e.g., a morning talk show segment, a commercial or PSA, a YouTube ‘How To,’ a weather forecast) provide them with that structure. Or let them pitch you on a story framework from their online lives that they want to create for you. Like, a TikTok.

In the creative process, set up a few key written or verbal deliverables about plot summary, character descriptions, the integration of five English idioms and of course, the script itself: it must be in English.

In development, have them create prop lists, a shot list, a storyboard, a rehearsal and shoot schedule,  
(Cont.)



...all in English. In short, the tools that they need to shoot a successful digital story need to be in English.

And finally, in production, have them focus on learning the terms of production – in short, how to use their iPhone with all of the proper English terms (a vocabulary that I am sure would be wholly welcome in your students' lives).

Take a step back. Look at the range of content you could accomplish, from your targeted content to content about story and character; from creating dialogue and conversation to the parts and assets of their smart phones. In every step of the way toward the targeted outcome, you can infuse a vast array of content that will be used, in a practical way, to complete the project.

It's vast. In the end, they have a fun story to share with you and their peers. In the end, they have been deeply engaged, creating and executing this story in English. And in the end, they have a piece that they can share digitally, a piece that perhaps helps to bridge the divide between their digital world and that of the English driven digital world in which they are surrounded.

Thank you for allowing me to share my thoughts with you and your academic community. I hope that this series of ideas has catalyzed some new and energizing ideas for your approach to content and student engagement. It has been enlightening for me, a non-TESOL educator, to attempt to step into your shoes and try and imagine the extraordinary work that you do. I come away from the experience in...awe.

### Bio

Brett is the founder and Executive Director of *Meridian Stories*, a Digital Storytelling Nonprofit for middle and high schoolers that challenges students to create digital narratives around core curricular goals. He authored "Expanding Literacy: Bringing Digital Storytelling into Your Classroom." He spent much of his professional life at Sesame Workshop – New York City, serving as a Co-Executive Producer on projects about literacy, math, science, and conflict-resolution for youth around the world. Most recently, Brett led the development and production of a radio drama, *Sawa Shabab*, targeting youth in the Kakuma Refugee Camp about gender equity issues, life skills and co-existence. He can be reached at [brett@meridianstories.org](mailto:brett@meridianstories.org).

Meridian Stories is a non-profit organization that offers an expansive catalogue of creative Digital Storytelling Projects, with over 140 Projects on offer in its library that engage students research, creation, development, and production of digital stories aligned with the curriculum. Explore [Here](#).



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## Join the RC-IG!

Sherry MacKay, Anne York-Herjeczki, Tally Caruso

### Do you work with war-impacted individuals or learners with refugee backgrounds?

As the Refugee Concerns Interest Group (RC-IG), we believe to support our learners, we need to start with us!

Our goals are to:

- **build** a more diverse, engaged and supportive community for one another;
- **support** learners with refugee backgrounds to create a sense of home, security, and belonging in California; and
- **engage** with one another in order to share: resources, practices, strategies, etc

We want to impact the community through fostering discussions on:

1. understanding **cultural backgrounds**,
2. learning about the **diverse paths** taken to arrive here;
3. understanding the **resettlement process**; and
4. implementing **relevant teaching methods** (i.e., trauma-informed teaching, ESOL for SLIFE)

Join us!

- Ring in the new year and join us Tuesday, January 9th at noon. Register [here](#) on catesol.org! We have monthly *Coffee Talks* facilitated on Zoom, discussing topics from the classroom to the community.
- Join our Facebook Group to learn from and share with one another. Click on [this link](#) and request to Join *CATESOL: Refugee Concerns Interest Group (RC-IG)*.

**Sherry MacKay** is the owner of Einstein, her beloved terrier-poodle-chihuahua mix dog.

**Anne York-Herjeczki** is a seasonal-coffee lover (any flavor will do!)

**Talley Caruso** loves snacks! When you meet her, she'll probably offer you some homemade treats.

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## *Refugee Concerns Interest Group Report II –* **“NORAH. From My Grandmother's Kitchen: Palestinian Recipes and Memories” By Dr. Rolla Alaydi - A Culinary Journey of Generosity and Resilience**

Rolla Alaydi

In the heartwarming narrative penned by Dr. Rolla Alaydi, "NORAH. From My Grandmother's Kitchen: Palestinian Recipes and Memories," we are welcomed into a world where the kitchen is not merely a place for cooking, but a sacred space where connections are forged, stories are shared, and cultural legacies are celebrated. Dr. Alaydi invites us to her home – a haven of rich scents, Arabic music, and lively conversations that transcend borders and cultures. Her kitchen serves as a symbol of hospitality, echoing the warmth of a Bedouin tent's fire, welcoming travelers from near and far.

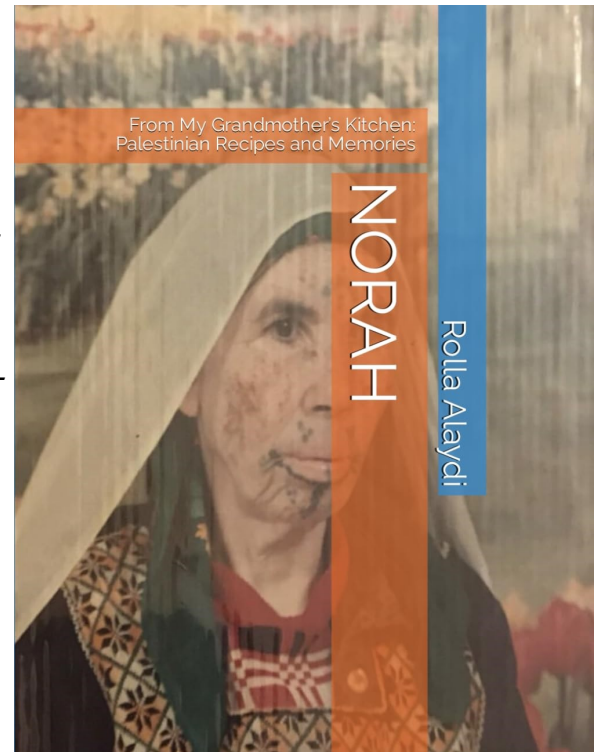
Dr. Alaydi's love for cooking is deeply rooted in her cultural heritage, and her kitchen becomes a vessel for nostalgia, where every dish prepared conjures joyous and poignant memories. Spices like cardamom and thyme, the sizzle of garlic in olive oil, and the preparation of traditional Palestinian dishes become not just a feast for the palate but a canvas for the rich stories and resilience embedded in Arab culture.

In a world where divisions often overshadow our shared humanity, Dr. Alaydi's home becomes a microcosm of unity and understanding. People from diverse backgrounds gather to appreciate culinary delights and to listen to the author's stories. Palestinian embroidery, shisha, and a warm, inviting atmosphere to create an ambiance that represents the author's cultural roots and their openness to sharing these cultural aspects with others.

But Dr. Alaydi's kitchen is more than just a place of cooking; it's a place where life experiences, cultural heritage, and the aroma of spices all come together to create an environment of togetherness and storytelling. Through her hospitality and culinary skills, she not only shares food, but also the rich tapestry of her life, blending the scents and flavors with the stories of her journey.

In the heart of Dr. Alaydi's narrative is her grandmother's kitchen, which serves as a poignant backdrop to her memories and cultural heritage. It is a place of humble origins, located in a Gaza Strip refugee camp, where her family's living quarters were surrounded by the homes of grandparents, uncles, and her mother's uncle. A majestic lemon tree stood at the heart of their home, while an orange orchard sprawled to the left, where the author often imagined the trees engaged in silent conversations.

The kitchen, the soul of the household, was modest in size but radiated warmth and freshness.(Cont.)



A low stove with a single burner allowed Dr. Alaydi's grandmother to sit on the ground while preparing meals. The kitchen lacked the opulence of modern kitchens, with no fancy shelves for dishes and cups. Instead, it contained only a few essential items, like a frying pan and a cooking pot, which were prominently displayed on the kitchen wall.

Their unconventional sink was not the conventional sink we find in the United States, but a simple water faucet with a small plastic container beneath. In their water-saving setup, they filled the container with water and soap to wash dishes, emphasizing the resourcefulness of life in the refugee camp.

When the family first arrived in the Gaza Strip, they had only a tent as their dwelling. Later, the United Nations provided a small bedroom and a tiny kitchen connected by a corridor. This corridor, adorned with grapevines, served as a shaded dining area where the family gathered around a white tablecloth to share meals.

The kitchen had an open entrance with no door and two windows. One window opened onto a small, unpaved path, providing a unique window to the world. Neighbors would often pause by the window, engaging in conversations with the author's grandmother as she cooked. This open view into their kitchen allowed for spontaneous interactions and communal spirit.

One fascinating tradition mentioned was that of sharing desserts with neighbors. If one made a dessert, it was expected to be shared with the community. An attempt to keep a cake to themselves was foiled as the tantalizing aroma wafted through the open kitchen window, leaving them no choice but to share.

Dr. Alaydi's grandmother, Norah, who went by the name Om Saber, was more than a guardian; she was a repository of knowledge. She never had the privilege of formal education, yet her wisdom surpassed the confines of textbooks. She recited poetry, sang songs, and narrated legends and stories, offering the author a unique insight into the culture and history of their people.

Norah hailed from a Bedouin family, a nomadic and herding people deeply rooted in Arab culture. The Bedouins were nomads, constantly seeking greener pastures and water sources as they traversed the Arab world. In doing so, they became the keepers of stories, legends, poetry, and songs, spreading them from place to place. These oral traditions were committed to memory, as the Bedouins did not read or write, making them early bearers of cultural heritage.

The author's grandmother bore facial tattoos, a proud and distinctive feature passed down from her Bedouin heritage. These tattoos were marks of a coming-of-age ceremony and served as the equivalent of cosmetics, accentuating her beauty. To the author, these tattoos were an integral part of her grandmother's identity, a symbol of her uniqueness.

Norah's life was a rich tapestry of stories, some of which were devoted to her first husband, Nasser. She described Nasser as a loving and generous partner who treated her like royalty. His return from travels always brought gifts, and his thoughtfulness in selecting special items like fabric and figs was a testament to their deep connection.

Norah's kitchen became an invaluable setting for the author's cultural and historical education. As the author assisted in cooking, they absorbed the lessons and stories, and the act of preparing meals became a vehicle for transferring cultural knowledge.

The author's family, steeped in Bedouin traditions, eventually settled in Beersheba, where they had resided for generations before the Nakba, the tragic exodus in 1948 when over 750,000 (Cont.)

Palestinians were displaced during the formation of Israel. These events profoundly shaped the author's family history and cultural identity.

Norah, or Om Saber, carried the legacy of her Bedouin heritage, even in her name, which referred to her eldest son, Saber. The name was a custom among Palestinians to name women after their first-born sons. Saber was the son of Norah's first husband, Nasser, whom she deeply loved, and his early passing when Saber was only one year old brought profound sorrow. Following Bedouin customs, Norah married Nasser's brother, Ali, to secure the well-being of their children and maintain the family's tribal ties.

Norah's life stories, her fond memories of Nasser, and the tales of her experiences with her two husbands enriched the author's understanding of their familial history. The author cherished these stories as a treasure trove of secrets.

In the evenings, gathered around the open fire, Norah sang Egyptian songs she had learned during her childhood from a traveler. She even described a unique instrument, the Rababah, which the author later identified as an Arab Fiddle, one of the earliest known bowed instruments.

Throughout their life, Norah shared the stories, legends, poetry, and songs that she had inherited from her ancestors and her travels across the Arab world. These experiences unfolded as the author and their grandmother worked side by side in the kitchen, with the scents of cardamom, thyme, and garlic creating a sensory backdrop to the tales.

The author's heart was shaped and nurtured by their grandmother's stories, a window into the history and culture of their people. The kitchen served as the fertile ground where these stories took root, as water poured into a deep well, nurturing the author's soul with the wisdom and legacy of their ancestors.

The book delves into the profound significance of food, specifically lentils, onion soup, and cauliflower, within the context of the author's life as a Palestinian refugee. These culinary elements serve as vessels for treasured memories and profound life lessons, each carrying a unique narrative intertwined with the struggles faced by Palestinians, their unwavering resilience, and the vital importance of generosity and resourcefulness.

At the heart of these recollections stands the author's beloved grandmother, a central figure who imparts invaluable wisdom and guidance through the preparation and consumption of these staple foods. She emphasizes the idea that lentil soup, often perceived as a modest dish, is indeed a rich and nourishing source of sustenance. This sentiment underscores the theme of making the most out of limited resources, resonating with the experiences of Palestinians who had to persevere in difficult circumstances.

The text further underscores the author's observations about the first Intifada, a pivotal period of Palestinian uprising, which disrupted the innocence of their childhood. This tumultuous time serves as a backdrop to the narrative, symbolizing the broader Palestinian struggle for justice and the endurance of their spirit.

In essence, the book is a contemplative exploration of the profound interplay between food, culture, and collective memory. It vividly illustrates how these seemingly ordinary culinary elements encapsulate the rich tapestry of Palestinian history, the resilience of their people, and the enduring spirit that persists in the face of adversity.

(Cont.)

“NORAH” shares a collection of personal stories and experiences, each accompanied by valuable life lessons from the author's grandmother. These stories revolve around ordinary objects and everyday activities, illustrating deeper meanings and insights:

### **Rice: A Symbol of Generosity**

In Palestinian culture, giving bags of rice as wedding gifts symbolizes the support for the couple's future life. This tradition exemplifies the values of generosity and resourcefulness, emphasizing how gifts can contribute to the well-being of both the couple and wedding guests.

### **Eggplants: Uncovering Hidden Messages**

The story of eggplants reveals that even in the most ordinary objects, hidden messages can be found. It highlights the importance of paying attention to life's intricate details, being patient, and finding significance in the little things.

### **Chickens: A Lesson in Patience**

The author's connection with chickens and the legend of the golden eggs imparts the wisdom of patience and the appreciation of daily blessings. It underscores the balance between savoring the present and investing in a brighter future.

### **Om-Nidhal, the Resilient Role Model**

Om-Nidhal, the author's neighbor, embodies resilience and resourcefulness in overcoming life's challenges, particularly as a single mother. Her story serves as an inspiring example, illustrating that giving to life can lead to fruitful rewards.

Overall, the passage delves into cultural traditions, the significance of family bonds, and the transmission of wisdom across generations. It celebrates the profound life lessons hidden in ordinary experiences, encouraging readers to seek meaning in life's minutiae and contribute positively to the world and the generations to come.

In this evocative passage, the author delves into the wisdom imparted by their grandmother, making it a rich tapestry of values and cultural insights. The central theme revolves around the significance of generosity, meticulous preparation, and the tenets of respect and hospitality when welcoming guests. These cherished principles are deeply rooted in the author's cultural heritage, steeped in the traditions of Palestinian and Bedouin communities, where the act of communal sharing and the warmth of hospitality hold profound significance.

The text not only emphasizes the grandmother's teachings but also underscores the enduring impact they have on the author's life in the United States. The delicate blend of modern values and timeless traditions is masterfully portrayed. The metaphors used, such as the thriving lemon tree, the cultivation of mint, and the ever-burning fire, serve as vivid symbols of the lasting influence of these invaluable lessons.

By sharing these tales, the author accentuates the importance of preserving cultural traditions and nurturing kindness, ensuring that these timeless principles are not just upheld but cherished and passed down through generations, enriching the lives of those who follow. The text encourages us to reflect on the profound legacy of wisdom that we inherit from our ancestors, which remains as vital today as it was in days gone by.

*You can purchase your own copy of “NORAH. From My Grandmother's Kitchen: Palestinian Recipes and Memories” on [Amazon](#) and other online book vendors.*

# Refugee Concerns Interest Group Report III – A Woman’s Account; “The Roaring Sands of Kandahar

Farzana Ebrahimi

## Introducing Myself: Farzana Ebrahimi

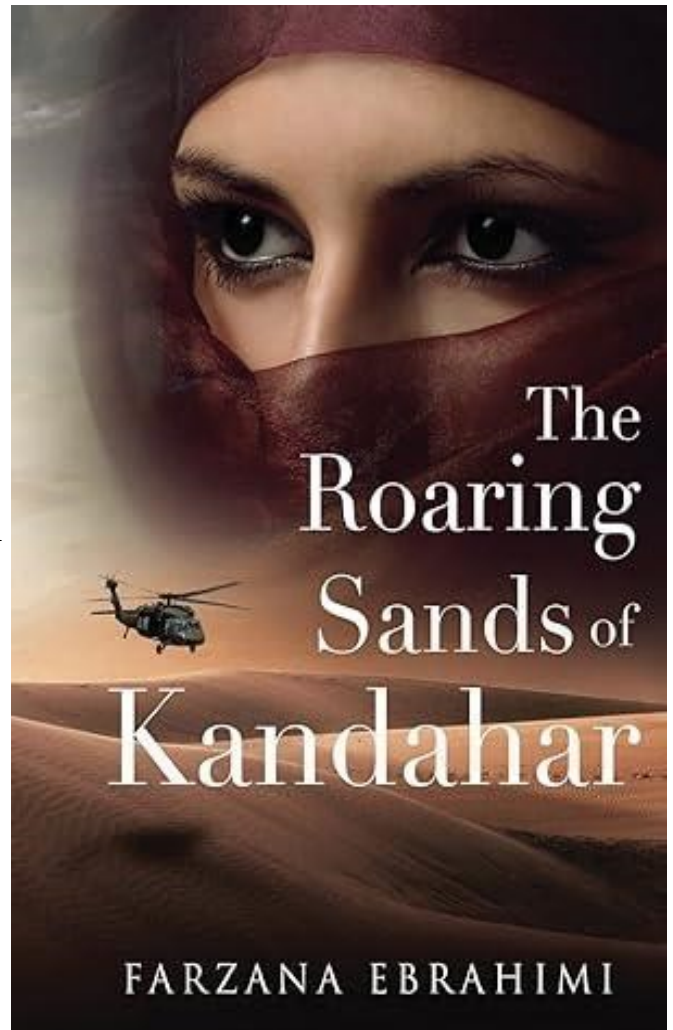
I was born 1981 in Kandahar, Afghanistan to an educated family. I, Farzana, founded Kandahar's Health and Development Organization to support women in Kandahar when I (hereafter she/Farzana) was only 24 years old. She trained hundreds of women in educational projects after the Taliban was removed from Afghanistan from 2001-2010. Farzana worked for over a decade for gender equality and was a women's rights activist in Kandahar. She moved to northern California through exceptional efforts in 2010 and continued to support Afghan women. Farzana (i.e., Frazana Ebrahimi) was the woman of the month in June 2010 as a remarkable woman in Lifetime TV in America because of her efforts for Afghan women's rights. She believed in women's rights and wanted to bring change for women in Kandahar and continued her path no matter where she was.

Farzana received an honorable bachelor's degree in leadership from Northwood University of Texas. Farzana has always loved writing since childhood and spent long years indoors writing about all the events in Kandahar. Farzana began her professional writing career when she moved to California, with her first book published in 2022: “The Roaring Sands of Kandahar,” which is available on Amazon. Regardless of the country or context, Farzana has always done the same job that she had done in Afghanistan – she is an educator. Teaching is her passion, and she is currently a Persian-Farsi teacher, but the issues and objectives of providing refugees from various regions with one or several countries of asylum is dear to her. She understands the connection and importance of sharing her story with teachers of English to refugees. Supporting refugee women is her passion too, especially with respect to helping them find a desired job and/or obtaining a higher education degree related to the field of education.

## Farzana’s Account Through a Fictional Narrative

“The Roaring Sands of Kandahar” is a novel based on true events in Kandahar, Afghanistan and San Francisco, California. The book will appeal to readers curious about the Taliban, life in Afghanistan, and American military stories in fiction genres. “The Roaring Sands Winds of Kandahar” was heavily inspired by the experiences of Afghan women who, under the reign of the Taliban, were subjected to some of the most severe social restrictions. Those restrictions included mandatory burqa coverings and limited access to education, jobs, and healthcare. They were also prohibited from appearing publicly without a male chaperone, leaving widows and children to starvation and lack of access

(Cont.)



# RC-IG Report III – “The Roaring Sands of Kandahar”<sup>32</sup> (Cont.)

to their basic social needs. The basic story is a terrific account and a rich and engaging novel that will intrigue readers. The story has potential for reaching a broad audience. This is a good moment to begin a public conversation in America about the trauma of U.S. soldiers in Afghanistan, as well as the experience of women in Afghanistan and the cost to women caught in civil turmoil. “The Roaring Sands of Kandahar” is a powerful story and has the capacity to be converted to a film.

## Conclusion

I, Farzana, lived my life as any individual would. I enjoyed my days of youth and had dreams for my future. Despite incidents larger than me, I, Farzana, was able to fulfill my personal and professional dreams. Now, Farzana has a larger mission: to share her story. CATESOL’s Refugee Concerns Interest Group (RC-IG) is playing a role in this larger mission by sharing her story and those of many Afghan women and their families.

**Farzana Ebrahimi**

**Phone:** 510-274-3396

**Email:** ebrahimifarzana@gmail.com

You can purchase your own copy of “The Roaring Sands of Kandahar” on [Amazon](#).

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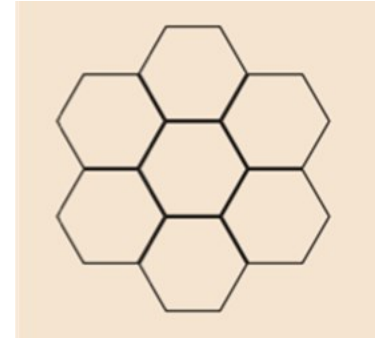
Learn more about the Writing Retreat, click [HERE](#).



# Member Submission I – Adopting Hexagonal Thinking Model to Promote Learners' Critical Thinking

Hiba Al Gabra

Hexagonal Thinking in language learning refer to a cognitive approach that involves connecting language concepts or skills in a hexagonal or interconnected manner. This could involve linking vocabulary, grammar rules, cultural aspects, and other language elements in a holistic and integrated way. It typically takes the form of a diagram or graphic organizer. Originally, it is a method taken from business, applied to the subject of English Language Arts (ELA) by Betsy Potash. The main feature is the use of hexagons to represent concepts or ideas and connect to each other to illustrate relationships between those concepts (Picture 1).



Picture 1

Hexagonal Thinking can be applied in language classrooms for various instructional purposes, namely:

## Benefits and Utilization of Hexagonal Thinking in Classrooms:

### 1. Connecting Vocabulary:

In a hexagonal thinking language classroom, vocabulary is not taught in isolation. Instead, teachers create connections between words, grouping them based on thematic or contextual relationships. For example, instead of presenting a list of unrelated words, a teacher might introduce a central hexagon with a theme (e.g., "travel") and connect related words like "airport," "passport," and "destination" in a hexagonal arrangement. This not only aids memorization but also enhances the learner's ability to recall words in context.

### 2. Integrating Grammar and Usage:

Hexagonal thinking extends beyond vocabulary to include grammatical structures and language usage. Teachers can show the relationships between different grammar rules, illustrating how they interact and influence each other. For example, the Arabic language has a root system from which other words can be extracted that have the related meaning to the root word (see picture 2). From the picture we can see that the root that means (to gather), we can extract many words that are related to the root word in terms of meaning (gathering, meeting, Friday, university, etc.)



Picture 2

(Cont.)

## Member Submission I – Cont.

### 3. Cultural Context:

Language is deeply intertwined with culture, and hexagonal thinking provides an excellent framework for integrating cultural aspects into language lessons. Teachers can create hexagons representing cultural concepts, traditions, and societal norms, of the target language that can serve as a reflection of a communities cultural identities.

For example, let's use the theme "Celebrations." In the center hexagon, write "Celebrations," and connect it to other hexagons representing specific celebrations like "Carnival," "Diwali," "Thanksgiving," and "Chinese New Year." Each celebration hexagon can then extend connections to cultural practices, traditional foods, and common expressions associated with that celebration. This not only builds vocabulary but also enhances cultural awareness.

### 4. Promoting Critical Thinking:

Hexagonal thinking in language teaching stimulates critical thinking skills as learners analyze connections and draw conclusions. By actively engaging with the hexagonal structure, students develop a deeper understanding of how language components relate to each other, promoting a more comprehensive grasp of the language. For example, teachers can do the following:

Central hexagon: Start by selecting a short story, which can be the central hexagon, and have the students read it as homework.

Identifying themes: Discuss with the class the major themes of the novel, such as social issues, international politics, etc. Write these themes in separate hexagons and connect them to the central hexagon.

Connections: Have students identify specific events, characters, or quotes within the novel that relate to each theme. Create additional hexagons for these elements and connect them to the corresponding theme hexagons. This step encourages students to think critically about how the author develops and conveys each theme.

Analysis: Ask students to analyze the relationships between themes. How are the themes connected to each other? How do the characters contribute to the development of these themes? This prompts students to think critically about the novel's complexities and the author's intentions.

Discussion: Facilitate a class discussion where students present their hexagonal diagrams and explain the connections they've made. Encourage them to engage in critical conversations about the novel, considering different perspectives and interpretations.

Reflection: Have students reflect on the process. What did they discover about the novel through this visual representation? How did hexagonal thinking aid their critical analysis? Self-reflection is always a great tool to help students understand and reflect on how their language learning is developing.

*“Hexagonal thinking in language teaching stimulates critical thinking skills as learners analyze connections and draw conclusions.”*

(Cont.)

## Member Submission I – Cont.

### 5. Facilitating Collaborative Learning:

The hexagonal thinking approach fosters collaborative learning environments. Teachers can encourage students to work together to create hexagonal diagrams and encourage communication and collaboration. This not only enhances language skills but also promotes teamwork and a sense of shared discovery.

#### Conclusion:

Incorporating hexagonal thinking into language teaching classrooms creates a more interconnected language teaching approach. Teachers can create an immersive learning experience that not only accelerates language acquisition but also cultivates critical thinking skills. As language teachers explore innovative methods to engage students, hexagonal thinking emerges as a promising strategy for creating a more collaborative and thought-provoking language learning environment.

#### Resources

Potash, Betsy. "127: How to Create a Hexagonal Thinking Deck". *Spark Creativity*.

<https://nowsparkcreativity.com/2021/05/127-how-to-create-a-hexagonal-thinking-deck.html>

Potash, Betsy & Jennifer Gonzalez. "Hexagonal Thinking: A Colorful Tool for Discussion." *Cult of Pedagogy*. 11 Sept. 2020, <https://www.cultofpedagogy.com/hexagonal-thinking/>

Barlett, Jeff. "Hexagonal Thinking in Health Education." 15 Sept. 2020, <https://bartlettjeff.wordpress.com/2020/09/25/hexagonal-thinking-in-health-education/>

Has a simple Google Slide template set up for you to make a copy of.

[Rainbow Hexagons Teachers Pay Teachers](#)

Free Rainbow Hexagons - Use contact paper to make dry-erase

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## Have an Idea for an Article Series?

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**Inquires: [newsletter@catesol.org](mailto:newsletter@catesol.org)**

(Cont.)

# *Guest Author Submission I*— Tips for Implementing a Digital Storytelling Project with Low-Literacy Adult Beginner ESL Students<sup>36</sup>

Caryle Stevens & Debora Amidani

Teachers are always looking for ways to engage their students through meaningful activities. However, many teachers lack the time needed to think about, plan, and implement such activities. In this article, we share our experience implementing a digital storytelling (DS) project in our beginner adult ESL classes and provide helpful tips for you to create your own project.

## **Background and timeline of the project:**

From February to June 2022, we implemented a DS project with 16 low-literacy beginner ESL students at an adult public charter school in Washington, DC. While hesitant at first to do this type of project with our low-level classes, we were curious to see how students used and developed their language and digital literacy skills through telling a personal story.

The first 3 months were spent building digital literacy skills, such as using a computer mouse, typing on a computer, searching for Google Images, and copying and pasting. To do this, our students spent 1 hour a week with the school's technology instructor to build these skills. During these technology classes, we also showed example DSs to familiarize students with the project they would create and to inspire and give them ideas about what they could write about.

In April, students chose their stories and began writing their narratives but we quickly noticed students were having difficulties. Most students were writing general facts about a topic they chose rather than writing personal stories. To help students understand the narrative genre, we analyzed a transcript from an example DS we had watched. After analyzing the transcript and identifying personal pronouns, students better understood the narrative genre and were able to write their own personal stories.

In the final two weeks of our project, students used the school's Chromebooks and the program PowerDirector to combine the visuals, music, and recordings of their narratives. While some additional support from instructors was needed to ensure the elements were all timed together correctly, students were able to do the majority of this step autonomously. On the final day of the project, the students had a "watch party" where they shared their stories with the other students at the school.

Overall, we found the project to be a worthwhile experience and students worked hard to create their stories. Although beginner level students, they all put in their best effort to produce their stories in English. This project was rewarding for our students and ourselves. Our students were very proud of their work and shared their videos with their families and friends.

To view the stories, visit <https://www.thefamilyplacedc.org/digitalstorytellingeslclass>.

## **Tips for implementing your own DS project:**

### **1. Before...**

- Spark students' interest since the beginning by showing genuine excitement for the project;
- Teach some tech skills like searching for images on Google and pasting them in their storboards (Google Slides is a good place for that);
- Show as many DS examples as you can and analyze their elements (background music, pictures, videos, GIFs, etc);

(Cont.)

## Guest Author Submission I – (Cont.)

- If possible, make your own DS to show students - not only they will love watching something personal you made, but you will also learn the steps;
- Research the steps to make a DS and anticipate students' problems;

### 2. While...

- If your students are not able to think of a topic, give them suggestions of broad topics, such as “my country”;
- In case your students are not familiar with the narrative genre, work on it before they start writing their script;
- Translanguaging is always welcome, specially in this type of personal project;
- Have students choose their pictures (from Google or personal) and the other elements they will use in their DSs;
- Record students reading their script;
- Provide office hours, if possible, so absent students and the ones who need extra help can catch up;
- Boost students' confidence every step of the way;
- Put all the elements together in a video software - help students time them;


### 3. After...

- Send students the link to their own stories; they will want to show them to friends and family;
- Have a “watch party” to show students' DSs!

### Bios

Carlye Stevens graduated from American University's MA TESOL program in May 2022. She is currently the digital literacy and technology instructor at The Family Place Public Charter School in Washington, DC.

Debora Amidani, who has taught English as a Foreign Language in her home country, Brazil, for over 15 years, has been the beginner English instructor at The Family Place PCS since she graduated from the MA TESOL Program at American University in Spring 2020.




# CATESOL Town Hall Meeting

**Saturday, January 13, 2024**  
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**Moderators: Dr. Merari Weber, Song Hong**

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# CATESOL Web Manager Communication – Member Profile Update

Marsha Chan

Hear ye! Hear ye! CATESOL Members, new and old!

Our Member Profile has undergone a significant improvement, allowing members easier and more direct communication with members who have similar interests, areas of expertise, and physical proximity.

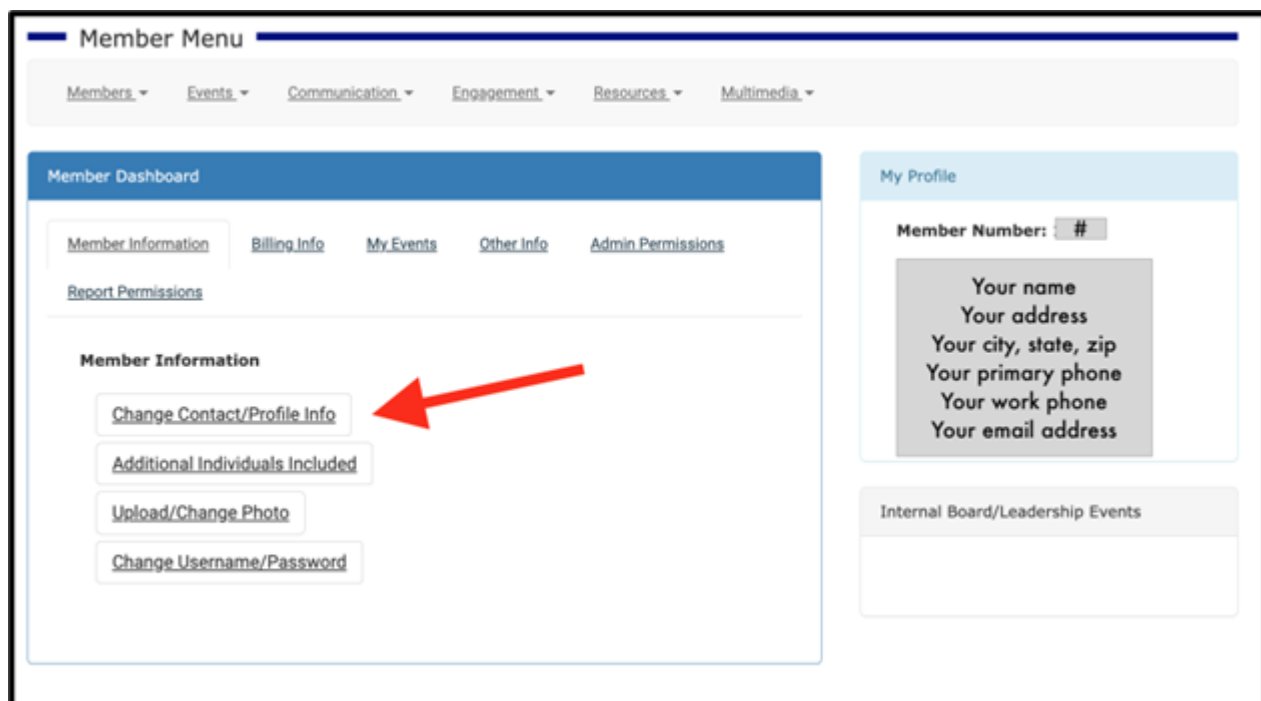
## View and edit your new and improved profile

Please log into [www.catesol.org](http://www.catesol.org) with your username and password. If you can't remember your password, click "Forgot your password?" and enter a new one.

After signing in, you will see your **Member Menu**.

On the right you'll see what's already entered in the section **My Profile**.

On the left, in the section **Member Dashboard**, under **Member Information**, click **Change Contact/Profile Info**.



1. Please complete or update your personal and contact information.
2. Indicate your professional position(s) and key in your school or affiliation.

Next select one or more (unlimited) of each of the following categories:

- Levels
- Interest Groups
- Regional Chapters

## Your choices reflect what Message Board messages you get

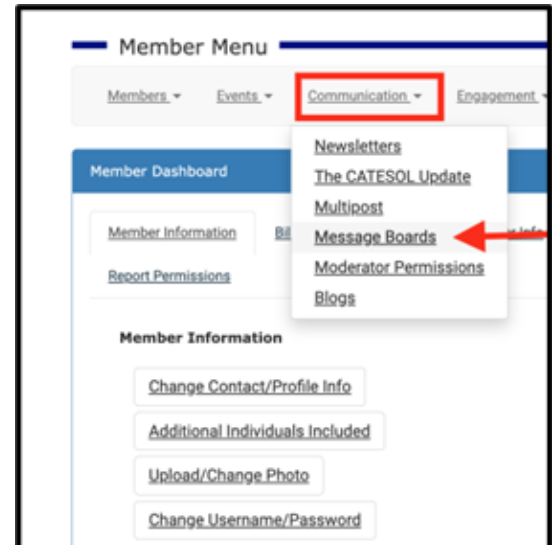
Selecting a group in any of the three categories—Levels, Interest Groups, and Chapters—will automatically connect you to peers in the identically named **Message Board**, a feature of the associated project/committee (the term used by Memberleap, our association management software). (Cont.)

## *CATESOL Web Manager Communication – Cont.*

In your **Member Menu**, under **Communication**, you may choose **Message Boards** to read, reply to, and begin a new topic in any open CATESOL message board.

In our new and improved set-up, you no longer need to access a message board in this way in order to opt into a group. From now on, it is best-and easiest-to do all of your selections in your Member Profile. At any time, you may access your profile to make changes and update your choices.

*“In our new and improved set-up, you no longer need to access a message board in this way in order to opt into a group.”*



### **CATESOL Webinar Events—A Lot is Going On**

**The CATESOL calendar has been packed with recent events in November and December.**

Write up a Chapter or Interest Group Report for the March Issue of the CATESOL Newsletter. Let your members know what you are doing and attract more members.

### **Upcoming Chapters and Interest Group Planned Events for 2024**

Write up a short brief for an upcoming Chapter or Interest Group event to advertise events you have planned in 2024. Let your members know what you have planned so they can mark it on their calendar and attract more members.

All Submissions Welcome!

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# Guest Author Submission II – Collaborative Calm: Integrating Breathwork in Language Learning

Annette Schenibner

## Introduction

Language acquisition is a remarkable process, as it not only puts demands on learners' cognitive processes, such as memory and attention, but it also involves learners' minds in regard to their social skills and emotional reactions, as research in social-emotional learning has shown (Durlak et al., 2011). Teachers are intricately involved in this process, as their role as guides, mentors, and facilitators of language learning plays a critical role in their students' academic journey and success. The challenges faced by students and teachers are manyfold: Students are faced with the challenges of reaching academic benchmarks while navigating peer and teacher interactions and expectations, and teachers encounter the pressures of meeting curriculum demands and managing classroom dynamics while striving to provide the best possible learning environment. Juggling these tasks can lead to stress, anxiety, and the feeling of being overwhelmed. This was especially apparent during the pandemic, as the sudden switch to online teaching and learning confronted educational stakeholders with never-before experienced academic, technical, and psychological issues. Post-pandemic, re-entering in-person teaching brought about new concerns when returning to in-person learning showed that residual stress could hinder academic success and smooth classroom interactions.

Even before the challenges for educators and students brought on by the pandemic, research had focused increasingly on how to foster holistic well-being in the classroom. Especially research in social-emotional learning showed how improving students' social skills and emotional well-being also improved their academic performance (Durlak et al., 2011). However, not only students, but also teachers can benefit from improved emotional well-being. Classrooms will best become the stage for optimal educational experiences, when both teachers and students possess tools to counteract feeling stressed, anxious, and overwhelmed.

A simple, readily available, and highly effective tool for dealing with stressful situations causing anxiousness and the feeling of overwhelm is the practice of breathwork. Long established through ancient traditions, and adapted for modern times, breathwork offers a plethora of breathing techniques and adaptations geared for physical and emotional regulation. After a brief history of breathwork, this article will delve into the benefits of incorporating breathwork practices in second language classrooms with examples for both teachers and students, focusing on stress reduction, enhanced cognitive function, and improved language acquisition outcomes.

## Breathwork – A Brief History

Breathwork has been defined as a broad category of practices involving controlled and intentional breathing and can be found in many cultures worldwide. It is often used during meditation, during religious practices, or with shamanic healing. One well-known example, originating in India's yogic tradition, is "pranayama," a practice during which yoga practitioners regulate the breath through different breathing techniques; in China, Taoists use breath control to cultivate "Chi," and indigenous cultures around the world use breathing techniques during ceremonial gatherings to induce an altered state of consciousness.

Breathwork's journey to the United States can be traced back to pioneers like Leonard Orr and Stanislav Grof, who played significant roles in introducing and populating breathwork in the (Cont.)



American context. In the early 1970s, Leonard Orr introduced the practice of conscious connected-breathing to release suppressed emotions and memories in the context of “rebirthing” (Orr, 2012). Stanislav Grof developed Holotropic Breathwork, emphasizing how deep psychological healing can be achieved through intensive breathing sessions (Grof & Grof, 2010). Based on the old masters, modern pioneers like Wim Hof (Hof, 2011) or Patrick McKeown (McKeown, 2015) have used breathwork to achieve physical excellence, bridging the gap between esoteric and physical outcomes of controlled breathing.

In recent years, researchers conducting scientific studies have begun to study breathwork during clinical trials, using modern technology such as MRI imaging. The studies showed that breathwork can positively influence the autonomic nervous system by regulating heart rate variability, and affecting brain activity (Jerath et al., 2006). Additionally, scientists found that breathwork can reduce stress and help with anxiety and depression (Zaccaro et al., 2018), and enhance cognitive functions (Luders et al., 2011). As these findings further increased the popularity and acceptance of breathwork, educators became interested in how breathwork could enhance students’ and teachers’ well-being, reduce classroom stress, and improve the overall learning experience.

### **Breathwork and Language Learning**

Second language acquisition challenges teachers and learners not only linguistically and pedagogically, but also requires them to address cognition, psychological factors, and emotional well-being (Lightbown & Spada, 2013). Hinkel (2006) found that language teachers are aware that their linguistic and pedagogical expertise significantly shapes learners’ academic outcomes, and research by MacIntyre and Gregersen (2012) confirmed that teachers know that they must be able to address the emotional and psychological dimensions of their students’ language learning experience for optimal academic success.

However, teachers increasingly struggle with balancing work and personal life and rarely find time to establish a practice to counter stress and burnout in their own lives. Language learners also can easily feel stressed and frustrated as they experience performance and test anxieties (MacIntyre, 2007). Especially in diverse English as a Second Language classrooms, students are not only confronted with the above-mentioned challenges, but they also have to adapt to a new cultural and linguistic environment, while often not being able to express their needs appropriately, increasing their stress load.

This is where a mindfulness practice such as breathwork can be helpful, especially as it does not require a large time commitment or any equipment. Deep diaphragmatic breathing is known to activate the body’s parasympathetic nervous system, which counteracts the “fight or flight” response, and incorporating breathwork such as diaphragmatic breathing into daily routines causes a decrease in the perception of overall stress (Ma, et al., 2017). Research has also shown that breathwork can reduce anxiety, while helping to improve cognitive functions due to lowered affective filters: Feeling less stressed allows teachers to interact more calmly with their students due to greater emotional resilience, which inevitably will improve the learning atmosphere and allow for smoother classroom interactions (Shapiro et al., 2011).

Similarly, introducing students to breathwork practices can help with anxieties such as performance anxiety or test anxiety. Students who suffer from anxieties often perform well in class but fail when they find themselves having to speak in another language in front of others, or (Cont.)

when taking a test. Knowing a quick breathwork technique can be a lifeline during these stressful situations. It is especially helpful for adult students that breathwork can be done discreetly without anybody else noticing, as they might be embarrassed if their peers knew that they are not as tough as they might want to appear. In addition, when students experience less anxiety and stress, they are better able to stay concentrated in class and at home and are thus able to absorb and retain more of the lesson content (Durlak et al., 2011).

### **Practical Application – Breathwork for Teachers and Learners**

Incorporating breathwork in the language classroom can help both teachers and learners emotionally as well as academically. In the following, the when and how of breathwork in education will be addressed.

#### **When to integrate breathwork in the classroom**

Researchers have found that establishing an individual daily mindfulness routine can help practitioners experience greater calm and confidence, and consequently could help teachers' creativity and students' receptivity to the material presented in class (Rocha et al., 2012). Including short (1–2 minutes long) breathwork breaks during demanding lessons can help with stress, anxiety, and concentration. These short sessions could be either always done at the same time, such as at the beginning of a difficult class or meeting, during breaks, or at the end of a session to integrate and reset (Kabat-Zinn, 2003). Once teachers and students have identified their favorite calming breathwork techniques, they can use them whenever needed to reset their mental state.

Another option is to include short teaching segments about breathwork in the target language in the curriculum. It can be fun to explore breathwork in another language while at the same time learning a useful tool for daily life. The length and timing of these segments will depend on the students' age and language proficiency, as well as how comfortable teachers are with breathwork themselves.

It is important to keep in mind that breathwork should only be done as long as it feels safe and comfortable, and it should be stressed before beginning any breathing exercises that everybody is responsible for returning to their normal breath should anything not feel right. This is especially important when breathing with children or minors, and it might be advisable to get their parents' consent for incorporating breathing activities in the classroom.

#### **How to integrate breathwork in the classroom**

The following are suggestions of breathwork techniques for teachers, adult students, minors, and children. They are examples of the most well-known breathwork activities, and many more can be found online, often accompanied by instructional videos. When breathing for the first time, it is helpful for the teacher to show a short video of the breathwork and also model it for the students.

With all breathing exercises, it is also important to note that the exhale and inhale should not be extreme (very quick, very strong, or very long), because this could cause hyperventilation. When introducing breathing exercises, it should always be mentioned that a short breath-hold and/or returning to normal nose-breathing will counteract any tingling or dizziness that might have started due to the onset of mild hyperventilation.

## Techniques for Teachers and Older/Adult Students

### For stress relief, anxiety, and difficult situations

#### 1. Diaphragmatic Breathing / Deep Belly Breathing:

Deep belly breathing activates the parasympathetic nervous system, regulating cortisol, which calms our fight-or-flight response and returns the nervous system back to equilibrium. It is especially helpful when experiencing anxiety, stress or overwhelm.

**Instructions:** Inhale deeply through your nose and feel your belly rising, exhale gently through your mouth, feeling the belly deflate. It can help to put a hand on the belly imagining a balloon inflating. Try to make the in- and out-breath even, slowly growing the breath count. Continue until your breaths are even in length and you feel grounded.

#### 2. Quick stress relief / Box Breathing / Combat Breath:

This helpful well-known technique envisions building a box with your breath which will keep you safe. It can be done discreetly anywhere to lighten a stressful situation and calm your nervous system.

**Instructions:** Inhale through your nose counting to four, hold your breath counting to four, exhale through your nose counting to four, hold your breath again counting to four. Start again... Continue until you feel calmer and more confident.

#### 3. Triangle Breath (Mindful Minute):

This technique is similar to box breathing and also very helpful as a quick break during stressful times when one feels overwhelmed. It could be used between classes when there is not much time to slow down between tasks.

**Instructions:** Inhale and exhale through your nose, inhale slowly and deeply counting to four, hold your breath counting to four, exhale counting to four. Start again... When done for one minute, you will feel centered and calm.

#### 4. 4-7-8 Breathing:

Another breathing exercise which is especially helpful when feeling anxious, such as when students experience test anxiety or when teachers face an observational visit in their classroom.

**Instructions:** Inhale counting to 4, hold your breath counting to 7, exhale counting to 8 and start again.

#### 5. Empathy Breathing (Compassion Breathing):

Porges (2011) suggested to practice this type of breathwork before difficult interactions or when feeling triggered, focusing on understanding the other person's perspectives and envisioning a calm response.

**Instructions:** Take deep, slow breaths in through the nose and out through the mouth. Aim for roughly 4 seconds in, 4 seconds out. As you breathe this way, you'll notice how you will feel your inner turmoil slowing down. By preparing your mind to be calm and open, you will be better prepared to deal with the situation with compassion for yourself and the other(s).

(Cont.)

## 6. Resilience Breath:

It is helpful to use this technique at the start of a challenging day.

**Instructions:** Inhale in and out through your nose. No need to count, but envision exhaling tension, inhaling the feeling that you are able to handle the situation. Exhaling doubt, inhaling confidence. You could say a short mantra in your head such as “I am calm, I am able” a couple of times as you breathe.

### For focus and concentration

## 7. Mindful Breathing:

This technique is especially useful when introducing breathwork for the first time. It not only helps with calming and focusing a scattered mind, but can also be promoted as a daily practice to regulate anxieties, increase emotional awareness and help with concentration. Becoming aware of one's breath can feel like always having an invisible helpful tool at one's disposal which can also increase confidence. This technique could also be used as the first step of any other breathing exercise.

**Instructions:** Without judgment, feel your breath entering and leaving through your nose. Without trying to change anything, observe your breathing, how many counts is your in-breath, how many counts is your out-breath, are your breaths fast or slow, even or bumpy, deep or shallow? Putting one hand on your belly and one hand on your chest, where can you feel your breath going? If it feels appropriate, you can thank your breath. At the end, students could share with each other what they discovered.

## 8. Star Breathing:

This technique helps when the mind feels overwhelmed and needs a break to re-focus.

**Instructions:** In your mind, imagine a star. As you inhale through your nose, imagine tracing one side of the star with your finger, as you exhale, trace the next side. Continue until you have traced all sides of the star with your mind and breath.

## 9. Alternate Nostril Breathing:

This technique, sometimes done during yoga sessions, acts to balance the left and right sides of the brain and helps with focusing and regulating emotions.

**Instructions:** Using your index finger and thumb (one on each nostril), close one nostril. You can either breathe in through the open nostril, while the other is closed, then switch and inhale and exhale through the other while the original nostril is closed, or you can breathe in and out through the same nostril, then switch.

### Techniques for Younger Learners and Children

Just as teachers and adult students can experience greater resilience through breathwork, young learners can also benefit from age-appropriate breathwork exercises that are tailored to their developmental needs. Introducing children to mindfulness activities like breathwork in the language classroom can improve their metacognitive skills by providing tools that help with self-regulation and focus, thus fostering resilience, self-reliance, and interpersonal skills (Veenman et al., 2006).

(Cont.)

## Conclusion

By collaboratively discovering and practicing breathwork in the classroom, teachers and students can create a win-win situation of working together, creating a more positive and calm learning environment. By addressing the challenges of feeling anxious, stressed and overwhelmed, and by having a possible remedy through the practice of breathwork, an atmosphere of mutual support and understanding can be created. Regulating emotions this way helps with emotional resilience and can have a positive effect on the overall physical and academic well-being of both students and teachers.

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As mentioned earlier, it is advisable to inform parents and the school's administrators before introducing breathing activities, especially with minors and children. To alleviate fears that breathwork is a suspicious activity, teachers could offer a get-together for all stakeholders during which the science behind breathwork could be introduced, and the group could practice a few breathing exercises together, allowing for time to ask questions.

The following exercises involve visualizations, which can also be fun for adults, and are not solely meant for younger learners.

1. **Bubble Breath:** Imagine blowing bubbles with your mouth.  
**Instructions:** Inhale through your nose, exhale slowly with pursed lips as if you are blowing bubbles. This playful exercise can introduce children to mindful, deep breathing, helping regulate emotions and improving self-regulation.
2. **Balloon Breath:** Another exercise which can help with self-regulation (Perry & Szalavitz, 2017).  
**Instructions:** Imagine that you are inflating a balloon with your breath on the exhale, deflating the balloon with the inhale. The teacher can encourage the children to envision their balloons in their favorite colors and share what their balloon looked like at the end of this activity. This could be a fun language activity to practice colors in another language.
3. **Bumblebee Breath:** This breathing exercise can help children when they feel nervous or anxious, not only at school but anytime (Weintraub, 2003).  
**Instructions:** With closed eyes, the children place their hands over their ears, inhale through the nose, and gently hum while exhaling through the nose like a bee. While they hum, they can envision how a cute bee is giving them some honey, which will help make them strong to face the situation. If the image of a bee is not appropriate, or the children don't want to cover their ears, the children can choose any animal that soothes them (e.g., a teddy bear) and connect with it by humming.
4. **Dragon Breath:** This visualization helps with releasing pent-up energy when emotions run high, or children are angry and frustrated.  
**Instructions:** Invite children to pretend they are a dragon (a lion or any other strong animal can be substituted). After a quiet inhale through the nose, the exhale is loud and quick through the open mouth, releasing energy like the fiery breath of a dragon. The children can be encouraged to walk around like a dragon while breathing for further energy release, but it is advisable to set boundaries beforehand, such as "for half a minute, we'll breathe like dragons walking in a circle and when my timer rings, we'll sit down again and return to normal breathing."

### Challenges & Considerations

Even though breathwork and other mindfulness activities have gained acceptance and scientific support in the field of education, introducing breathing exercises in classrooms is not without challenges. First, before choosing a breathwork technique, the needs and experiences of the language learners and teacher have to be taken into consideration, and the breathwork should be adapted accordingly. Second, teachers who want to implement breathwork activities in the classroom have to make sure to properly introduce and explain the breathing technique to ensure its safety and effectiveness. Lastly, it is important to be transparent with all stakeholders about breathwork in the classroom to avoid misunderstandings. Considering these challenges, breathwork can ultimately prove its effectiveness when students and teachers are able to report that they are feeling less stressed and anxious, and that learning has become more joyful by exploring breathwork together.

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### CATESOL Blog: Call for Submissions

The CATESOL Blog is published monthly and accepts a range of article types for publication. Plan on trying out *breathwork* in your classroom? Write about it on the blog!

Access the blog at <https://catesol.org/blog/catesol-blog>

Email **Michelle Skowbo** at [meskowbo@gmail.com](mailto:meskowbo@gmail.com) to contribute to the blog.

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# Member Submission II – Fostering Cultural Awareness in Language Learning Through Introducing Famous Figures 48

Hiba Al Gabra

Introducing famous figures during language teaching is an excellent way to promote cultural awareness and enhance language learning. It not only provides linguistic benefits but also offers insights into the culture, history, and values associated with the figure. Furthermore, it provides a context for language learning that goes beyond grammar and vocabulary, making the learning experience more meaningful and engaging for students.

In our school, this activity was held every other week, and student from various linguistics abilities were welcomed to participate. The way in which this activity was performed involved a number of steps to ensure the smoothness of its applicability. Here are the steps we followed to integrate famous figures into language teaching for cultural awareness:

## 1. Select Relevant Figures:

Choose figures that are relevant to the culture associated with the language variety, regional context and/or social-cultural population being taught. This could include historical figures, artists, writers, scientists, political leaders, or even contemporary figures who have made a significant impact. Each time can be dedicated to a certain theme. The theme and the public figure can be agreed on with the students prior to the class itself to give them some time to read about the public figure they want to learn about about.

## 2. Create a Lesson Plan:

After agreeing on the public figure with the students, teachers can develop a lesson plan that incorporates information about the chosen figure, including relevant vocabulary, phrases, and expressions related to the figure's life, work, or achievements. This could be done through interactive activities and utilizing multimedia resources, such as videos, interviews, or documentaries about the figure. All of this can make the lesson more engaging and interesting to the students, allowing them to hear authentic language and expose them to different accents.

## 3. Share Biographical Information:

Provide students with biographical information about the figure, highlighting key milestones in their life. You can allocate a week or 10 days for students to carefully read and explore this public figure in order to come to the hour prepared and ready to participate in class discussions. In addition to that, this can be an opportunity to expose students to verb tenses, narrative structures, and other language elements within a meaningful context.

## 4. Include Cultural Context:

During the hour, teachers can take advantage of the topic and discuss the cultural context in which the figure lived or lives. Explore how their contributions have influenced the language, traditions, and societal norms of the culture. This helps students connect language learning with broader cultural understanding.

*“Explore how their contributions have influenced the language, traditions, and societal norms of the culture.”*



(Cont.)



## 5. Interactive Learning:

Designing activities such as class discussions, creative projects, and role-playing scenarios engages students in interactive learning experiences. These activities not only reinforce language skills but also promote collaboration, communication, and a sense of community within the language classroom.

## 6. Personal Connection and Preparation for Real-world Communication:

Famous figures can become a bridge for students to connect with the language on a personal level. Learning about the life stories, challenges, and triumphs of these figures helps students form a personal connection to the language. It also prepares students for real-world communication as it equips them with the ability to navigate social interactions, comprehend idiomatic expressions, and use language appropriately in various situations, contributing to their overall language fluency.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, integrating famous figures into language teaching transforms language education into an engaging and meaningful exploration of culture, history, and human achievement. This approach benefits language proficiency as well as cultivates global citizens who appreciate and respect the diverse cultures that make our world vibrant and interconnected. As teachers continue to embrace this holistic approach, they empower students to not just speak a language, but to truly understand and appreciate the complexities of our interconnected world with empathy, fluency, and cultural sensitivity.

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## CATESOL Town Hall Virtual Meeting- CATESOL Town Hall Meeting: Equitable Course Prefix in AB 1111

On November 16th, 2023, the California Community College's Academic Senate passed Resolution 09.02 F23 Support for an Equitable Course Prefix in Lieu of 'ESL' in AB 1111 Common Course Numbering with amendments. (hyperlink to Resolution 09.02 F23: <https://asccc.org/events/2023-fall-plenary-session>).

As a language community, let's come together to discuss the implications of AB 1111 as it relates to our credit and potential noncredit programs in the community college community but also in adult education and four-year institutions. Let's gather and discuss our concerns and bring our collaborative voice forward with a potential recommendation for the prefix we choose to adopt prior to the July 1st, 2024, due date indicated in AB 1111. (hyperlink to AB1111: [https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill\\_id=202120220AB1111](https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill_id=202120220AB1111) )

### Moderators:

Dr. Merari Weber, Academic Senate Vice President, Santa Ana College School of Continuing Education and Song Hong, CATESOL President 2023-2025



**CATESOL**  
**Town Hall Meeting**



Saturday, January 13, 2024  
(11:30am-1:30pm)

[Register Here:](#)

Moderators: Dr. Merari Weber, Song Hong

(Cont.)

# Feature Focus I—ESL Meets AI: How We Can Make Our Lives Easier with ChatGPT, Submission #4

Kristi Reyes and Ryan Detwiler

## 5 of 20 Ways ESL Teachers Can Use ChatGPT

Early in 2023 when teachers were grappling with how to address ChatGPT in their classroom and the impact it could potentially negatively impact students' learning, we brainstormed some ways for teachers to leverage the tool. These suggestions have been featured in the previous issues this year (i.e., 56-1, 56-2 and 56-3). This is the last installment of the four-part series, sharing the five suggestions (i.e., #16-#20).

### 16. Answer hard questions about vocabulary, grammar, or other topics you may not be prepared to answer on the fly.



Explain a simile versus an analogy with examples.



A simile is a figure of speech that uses a comparison to describe something by saying that it is like something else. The comparison is usually made using the words "like" or "as." For example:

"The room was as quiet as a library."

"She runs like a cheetah."

An analogy is a comparison made between two things that are similar in some way, in order to explain or clarify something. An analogy is often used to help explain a concept or idea by making a comparison to something that is more familiar. For example:

(response continues)



Explain past perfect verb tense with examples.



The past perfect verb tense is used to describe an action that was completed before a specific point in the past. It is used to describe an action that happened before another action in the past, and is often used with the past simple tense.

Here are some examples of the past perfect verb tense:

- "I had finished my homework before I went to bed." (In this sentence, "had finished" is the past perfect verb tense and "went" is the past simple verb tense. The action of finishing the homework happened before the action of going to bed.)
- "She had already eaten lunch when I arrived." (In this sentence, "had already eaten" is the

(Cont.)

### 17. Write scenarios for discussion and [problem-based learning](#).



Write a problem-solving scenario for adult English language learners about lack of childcare.



Scenario:

You are an adult English language learner and have recently started a new job. However, you have been struggling to find reliable childcare for your young children while you work. You have tried reaching out to family members and friends for help, but nobody is available to watch your children during your work hours. As a result, you have had to miss work a few times, which is causing stress and financial difficulties.

Problem:

You need to find a solution for your lack of childcare so that you can continue working and supporting your family.

Possible solutions:

(response continues)

Possible solutions:

1. Look into local daycare centers or babysitting services: There may be options available in your area that can provide the care you need for your children. Be sure to do your research and ask for references before choosing a provider.
2. Ask your employer for assistance: Some companies offer employee assistance programs or flexible work arrangements that may be able to help you find childcare solutions.
3. Explore online resources: There are many online platforms and services that can connect you with babysitters and nannies in your area. These options may be more flexible and allow you to find someone who can watch your children at the specific times you need.
4. Consider sharing childcare with another parent: If you know someone else who also needs childcare and has similar work hours, you may be able to work out a arrangement

(response continues)

(Cont.)

### 18. Generate writing assignment prompts and model paragraphs for writing assignments.



Generate a writing prompt for a paragraph on family.



Write a paragraph about a memorable family vacation you took. Describe the place you went, the activities you did, and how it brought your family closer together.



take out vacation



Write a paragraph about a meaningful experience you had with your family. This could be a special event, tradition, or activity that you all enjoy together. Reflect on why this experience is important to you and how it has strengthened your bond with your family.

Here's another example:



Generate an opinion paragraph writing prompt on the topic of automation of jobs



Write an opinion paragraph discussing your thoughts on the automation of jobs. Do you believe that automation is a positive development that will lead to increased efficiency and productivity, or do you have concerns about the potential negative impacts on employment and wages? How do you think society should approach the automation of jobs, and what steps do you think should be taken to mitigate any negative consequences?

### 19. Group projects to practice ChatGPT prompt engineering.

**Example assignment:** “Invent a product that solves a specific problem. Use ChatGPT to streamline the development of a marketing presentation about your product.”

**Steps:**

In small groups:

1. brainstorm a problem
2. then brainstorm an invention (product)
3. next ask ChatGPT to list 3 ways the product will solve such and such problem
4. experiment with ChatGPT prompt engineering to develop a marketing pitch

(Cont.)

5. make a Google Slides presentation

### Example prompt engineering tasks:

Tell ChatGPT to:

1. act as a specific person or profession
2. use a specific tone, for example, a friendly, scientific, casual, slightly-enthusiastic tone
3. incorporate specific vocabulary

**BONUS:** Use a text-to-image generator to create images of your product solving the problem.

## 20. Write lesson plans.



Title: Using the Present Perfect to Talk about Life Experiences

Objective: By the end of this lesson, students will be able to use the present perfect verb tense to talk about their own life experiences and the experiences of others.

Materials:

- Whiteboard or blackboard
- Markers or chalk
- Handouts with examples and practice exercises

Warm-up:

- Review the present perfect verb tense with the students. Remind them that it is used to talk about actions or events that have happened at an unspecified time in the past and have a connection to the present.
- Write the following sentence on the board: "I have eaten pizza many times." Ask the

In addition, teachers AND students can use ChatGPT to get suggestions for improving written assignments by copying in students' written submissions and asking for targeted feedback. It can also provide grammar corrections and explanations, but the explanations are not always great. ChatGPT also does translations; a student could ask ChatGPT to explain text entered in English in another language.

(Cont.)

Are you interested in other uses of AI for instructional purposes? [Futurepedia](#) is a directory of AI tools waiting to be explored and exploited for engaging language teaching and learning! There are tools that will paraphrase texts, create art and logos and avatars, make music including mixtapes and playlists, write better emails, convert video to text, create podcasts, design the interior of your home, create videos from scripts or blog posts using voices, allow you to have conversations with historical figures and have your text spoken by celebrities, even write newsletters like this one!

See also this compilation of other tools and resources: [Artificial Intelligence \(AI\) Tools for Teaching and Learning: List of Resources, Further Reading.](#)

We are curious how you will use ChatGPT or any other AI tools you explore! Are you as excited as we are? This article focused primarily on how teachers can use ChatGPT. How would you have your students use ChatGPT and other AI tools?

### Conclusion

If you missed any of the previous articles describing the first fifteen suggestion on how to leverage ChatPGT in the classroom, they can be accessed through the previous issue on the CATESOL Newsletter site or the full article can be accessed here: <https://www.lessons.eslvideo.com/esl-meets-ai-how-we-can-make-our-lives-easier-with-chatgpt>

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## Call for 2023 CATESOL Conference Session Presentations – For 2024 January, March and June Issues.



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# CATESOL23 Conference Session Report III- Postgraduate L2 English Learners Views of AI on Writing Processes<sup>55</sup>

Leslie Sherwood and Kara Mac Donald

It is pretty much a year to the date when OpenAI launched ChatGPT (Generative Pre-trained Transformer) in late November 2022, now the well-known chatbot, which permits a user to input a question or topic prompt while the application produces an answer in a short answer or essay format, is a commonplace term and application in use. A year ago, many in reputable news publication and teacher practitioner publications (Bowman, 2022; Elsen-Rooney, 2023; Grobe, 2023; Herman, 2022; Johnson, 2023; Yorio, 2023; McMurtie, 2022; Roose, 2023; Young, 2023; Zimotti & Francis, 2023), initially considered the predominantly potential negative implications of the tool. However, as the hype and trepidations of the app's, and the related Google app Bard's, implications waned, educators began to share how such technology can be leveraged as a productive tool in English language learner (ELL) classrooms (Cohen, 2023), including individuals in the CATESOL Newsletter (Reyes & Detwiler, 2023), with the fourth installment of the series in this issue. As these ELL instructors and others began to respond to the general popular news discussion around ChatGPT, they shared positive instructional insights and caveats around leveraging the tool and navigating pitfalls of potential disuse across various learner groups.

## Learners Views of ChatGPT

However, the majority of the discussion has been from educators' perspective of the AI technology, with only a few examining learners' point of view (The Learning Network, 2023). As a consequence, in early 2023 the authors conducted action research examining the perspectives of postgraduate international students' perspectives of AI impact on writing processes. The authors shared the finding in a presentation at the 2023 CATESOL Conference, *Breaking New Ground*, in Alameda, which situates well within the conference theme, as ELL educators were breaking new pathways in the language education landscape in the midst of ChatGPT and other AI language applications (i.e., Bard).

This article summarizes the collaborative action research project, using a qualitative approach, which was based on action research that specifically explored postgraduate second language (L2) English students' views of AI tools in terms of how the technology affected their thinking and writing processes. Additionally, questions of how these views correlated to students' first languages (L1), disciplines, postgraduate programs, and prior course experience with the instructor were examined. The study employed an action research framework (Efron & Ravid, 2020; Hammond, 2020), coupled with activity theory (Leontiev, 1981). The researchers coded students' first day of class writing diagnostic tasks in a high-intermediate L2 English writing and communications course, based on a reading and prompt discussing both viewpoints of potential learning implications with the growing ubiquity of generative AI. Based on the findings, pedagogical implications for how instructors might support their students in navigating AI tools, for the learning of English for Academic Purposes (EAP) writing, were shared.

## Literature: Areas of Focus

The consulted literature revolved around the following: academic integrity, writing as a human process, loss of authorship, and reduction of critical thinking.

First, since the 1990s, there has been a growing body of research on academic integrity (Macfarlane, Zhang & Pun, 2012; Bretag, 2016) with expansion in higher education and distance learning. Additionally, faculty are not always in agreement of how to address instances of mis- (Cont.)

conduct (Loftstrom, et al., 2015). However, Grobe (2023) sees the tool as a point of departure and argues that the confines of ChatGPT is where true writing, and writing instruction, begin.

Second, writing is a complex process (Hayes and Berninger, 2014). The back-and-forth of crafting a written piece requires a focused thought process, drawing on working and long-term memory, which is a dynamic and complex process. Many factors guide writers' actions and decisions that writers choose in the process of crafting a piece, informed by their audience, context, register, genre, etc. (Flower & Hayes, 1981). It is argued that AI reduces the quality of the human experience of writing (Johnson, 2023), causing it to atrophy.

Third, published texts across the internet with unidentified authors are increasingly common (Abassi et al., 2022). This new mode of writing is growing. A recent example of a writer and AI co-authored publication is *Pharmako-AI and Amor Cringe*, by Allado-McDowell (Knibbs, 2022), where Knibbs discusses talking to Amor Cringe coauthors, writer K. Allado-McDowell and GPT-3. As a result, questions regarding author ownership and who owns the content are under discussion and in question. Additionally, the internet offers a wealth of misinformation available that can be taken as fact, as it comes from a published source not necessarily framed as an opinion piece (Adams, et al., 2023).

Fourth, writing requires i) forethought and planning, ii) at times research and analysis of published texts to formulate an argument, iii) consideration of the audience, iv) assessment of the draft text and revision of the wording and/or organization. This process is intrinsically human as it involves considerations of various nuances at all stages of the writing process. For example, participants subjected to writing instruction treatments compared with those that were not demonstrated critical thinking skills higher in the former than the later (Naber & Wyatt, 2014; Quitadamo & Kurtz, 2007).

## **Instructional Implications**

Based on the outcomes of the study, in review for publication as a chapter in a two-volume series, the authors share instructional suggestions for the L2/ELL classroom.

As a starting point, involve students in the discussion to understand their viewpoints and use this understanding to inform classroom instruction and activity adaptation.

- Can invite learners to share perspectives on such topics, e.g. via a diagnostic exam
- May subsequently plan and contextualize the use of technology based on such responses, e.g., "As many of you expressed in your diagnostic, ChatGPT can ..."
- Redesign curriculum, ensuring scaffolding and reflection of writing process and (optional) tool use

Since students have a nuanced view of AI's potential effects on their thinking, we, as educators, should proceed with caution, as we consider how to treat such tools in the learning environment.

- Consider the value of naturalistic language learning opportunities AI, such as ChatGPT, may afford the learner (Cole & Vanderplink, 2016).
- To be most effective, digital language learning needs to be grounded in socially structured instruction (Lantolf & Xi, 2023). Thus, exploring such tools in the classroom may be worthwhile in meeting the goals of language learning.
- Pilot directions for chatbot tasks to maximize student learning experience (Bibauw, et al, 2022, p.130)

Given both the affordances documented (Huang et al, 2022) and the relative openness of students to such technologies, instructors may experiment with ways to leverage generative AI for the teaching of writing, being mindful and communicating limitations of such technology as well. (Cont.)



- Requesting feedback on one's writing (Kooli, 2023)
- Prompting the technology for samples that target a specific linguistic form, for an inductive, pseudo-corpus, learning experience
- Reviewing output of a request involving content written for distinct audiences
- Asking for a metalinguistic analysis of a specific rhetorical form
- Consulting the technology for contrastive analysis of synonyms, informing word choice

The above is just a summary of instructional recommendations, in absence of the extensive results obtained from the action research study. However, not a year into the educational landscape with AI's presence, the authors believe that the recommendations can be beneficial for educators navigating their own experiences with students' and teachers' access to AI.

## Conclusion

Of course, there are limitations to the action research study, as it was a small relatively sample of students enrolled in one course at a California university. For example, it is unclear the extent to which student views on their diagnostics were reported based on perception of the instructor's views and preferences. Additionally, the instrument (i.e., the diagnostic prompt), was somewhat leading, asking students to respond directly to the idea that AI might lead to "an outsourcing of one's thinking," potentially biasing results. Given the contextualized nature of this study, inferences beyond the immediate classroom context may be limited, but the general recommendations shared here are potentially informative for diverse student populations and classroom settings.

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## Turn Your Presentation Into A Publication

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The CATESOL Newsletter will be publishing presentations from the 2023 CATESOL Conference, Breaking New Ground, in Alameda, CA this past October in the first three issues of the 2024 (57-1(March), 57-2 (June) & 57-3 (September)).

**Submissions to:** [newsletter@catesol.org](mailto:newsletter@catesol.org)

Jon Phillips and Sumbal Ayaz

Many IEP students often achieve a proficiency level of 2+ and above in Reading and Listening skills according to the Interagency Language Roundtable proficiency scale (ILR), which is equivalent to Advanced High on the ACTFL scale or Bridging-L5 on the TESOL scale. However, when it comes to Speaking skills, reaching the same level seems more challenging. Speaking is often considered the **more** difficult skill to master due to the active production of language on the spot, which can be more demanding than passive comprehension in Reading and Listening.

Several reasons contribute to the difficulty students face in Speaking:

**Active Production:** While students might understand spoken language, expressing coherent and accurate responses in the target language is challenging.

**Performance Anxiety:** Speaking in a foreign language, especially in front of others, often leads to fluency issues, errors, and lack of confidence.

**Foundational Skills:** Speaking proficiency requires a strong base in vocabulary and grammar, which takes time and practice to develop.

**Cultural and Social Challenges:** Navigating social norms and cultural nuances in conversation can be complex and challenging.

**Cognitive Load:** Speaking in a foreign language demands simultaneous use of cognitive resources like attention, memory, and processing speed, adding to the difficulty.

**Lack of Confidence and Knowledge:** Some students lack confidence, hesitate, stumble over words, or avoid speaking due to insufficient background knowledge or vocabulary.

To support our students, a comprehensive approach to teaching speaking is crucial:

**Understanding Speaking Competence:** Teachers should comprehend the interconnectedness of speaking competence's various elements. A model encompassing language knowledge, core speaking skills, and communication strategies provides a holistic understanding.

**Language and Discourse Mastery:** This involves mastering pronunciation, understanding grammar, vocabulary, discourse structures, and the nuances of different types of speech.

**Social and Pragmatic Appropriateness:** Teaching students to adapt their language and communication style to various social contexts, considering formality, politeness, audience awareness, cultural sensitivity, situational adaptation, and conversational roles.

**Core Speaking Skills:** Focusing on fluency through controlling speech rate, chunking techniques, strategic pausing, and utilizing formulaic language and discourse markers to enhance coherent expression.

**Negotiating Speech:** Encouraging students to build on previous utterances, monitor understanding, repair communication breakdowns, and offer constructive feedback.

**Managing Flow of Speech:** Teaching the art of initiating topics, turn-taking, signaling intentions, and opening/closing conversations appropriately.

By addressing these elements comprehensively, teachers can better equip students to navigate the complexities of developing their English speaking proficiency.

## The Teaching-Speaking Cycle

In their book *Teaching Speaking*, Goh and Burns (2012, p. 153) recommend a seven-stage (Cont.)

cycle of activities in a speaking lesson:

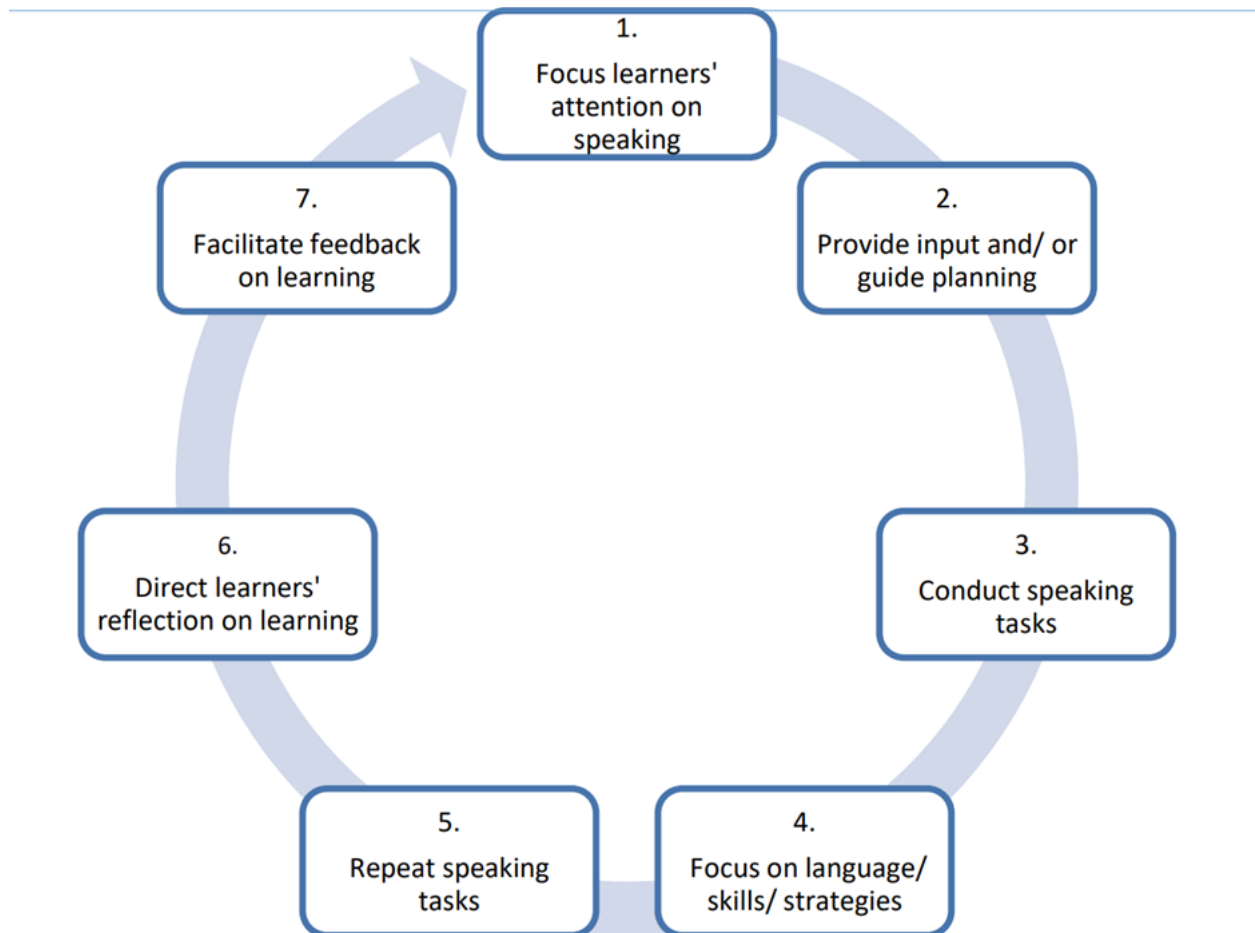


Figure 1: The Teaching-Speaking Cycle

1. Focus learners' attention on speaking: Students think about a speaking activity, what it involves and what they can anticipate.
2. Provide input and/or guide planning: This may involve pre-teaching vocabulary, expressions or discourse features and planning for an activity they will carry out in class (e.g., a presentation or a transaction).
3. Conduct speaking task: Students practice a communicative speaking task with a focus on fluency.
4. Focus on language/skills/strategies: Students examine their performance or look at other performances of the task, as well as transcripts of how the task can be carried out and review different features of the task.
5. Repeat speaking task: The activity is performed a second time.
6. Direct learners' reflection on learning: Students review and reflect on what they have learned and difficulties they encountered.
7. Facilitate feedback on learning: Teacher provides feedback on their performance.

(Cont.)

## Guest Author III – (Cont.)

### 120-90-60 Speaking Fluency Activity

Here is an example of an ELL speaking fluency activity that incorporates aspects of the stages mentioned above that you can try out in your classes. It will help get your students speaking more quickly on a familiar topic. This activity is more appropriate for intermediate or advanced students as beginners will find it a struggle to speak in English for a full two minutes without stopping. Here's how it works.

In this activity, students have to talk about a topic for 120 seconds. The next time, they have to include all the same information but cover it in 90 seconds. The third time, the same information but in 60 seconds. This is challenging but fun.

#### Here's how to set up 120-90-60

Give your students a topic that they know a lot about. For example, good or bad points about their school, university, or hometown. You may want to give half the class one topic and the other half another topic just to make it a bit more interesting to listen to.

Give your students 1-5 minutes to prepare, depending on their level. Advanced students will need less time than intermediate ones. For the best students, you may tell them to just think "in their heads" and write nothing down on paper. This makes it a bit more challenging for them.

Emphasize that your students should just write one or two words for each point, and not full sentences because it is a speaking activity and not a writing one. The most important point is NOT to write full sentences. You may need to show an example of what you expect from your students. Also, remind them to use things like contractions when trying to speak quickly.

Here is an example outline from which students will talk for 120 seconds, then 90, then 60:

#### Hometown: Good & Bad Points

##### Introduction

Good (parks, restaurants, my family)

Bad (traffic, no university, pollution, crime)

#### The Talking Part of 120-90-60

Students work in pairs. Student 1 in each pair has two minutes to talk with an emphasis on fluency and they then switch roles. After that, the students have to find a new partner and the activity repeats, except they have to include ALL the same information as before in 90 seconds. Then switch roles. Students then find new partners and repeat the process in 60 seconds. For lower-level students, you can adjust the times to make them shorter. To make this ESL speaking fluency activity a bit more interactive, you can require the listener to ask 2-3 questions after listening.



Image 1: Students Speaking Practice (Creative Commons).

Students then find new partners and repeat the process in 60 seconds. For lower-level students, you can adjust the times to make them shorter. To make this ESL speaking fluency activity a bit more interactive, you can require the listener to ask 2-3 questions after listening.

The teacher listens in, notes areas for constructive feedback and provides timely input and guidance for improving students' performance.

(Cont.)

### Examples of More Speaking Fluency Activities for English Speakers

- Role Play:** Have students act out different scenarios to practice real-life conversations.
- Debate:** Encourage students to discuss and defend their opinions on various topics.
- Storytelling:** Have students share personal anecdotes or create fictional stories
- Picture Descriptions:** Show images and ask students to describe what they see in detail.
- Speed Talking:** Set a timer and have students speak on a topic without hesitation for a certain duration.
- Interview Practice:** Pair students up for mock interview sessions, taking turns as interviewee and interviewer.
- Story Starters:** Provide the beginning of a story and have students continue it in groups.
- News Discussion:** Students read current news articles and discuss their perspectives.
- Problem-solving scenarios:** Present challenges for students to discuss solutions collaboratively.
- Public Speaking:** Have students give short presentations on reading or listening texts, and topics of interest.
- Cartoons, idioms/proverbs/colloquialisms, culture embedded phrases related to a particular topic:** Higher level students interpret, discuss and present.

### Conclusion

The primary goal of speaking tasks is to help students develop fluency where meaning is communicated with few hesitations and in a manner that is appropriate for the purpose of the message. This is achieved by using of accurate language, appropriate speech enabling skills, and effective communication strategies.

The learners' speaking performance can be enhanced through pre-task planning and task repetition, as these activities can reduce cognitive load during speech processing.

Learning involves noticing key information and storing it in long term memory. Activities that focus learners' attention on language, skills and strategies are therefore an important part of teaching speaking.

Activities that help learners develop metacognitive knowledge and self-regulation of their speaking and learning processes are also needed to address affective and other cognitive demands of learning to speak in a second language.

### Resources

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Ideas for the Classroom: 120-90-60 Speaking Fluency Activity. [www.eslspeaking.org](http://www.eslspeaking.org)

# *Language Teacher Identity Series – Juggling Teaching ESL, Arabic, and French (while dissertating): Three insights into Language Teacher Identity from a challenging period* <sup>63</sup>

Dr. Roger W. Anderson

As a new Californian, I am finally finding time to reflect on my intense teaching experiences of the past few years. In 2020, at the height of the global pandemic, I finished my doctoral studies (in second language education) from a large research university in the Midwest. To fund my studies, I was teaching (ESL and Arabic, then ESL and French) within this university, then at local community college during summers (French), and doing corporate tutoring (ESL) on weekends. Needless to say, it was the most intense period of my life – thus far.

Specifically, I was teaching Modern Standard Arabic to classes that mixed true beginners with heritage learners (Arab-heritage, non-Arab Muslim students). Simultaneously within the ESL department, I was teaching language and teaching skills/American academic culture to International Teaching Assistants (ITAs) in an ITA training class. This class was required for students who scored low on sample teaching practica, which were part of the university's testing regiment (mandated by a state law dating from the 1980's). This class was not a replacement for department specific training (within the Music department, the Chemistry department, etc.).

Finding ITA work terribly complex and important, I focused my dissertation research on the experiences of six ITAs employed in various departments across campus. None were my students. For just over a semester, I collected ethnographic data, involving many hours of interviews (50+) and nearly as many hours of classroom observations. To remain aware of my biases, my dissertation committee prudently required me to keep a journal during that period. I journaled 270 double-spaced, typed pages over 13 months. Struggling to perform all these activities, I journaled about all of them together.

Finally finding the tranquility to revisit this journal, I decided to analyze it using my training as an applied linguist. Inductive analysis is commonly used in qualitative research. The main findings will be published elsewhere. Notwithstanding, three insights about my language teacher identity (LTI) surfaced that are worth considering. For each, I provide an excerpt from my journal.

## **Insights into LTI from this tough period of my teaching career**

### **1. Learning environments in which Non-Native Speakers (NNSs) teach Heritage Language Learners (HLLs) can be fraught – and fulfilling**

At times, my LTI (of French and Modern Standard Arabic) were challenged by heritage (and native speakers), while at other times it was enriched by their contributions. In rare moments, I experienced both positivity and negativity, simultaneously. I journaled:

*During (Arabic) class, an interesting moment happened when I put up a slide for the word “to smoke.” I asked if in Palestinian Arabic and Kuwaiti Arabic the word was the same (those being the two dialects represented by students in my class). I temporarily forgot about my Moroccan-American student, whose face was obscured, sitting in the back row. (The two Kuwaiti and Palestinian-American students) concurred the word was the same, and so I proceeded to explain in Moroccan Arabic, the word is different, and spoke it. The one Palestinian student turned around to the Moroccan Arabic student and asked for verbal confirmation. This was because 1) I am not a native speaker, and/or 2) the word is so different than formal Arabic, it has no recognizability with it. The student*

(Cont.)

*confirmed my word. I felt both vindicated and oddly challenged at the same time, but don't mind. As a non-native speaker, I know my authority as a user of the language is always wrapped up with students' perception of me, my status, my abilities, my ties to the Arab World, etc., which I expect.*

This passage demonstrates that I perceived the legitimacy of my LTI as an NNS Arabic instructor as depending upon, or in the least subject to, the approbation of HHLs in the class. In this instance, my LTI was reaffirmed by one HHL. Conversely, predominantly negative anecdotes surfaced in my journaling regarding teaching French. Multiple native speakers (not heritage learners) were able to enroll in my Beginning/Intermediate French courses since no testing was required by those departments. Their presence complicated class by bringing attention to their advanced structures, and serving for other students as references against which they often verified the veracity of my teaching.

## **2. Instructors, like students, bring their cultural preferences and values into the language classroom (and mismatching may occur)**

Arabic is a language that is *diglossic* in nature: one gloss is the formal variety, standardized across Arabic speaking populations (MSA), and the other is the colloquial dialect, of which five major groupings are recognized. Major vocabulary and phonetic differences exist between some dialects. Moreover, many Non-Arab Muslims worldwide have varying levels of familiarity with Arabic, having studied or used it as a liturgical language. The university course I was teaching focused mostly on MSA. After one class, I journaled:

*In small talk after the quiz, [a Kuwaiti-American student] said his last semester instructor, a non-native (Muslim) speaker of Arabic, was so rough with them that they felt as if they had been beaten up after the class. He said she teaches like an Arab. He said he still had "battle scars" from her class last semester. He also said he wished our class was more like that, and less fun. I was surprised ... I told him that my goals are for students to learn and for students to enjoy it (so they continue in their study and not hate the language). I think his perspective is very situated in his Arab identity or Muslim identity, in which it is a given that he will/must/should learn Arabic. For the true beginners, this is not so established and I must cater to both.*

This excerpt indirectly addressed my Arabic LTI. Here, the student's expectations for the classroom misaligned with my administration of it. Moreover, his motivation for language learning was unflinching, which differed significantly from those of his non-Arab heritage, non-Muslim classmates. Catering to two distinct sets of learners was therefore challenging. Furthermore, that my "fun" approach contrasted with his prior teacher's ("battle"-like) approach underscores how teaching language is a culturally-mediated practice. Ironically, I doubt that he felt as free to critique his former instructor's approach. Not only did his forthrightness surprise me, but so did his preference for being metaphorically wounded in the language classroom.

## **3. ITA educators are keystones within universities' structures**

Within many North American universities, ITAs have been critically important teaching staff, even if temporary. The following excerpt continues to be troubling. It records my reaction to an ITA student of mine explaining his dire situation. The passage references the "Discussion Facilitation" Assignment, which was included in the ITA Training curriculum. This weekly assignment required ITA students to read material on aspects of U.S./U.S. academic culture vis-à-vis undergraduate education, then take turns each week facilitating the class discussion of the materials. I implemented it each semester I taught ITAs, having the choice to modify the curriculum with little super-

(Cont.)



*[One distressed ITA student of mine] was deemed uncertified to teach by his lab supervisor and thus lost his TA position and thus his funding. He said he was accused of chronically being late and of being disrespectful to his supervisor. He is distraught, and already went to the chair, who said this person's decision is final. I of course want to throw myself into the mix and investigate further to see what role cultural difference played, etc. Of course, every story has two sides... I do feel badly seeing how distressed he is. Today I referred him to the grad school and next week I will refer him to the graduate student government committee on which I used to serve.*

*He frantically emailed all his students telling them what was happening, and asking them to get involved... a desperate measure. Again, I feel very compelled to get involved, but know that this is not my role, my place, and definitely don't want to get (my department) involved since they have had issues with [the ITA's department] anyways.*

*Even sending this student an email with my name attached to it, advising him on the issue, I am reluctant to do... His department has power, as evidenced through my dissertation findings.*

*This related to the role of culture in [my ITA Training class]... am I doing enough? No. Discussions contain cultural materials but only if they are read or included by the Discussion Facilitation (assignment). Most times, the discussion facilitator seemingly hasn't read, and the discussions are based on ITA's own personal experiences. There is value in managing a discussion, but there is also (more valuable?) knowledge in knowing about undergraduates and the cultures in which they are enmeshed. Very torn about this assignment... In any event, culture, cultural difference, English speaking skills, academic rigor, working with American undergrads... all of these come together when an ITA enters a classroom.*

Regarding my LTI, this dense passage demonstrates my investment in my ITA learners' success, but this investment was tempered by my awareness of the structures of the university itself. My empathy for my student ran against my need for self-preservation, given the precariousness of my own employment. Particularly, this student's (large) department and the ESL department had dealt with recent conflicts between them. Recognizing the U.S. university as an intercultural space, my inclination was to defend the ITA, and to begin to question myself and pedagogical choices.

In hindsight, I recognize that I was but one of several ITA educators, who was juggling teaching multiple languages and dissertating. As such, I was not solely responsible for the ITA class curriculum, nor was I solely responsible for this student's linguistic or culture development and professionalism. I believe that learners are responsible for their own learning, just as adults are responsible for their own actions. Not knowing all the facts, I remain curious as to how much cultural and linguistic differences, rather than personality clashes, impacted these decisions. I certainly hope this ITA was able to complete his studies, somehow.

Notwithstanding, this passage elucidates that the work of ITA educators, as teacher trainers, is of exponential value to universities. It is imperative that universities recognize the specialized nature of this work. In doing so, they would respect the niche expertise of ITA educators and provide them adequate resources, including the ability to conduct observations within departments to understand pedagogies across campus and the communicative needs of these pedagogies, from which ITA pedagogies and materials could be developed or refined. This would also mean investing in a professionalized, permanent ITA education staff, who would not need to piece together a living through various teaching gigs in multiple departments/institutions. If the university employs unsuccessful ITAs, undergraduate students will not go unaffected.

(Cont.)

Finally, that this ITA confided in me, a university professional outside their home department, stresses the imperative that ITA students have access to similar but more formalized resources within the university to navigate cultural differences within academic departments or mediate conflicts that arise there. Such work was not within my job description, nor within the purview of the ESL department generally.

### Conclusion

These few passages from my dissertation journal highlighted some controversial aspects of LTI. They demonstrated the complexities that can arise within language classes led by NNSs, particularly classes populated with HLLs. Cultural expectations and personal preferences of both instructors and students were being brought into the learning environment. While integrating HLLs has become a major concern within world language education, little attention has been given to their NNS instructors. Journaling here suggested that institutions that are attentive to their staff's LTIs would establish testing regimes that prevented highly proficiency speakers to enroll in low level courses of the language.

The final passage elucidates the high-stakes nature of ITA education. Institutions that care for their undergrads and for their ITAs must support ITAs throughout their career at the institution. Regarding LTI, journaling showed how my multiple identities and loyalties were colliding. As an instructor, I was committed to my students, but I was also a graduate student/employee of specific departments with rules governing my conduct. Teachers may feel responsible for their students' success, sometimes to a fault. Yet it is the entire institution that is responsible for students' learning experience (and learners themselves are not without agency). The committed, professional teacher may need reminders of this from time to time.

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Sonia Estima and Kara Mac Donald

The co-coordinators of the Research Writers-Interest Group (RW-IG) have offered various webinars over the past several years, along with IG sessions provided at the annual conferences, like at *CATESOL23* in Alameda, promoting the CATESOL Newsletter, Blog, and Journal as great venues for sharing expertise.

These venues have highlighted the wide range of submissions welcome by the CATESOL publications and how accessible they are for members to share their action research, conference presentations, classroom activities or personal reflections. However, the RW-IG also supports members that have interest in submitting manuscripts to other publications as well.

## **RW-IG Writing Retreat**

The RW-IG Writing *Retreat* is scheduled for Saturday, January 20, 2024, from 10:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.

To offer a new format for the IG's events, the virtual webinar event will be extended to three hours to offer discussion, collaboration, facilitator support and independent drafting/writing time: a writing *retreat* from the comfort of your own home.

We aim to leverage the energy and engagement members gained from the 2023 Annual CATESOL Conference, matched with the possibility of more downtime now that the fall semester is done, to offer a set period where you can put aside responsibilities of regular life to connect with other CATESOL members and set goals or make headway on writing projects for 2024.



## **Invited Journal Editor, Dawn Bikowski**

As in the past, the RW-IG seeks to bring presenters and collaborators to participate in its webinar sessions to bring valuable professional development and academic expertise to CATESOL members.

### ***Dawn Bikowski***

Dr. Bikowski is an Associate Professor at the Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center in Monterey. With an academic background in applied linguistics and educational technology, her research interests include educational technology, global teaching and learning, and academic and professional communication. International conferences and workshops, curriculum development projects, and program assessments have taken her to several countries worldwide. She is the author of numerous journal articles and co-authored the book *Teaching with a Global Perspective: Practical Strategies from Course Design to Assessment*.

## **Conclusion**

You can register for the RW-IG Writing Retreat on the CATESOL Homepage ([Here](#)). It may seem that January is a long way away. Yet don't wait! Register now and put it on your calendar to position yourself to start your writing project for publication in 2024. Time flies. Register now.

# Member Submission III – Key Strategies for Utilizing ChatGPT in the Foreign Language Classroom

Ragaa Shenouda

The introduction of ChatGPT 3.5 has sparked intense debates and discussions in education, capturing the attention of teachers and educational leaders alike. Unlike previous language models, ChatGPT stands out for its remarkable ability to generate human-like conversations and rapidly process vast amounts of information (Lo, 2023). However, the discourse on ChatGPT goes beyond its applications in content creation and customer service. It also delves into serious concerns about moral issues and the potential risks of using these advanced language models. These concerns are not mere speculation; they address issues such as the spread of misinformation, biases embedded in training data, and the urgent need for robust protective measures to mitigate these risks (Casal & Kessler, 2023). Ethical considerations also extend to academic integrity, prompting legitimate worries about the authenticity and honesty of educational efforts, especially when employing ChatGPT to complete assignments or compose essays.



On the other hand, ChatGPT can serve as a beneficial adjunct for language acquisition. It is important to emphasize that this article does not endorse using ChatGPT for dishonest practices or expediting academic tasks. Instead, it aims to explore how ChatGPT can be a valuable tool that enhances students' language learning experiences while upholding the essential principles of integrity and authenticity in education (Casal & Kessler, 2023). Its utility can enable language learners to practice speaking, receive immediate feedback on grammar and vocabulary, and delve into various linguistic subtleties. Engaging with ChatGPT allows learners to refine their oral and written proficiency and comprehension abilities by simulating genuine language scenarios. In addition, when ChatGPT is integrated with traditional language learning resources such as textbooks, it can offer supplementary opportunities for practice and support through language exchange initiatives and live instruction (Barrot, 2023). This collaborative approach ensures a well-rounded language learning experience without compromising educational values.

**Methods for Teachers to Use ChatGPT in Foreign Language Classroom** There are many ways that generative AI can help teachers. ChatGPT proves to be a valuable tool in expediting this process, offering prompt and insightful assistance. Therefore, educators can develop effective lesson plans aligned with learning objectives to actively engage students and enhance their academic achievements (Barrot, 2023). ChatGPT can be used for conversation practice, vocabulary acquisition, pronunciation practice, grammar practice, reading and listening comprehension, and writing practice. Here are some ideas for using ChatGPT, as follows:

## 1. Generate Reading Articles

Teachers can ask ChatGPT to generate articles on topics at students' reading levels.

## 2. Rephrase Existing Reading Articles

Teachers have the option to provide ChatGPT with existing reading articles and request a rephrasing tailored to accommodate students' reading levels.

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This allows teachers to offer the same content to different students, adjusting the language complexity to suit their diverse reading abilities.

### 3. Question Generation

Educators can ask ChatGPT to generate questions for different text types, such as books, movies, and articles. Teachers can prompt ChatGPT to create relevant queries by inputting the exact text they want. It is recommended to review the generated questions as they exhibit coherence around 90% of the time, which is a significant improvement compared to earlier this year.

#### Example

**You**  
Create content questions for the following passage:  
On Nov. 27, 2021, residents of an impoverished Baghdad suburb awoke to the news that the body of a young man, emptied of its organs, had been found in a vacant landfill. The man's relatives had reported him missing earlier that month. The crime was not the first to occur in the alleys of Sadr City, and it will certainly not be the last.  
Since 2003, human trafficking has spread in Iraq in a variety of ways: exploitation of children, coerced prostitution, and organ harvesting. In response to the increase in trafficking crimes, the Iraqi parliament passed Law No. 28 of 2012. It was against the law to recruit, transport, house, or receive people by force, threat of force, or other means, such as kidnapping, fraud, deception, abuse of power, exchange of money or privileges to an influential person in order to sell and exploit them through prostitution, sexual abuse, forced labor, enslavement, beggary, trading of human organs, medical experiments, or by any other method."

**ChatGPT**  
Content Questions:

1. What tragic event occurred on Nov. 27, 2021, in the impoverished Baghdad suburb mentioned in the text?
2. How has human trafficking manifested in Iraq since 2003, as outlined in the text?
3. What specific actions did the Iraqi parliament take to address the escalating issue of human trafficking, as mentioned in the text?
4. According to Law No. 28 of 2012, what activities related to human trafficking are explicitly prohibited in Iraq?
5. How does the text suggest that the incident described in Sadr City is not an isolated case, indicating a broader issue?

### 4. ChatGPT for Vocabulary Acquisition

Teachers can use ChatGPT to enhance vocabulary, as it can generate comprehensive vocabulary lists on specific topics. For instance, teachers can input the vocabulary list and instruct ChatGPT to create diverse types of assessments, such as fill-in-the-blank or multiple-choice questions. This approach stands out as an effective method for expanding students' vocabulary and studying new words in a contextualized manner. Furthermore, it aids students in grasping how these words are employed in sentences or within more extensive passages, providing a more profound understanding of their meanings and usage. One can prompt ChatGPT to integrate the vocabulary words into sentences, paragraphs, reading passages, or even dialogues to achieve this.

**You**  
Create a list of high-frequency on travel and tourism

**ChatGPT**  
Certainly! Here's a list of high-frequency terms related to travel and tourism:

1. **Airfare:** The cost of a ticket for air travel.
2. **Accommodation:** Places to stay, such as hotels, hostels, or vacation rentals.
3. **Itinerary:** A planned route or schedule of activities during a trip.
4. **Tourist Attractions:** Popular places or landmarks that attract visitors.
5. **Visa:** A permit allowing entry to a foreign country.
6. **Passport:** A government-issued document proving identity and citizenship for international travel.
7. **Reservation:** Booking in advance, such as hotel reservations or restaurant bookings.
8. **Guided Tour:** An organized tour led by a knowledgeable guide.
9. **Travel Insurance:** Coverage for unexpected events during a trip.
10. **Currency Exchange:** Converting one currency to another.
11. **Local Cuisine:** Food and dishes native to a particular region.
12. **Sightseeing:** Visiting places of interest or attractions.
13. **Transportation:** Modes of travel, including flights, trains, buses, and car rentals.

**You**  
Create a passage using those vocab

**ChatGPT**  
Planning a trip involves a myriad of high-frequency activities that contribute to the overall travel experience. Securing affordable airfare, booking suitable accommodation, and mapping out a detailed itinerary are crucial initial steps. Obtaining the necessary visa and ensuring your passport is up-to-date are prerequisites for international travel.  
Once the basics are covered, making reservations for guided tours to explore tourist attractions becomes essential. Consideration of travel insurance provides peace of mind, protecting against unforeseen events during the journey. Before departure, it's common to exchange currency and familiarize oneself with the local cuisine, anticipating delightful gastronomic experiences.  
Upon arrival, the adventure begins with sightseeing at iconic landmarks and indulging in local culture. Transportation choices, whether by plane, train, or rental car, play a pivotal role in navigating the destination. Cruises offer a unique travel experience, allowing exploration of multiple ports in a single trip.

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In conclusion, ChatGPT can be a valuable instrument for acquiring language skills when utilized appropriately. Its utility extends to allowing learners to participate in conversational practice, receive immediate evaluations of their grammatical and lexical usage, and explore different language aspects. Additionally, integrating ChatGPT with conventional language learning resources provides supplementary opportunities for practice and assistance. However, it is essential to be careful when using ChatGPT for any language task since it is an artificial intelligence model, and answers may only sometimes be correct or appropriate. To significantly improve language proficiency and cultural awareness, students must actively seek opportunities to communicate with native speakers and immerse themselves in authentic language environments.

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Have an upcoming Chapter event or a regular monthly Chapter meeting? Use the CATESOL Newsletter to advertise your events. Submit the banner that has been created for the event on the CATESOL website or if you are not that far along in the event set up, submit a brief event summary with an image to accompany it and an ad will be created for the upcoming issue of the newsletter. **Submit to** [newsletter@catesol.org](mailto:newsletter@catesol.org)

# *Co-Editor Article Series Submission II – Transferable Skills & Career Pivoting in the TESOL Field: Advocacy* <sup>72</sup>

Amy Sleep

## **Introduction**

In my previous submission on this series, I merely scratched the surface in exploring and unpacking all the transferable skills that TESOL professionals and ESOL instructors cultivate in this field. I shared a moment of clarity and reflection in my own experience – after being brought to tears during a presentation from an individual whose career path I desired, but who made it sound unattainable – that TESOL can take us on journeys and down career paths we never considered or expected. I attributed this to the incredible and flexible skillset we acquire working in this field and how it allows us to find success in so many aspects both within and beyond the TESOL field. ESOL teachers possess specialized knowledge of ELLs and their cultural and linguistic needs that informs other aspects of the TESOL and education fields, ultimately transcending the walls of an English classroom and leading us to new roles and titles that we may have not initially considered before.

## **Advocacy in TESOL**

One such title is that of an advocate. The topic of advocacy in the TESOL field is important and pervasive. In fact, by simply loading the homepage of websites such as our own CATESOL and TESOL International, you can easily find among the drop-down menu items a section titled “Advocacy.” When we consider the multicultural, socioeconomic, multilingual, and racially diverse backgrounds of learners of English and the history of English as a language a colonialism, it makes sense that advocacy is an essential discussion point for TESOL. Our own CATESOL addresses the importance of advocacy in TESOL in its Statement on Racial and Social Injustice by calling on ESOL teachers to “reflect on our role as educators in perpetuating the structures of racism and white supremacy in our schools, classrooms, and communities.” Furthermore, Hawkins and Norton (2009) state:

“Many would agree that ESOL teachers are in a key position to address educational inequality, both because of the particular learners they serve, many of whom are marginalized members of the wider community, and because of the subject matter they teach – language – which can itself serve to both empower and marginalize” (p. 32).

So, we know advocacy is important in TESOL – but what is advocacy and what does it mean to be an advocate in this field? And do ESOL teachers consider themselves to be advocates?

When I casually asked some of my TESOL colleagues whether as ESL/EFL educators they considered themselves advocates, the initial responses and reactions were either a question of what I meant or a confirmation that I was referring to practices to ensure equity and social justice for our learners. After clarifying, most of my colleagues said they didn’t consider themselves advocates, but then went on to describe the many advocacy actions they do to support their students, schools, and communities! These included supporting their students both in and outside of the classroom, often using the students’ shared needs and motivations from outside the classroom to inform their classroom activities, such as English to make connections in their community, speak up for themselves, or to find a job or improve at their current job. One colleague, living and working in Costa Rica, said that because English classes can be very expensive, a lot of people can’t afford to study English, but are in turn unable to receive higher paying jobs if they can’t speak English. In response to this disparity, she offers English classes to community members in exchange for products

(Cont.)



or services, e.g., providing English classes to her nail technician in exchange for a manicure. Now, that sounds like an advocate to me!

While my small sample here doesn't reflect all of the TESOL world, it does seem to reflect a pattern that research confirms. Whether knowingly or unknowingly, most of us ESOL instructors are all advocates to some degree. In fact, Harrison and McIlwain (2019) tell us that "it is clear that the ESOL teacher's role should include advocacy actions" (p. 2); however, whether a teacher is conscious of their advocacy actions is another question altogether. And certainly advocacy means different things to different teachers and plays out in different ways depending on the teacher, the students, the learning context, the school, etc.

Most language teachers engage in advocacy actions that Harrison and McIlwain (2019) categorize as "nontransformative advocacy" on a regular basis. Nontransformative advocacy is focused at the learner level in which ESOL educators notice injustices or inequalities affecting students in the classroom or in student's lives outside of the classroom and take action to remedy or improve the situation. Nontransformative advocacy supports the learners "without challenging institutional practices or offering alternatives to current practices" (p. 5). In fact, one of my colleagues said that she didn't consider herself to be an advocate because she "is not speaking up about policies in the school district." The advocacy action she refers to falls under "transformative advocacy." de Oliveira and Athanases' (2007) survey of beginning ESL teachers found transformative advocacy practices of "critiquing institutional practices or policy, and proposing or building alternatives" (p. 1) occurred to a lesser degree than student and classroom advocacy actions such as creating a safe space for learners, addressing or responding in the classroom to sociopolitical factors that impact learners, and working to improve learners' lives outside of the classroom.

In my own personal experience with advocacy in TESOL, my teaching philosophy – developed in my MATESOL and informed by my experiences teaching before and during grad school – centered around the theme advocacy. I wrote – and still believe – that as an ESL educator, I am an advocate for my learners and it is my role to advocate for them in the classroom by teaching them how to be advocates for themselves. Some of the advocacy actions I described as teaching practices include incorporating noticing activities to develop learners' linguistic inquiry skills; reflective practices to allow students to reconcile their developing language learner and English speaking identities; incorporating diverse materials, translanguaging, and English varieties per the Critical Language Awareness approach; and creating a classroom environment in which learners feel comfortable sharing their personal lives with me and their peers, allowing me to create lessons based on their true needs/wants.

My philosophy is heavily informed by the class I taught during a teaching practicum in grad school, one of the first times I consciously played advocate in my TESOL career. While teaching for an online language school in Washington, D.C., most of my students were female au pairs in their 20s living and working in the U.S. After several weeks of class, working through the boring and irrelevant old textbooks provided by the school, me and some of the students were chatting during the break, having now developed a positive rapport amongst one another. During this conversation, one student shared how her host family had made her work on her day off, and she expressed frustration in not knowing how to say no because of the awkward situation of living with her employers and depending on them for food, shelter, etc. Several of her classmates echoed similar situations in which, in essence, their host families were taking advantage of them, their situation, and seemingly their English level. I took this information and moving forward, shifted class to include lessons on speech acts that would be important for these au pairs to know to navigate their

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unique situations, starting with how to politely say no to request. My advocacy action was giving my learners the tools to hopefully advocate for themselves in English.

This, of course, was advocacy at the nontransformative level. I never considered engaging the program employing and placing these au pairs to bring this common occurrence of host families taking advantage of their students to light, with the hopes of creating institutional change within the organization. I remember feeling so overwhelmed and unsupported by the institute I was teaching for, and focused on doing what I could for my learners with the little support (and pay) I was afforded. Doing anything more than that seemed impossible. Reflecting back on it, I think a big reason for this was that I had no support, collaborators, or peers at that school. It was just me and my students.

Like my colleagues and some of the subjects in the research on ESOL educators perspectives on advocacy, I find myself performing nontransformative advocacy actions in the ESOL classroom naturally and without hesitation. It's part of ELT. However, more transformative advocacy actions feels harder, especially when feeling isolated in the classroom.

### **Collaboration is Key**

In discussing advocacy in TESOL with peers and reading articles about advocacy, there is an inherent feeling, "I could be doing more" or "I am not a real advocate." Even the terms nontransformative vs. transformative advocacy suggest one is better than the other – don't you feel a sort of negative connotation to "nontransformative;" that if you're also engaging in nontransformative advocacy, you simply aren't doing enough? Well I don't believe that's true, as any advocacy actions enacted by an ESOL educator is important and essential to support our learners, it's understandable that we would like to strive for more transformative change that serves our learners on a grander scale. However, when we consider what transformative advocacy calls for – policy and institutional change – this is no easy feat, and certainly not something a single ESOL teacher can do alone!

Transformative advocacy, then, requires collaboration, partnerships, and support. Whether it's support from fellow teachers, school staff, or community stakeholders, we are more effective in this field when we come together. Consider for example the integration of ESOL specialists in mainstream classrooms, resulting in the collaboration of teachers with different expertise to address the education gap experienced by ELLs in mainstream classrooms (Percy et al, 2016). Furthermore, my colleagues described their schools working directly with the family members of their students to ensure they are successful in their English studies and in their lives outside of the classroom, such as communicating and collaborating with the family member of an elderly student struggling to join class virtually.

Harrison and McIlwain (2019) address this need for collaboration and propose another form of advocacy for ESOL teachers: "transitive advocacy." Essentially, transitive advocacy involves other "potential change agents with whom ESOL teachers work for the improvement of EL's educational and life chances" (p. 14). Potential change agents could be family members, content teachers, administrators, counselors, case managers, and other stakeholders and various community members, with ESOL teachers playing the essential role of mediator in each of these relationship scenarios. By engaging a third party in advocacy actions, there is the opportunity for the action to move beyond the initial act and creates a shared responsibility, which is an "essential part of effective advocacy" (Harrison & McIlwain, 2019, p. 14).

As a curriculum developer and instructor for a workforce development training nonprofit, I have

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witnessed firsthand the role of collaboration and partnerships in promoting effective advocacy. The Worker Education & Resource Center, Inc. (WERC) relies on strong partnerships to achieve its mission of helping individuals in Los Angeles with barriers to employment receive stable, quality jobs. In the case of the WERC, there are several parties involved – funders, employers, development partners, and more – that all share responsibility in the outcomes of our programs. Internally, the WERC has several different departments that work together to advocate and support our learners from start to finish of a program, extending well past the last day of class. For example, each participant in our program works closely with a case manager assigned to help participants successfully finish the program by providing supportive services, resources, and referrals, as needed. This way, instructors are not alone in noticing and addressing needs for advocacy actions, but can rely on the rest of the team.

While the WERC wasn't initially created or set up to provide training and instruction to NNEs and ELs in Los Angeles, individuals in this category fall into the WERC's audience of individuals with barriers to employment. ELLs were either left out of the programs, or sometimes were allowed to join a cohort only to struggle to understand the material and fail to move forward. In a recent training for incumbent County employees looking to promote into higher paying items, a significant portion of our class were NNEs, some with low English proficiency levels. I was able to advocate for these learners in the classroom, creating supplemental materials, working with instructors to integrate appropriate scaffolds, visual aids, etc. to support the ELs, and by providing in-class support and additional tutoring outside of class to the ELs.

Furthermore, I was able to speak up in meetings and share with leaders the challenges these learners faced and the need for a specific ELL training. This summer, I helped with the writing of a grant proposal requesting funding for an ELL Integrated Education Training (IET). And just this month, after receiving the grant, I have officially begun the first stages of developing this ELL program that will serve the NNEs that have previously been left out. And, of course, we're not doing it alone! The partners in this project are Los Angeles County, who is the employer, and who have expressed the need for ELL training opportunities to prepare incumbent and new employees to take public service jobs that are unfilled, and to fill jobs in County contract agencies. Additionally, the WERC is collaborating with the Los Angeles Unified School District's Division of Adult Career Education, an established IET program provider, to develop curriculum, facilitate workshops and courses, and evaluate the programs.

### **Conclusion**

Once again, I ask you to take a step back and consider how our advocacy skills in the ESOL classroom can extend beyond the perimeters of the classroom and spark new career paths, partnerships, and positive change. My experiences in TESOL led me to my curriculum developer role with the WERC and set me up with the expertise and skills to perform this role well, as well as extend my reach in advocating for ELLs. Due to my TESOL education, I have brought material to the WERC that is creative, interactive, reflective, and that ultimately serves the unique needs of our learner population to make classroom content digestible and fun. TESOL also developed my intercultural communication and competence, which has proven essential in communicating and connecting with our learner population with a range of cultural backgrounds and identities. This in turn, allows me to be an advocate for our participants in and out of the classroom.

Finally, to close this submission, I'd like to reemphasize the argument that when we work together in this field, our impacts are greater. I leave you with a quote from Margolis (2018) on the of

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importance of interacting and collaborating with TESOL peers and within organizations such as CATESOL:

“Teachers who participate in professional organizations discover that they are not isolated individuals in a classroom, but rather an essential part of a vibrant and growing field. Moreover, joining and volunteering to support professional organizations contributes important service to the field and makes available valuable career resources that can improve one's teaching, as well as creating options for career advancement” (p. 1).

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## **CATESOL Member Focus – CIRT-IG Member, Elizaveta Kuznetsova<sup>7</sup>**

The CATESOL Newsletter launched a new column in the last issue, Issue 56-3, to highlight members background, expertise and/or interests as way to get to know newer or less visible members and their contributions to the association. In this issue we share and interview with a CIRT-IG member, Elizaveta Kuznetsova.



### **Please Introduce Yourself and Brief Background.**

I am Elizaveta Kuznetsova, but I usually go by 'Ellie', a much easier version to pronounce in English. I came from Russia to the US in 2021 to get a graduate linguistics degree. I was happy to join the Northern Arizona University (hereafter NAU) community to extend my linguistics circle as well as study new perspectives on linguistics fields I have never been taught before.

### **Why an Interest in Corpus Linguistics?**

I have heard about corpora back in Russia, but I didn't feel so much interest in it until after I came to NAU. Their curriculum and program is enriched with different views on languages, with a high focus on corpus studies and statistical analysis. I would have never thought that linguistics might be not just a humanitarian-oriented field, but it also has statistics and programming constituents behind it. I was like, "WOW, corpus can be used for teaching and researching with further contribution into the growth of understanding the world of languages?". This was the first step on my path to corpus linguistics. Then I got involved in a corpus-based study that we're still working on and came to think, "WOW, I can actually do something with the corpus myself!".

### **What drew you to CATESOL?**

After I graduated and happened to move to California, I e-met Nicole Brun-Mercer who offered me to join CATESOL as a CIRT-IG assistant coordinator. Another surprise appeared on my face, "WOW, now I can actually promote corpus studies and bring awareness to people who don't know of the corpus' existence, similar to how unfamiliar the corpus was to me before!".

### **Why Seek a Leadership Role in the CATESOL CIRT-IG?**

I would like to show our community that corpus can be a useful tool not only in teaching but also in researching your goals. Just browsing the most commonly used phrases in the corpus that might not be even following English grammar rules is so amusing and unexpected! I also believe that when people hear "corpus" they might think it's out of their reach and understanding, that it requires extra preparation to be able to use it, but, in fact, it doesn't. It might not be self-explanatory at first, but once you do a few word searches, you will be able to say, "I know the drill". Corpora actually has its complexities too, but if you are not a corpus researcher, you do not need to know too many details to be able to use it in your work.

### **What else about yourself would you like to share that will be of interest to CATESOL members?**

Having such a friendly, welcoming, and supporting community as CATESOL helps to get adjusted more easily to the pace and environment, where I became a new member. I really appreciate CATESOL for giving me this great opportunity to get involved and develop my interests in many linguistic areas. Thank you, thank you, thank you, CATESOL!

# *What CATESOL Offers You! Membership Highlights-Submission 7<sup>8</sup>* - The CATESOL Blog

Michelle Skowbo and Kara Mac Donald

CATESOL offers so many resources to members. The often-noticed ones are the annual conferences and chapter events. This is understandable as members seek tangible major opportunities for professional development.

This pilot column series for 2023 aims to highlight possibly overlooked or less utilized resources available to CATESOL members written by members for other members' awareness.

Without you, active members, CATESOL would not be the vibrant longstanding English language teaching association it is in the state of California.

Yet as a community of practice (CoP), we need to ensure that members are aware of the multiple resources the association makes available to them. In each issue, the column will highlight one member benefit. In this first column in the series, the CATESOL Blog is highlighted. The authors share the function of the CATESOL Blog, how to contribute, what are the guidelines and how members can expand its role.

## **The CATESOL Blog**

Are you a blog writer? Do you read (or want a push to motivate you to read) new works on TESOL? Is your interest group preparing for a special workshop? The CATESOL Blog is the most flexible of the CATESOL publications. It mainly features monthly book reviews on texts related to teaching; it also includes previews and debriefs of special CATESOL workshops. Because of its flexible format, the CATESOL Blog is a great place for more "out-of-the-box" pieces as well. If you enjoy writing, consider providing a reflection on a teaching technique, your experiences in publishing or policy work, or an interview with someone whose expertise you value. Check it out [here](#).

There are no set deadlines, as the blog published on a rolling submission basis. Currently, the only set blog posting is the monthly Book Review that published around the middle to end of each month. If you would like to offer a monthly or quarterly blog posting under a running theme or topic, reach out to the editor, Michelle Skowbo at [blog@catesol.org](mailto:blog@catesol.org). If you have any single posting, you wish to share you can submit it for posting at the same email: [blog@catesol.org](mailto:blog@catesol.org).

The CATESOL Blog is an active resource for members but is has so much potential to be expanded to offer membership a place for sharing and learning as a CoP.

**The CATESOL Blog is a great place for more "out-of-the box" pieces.**



# **Member Submission IV- Team Teaching and the ELL Classroom:<sup>79</sup> Practices Informing Critical Praxis for Student Success**

Siyi Gao, Pascale Koayess and Kara Mac Donald

Team teaching in English Language Teaching (ELT) most often provokes thoughts of a practice utilized in EFL (English as a Foreign Language) contexts, where a non-native English-speaking teacher is matched with a native-English speaker. The practice is understood to benefit EFL students as they can receive instruction in the first language (L1) from the L1 speaking teacher that can scaffold their learning as needed, while also being exposed to socio-cultural and linguistic practices of the native English-speaking teacher in the classroom. However, team teaching is also a practice in English Language Learner (ELL) classrooms in the U.S.

In particular, in the past two decades there has been an increased focus on meeting the demands of learners with diverse needs, which for ELLs in part has resulted in required resources to provide equitable instruction for learners in public schools and programs. At the state level, there are various assembly bills (CDE, n.d.) requiring programs that teach Limited English Proficiency (LEP) students to be adequately supported with appropriate staffing and resources. To meet LEP learners' needs districts, schools and/or teachers have in many cases leveraged collaborative teaching partnerships (Villa, Thousand, & Nevin, 2004) to best serve their learners. Instead of pulling students out to learn in specialized independent classrooms, there is the encouragement of utilizing trained teachers with teaching credentials to teach ELLs to partner with general education content teachers to provide a more equitable and inclusive learning environment for all students.

With an understanding of the practice of team teaching in classrooms with ELLs/LEPs learners, the authors reflected on the outcome of an action research, and it may be able to inform the instructional practices of instructors working in teaching teams for ELLs. The authors, first provide an overview of team teaching and its relevance in today's educational ELL context. This is followed by the description of the action research study conducted, followed by identified teaching teams practices that foster student learning, proficiency development and overall achievement. The four types of reciprocal and interconnected practices are discussed regarding supporting ELL/LEP learner instruction, offering recommendations to support these learner populations in current climate with a focus on supporting students with diverse needs and backgrounds.

## **Collaborative Teaching – Team Teaching**

### ***Beyond the Sole-Instructor Lead Classroom***

Most often students are taught in a sole-instructor lead classroom, where students in elementary and secondary school are assigned to a class and receive instruction by one teacher for the duration of the class/course/program depending on the age level of the student. Yet as educators, we know there are other models of instruction. Two of the prominent approaches are co-teaching and team teaching. Co-teaching is a cooperative instructional method where two teachers collaborate to plan and deliver classroom instruction). It can be implemented where there is a general educational instructor combined with a specialized skill area teacher that complements the overall student learning experience. Teachers are together in the classroom at the same time supporting students, which permits students to be able to have more time with the teachers' support and/or receive more individualized attention. So, co-teaching is a situation where two instructors are responsible for the teaching of one class (i.e., group) of students.

Team teaching is where two or more teachers are responsible for the independent instruction of students in the classroom during different periods or blocks throughout the day or week, which is coordinated across the members (i.e. instructors) of the teaching team working with the same (Cont.)

curriculum and sharing equal instructional roles in the team. So, in this situation, two or more teachers share the responsibility for two or more separate groups of students. Teachers may or may not have specialized areas of expertise, but they can. The benefits are similar in that teachers' specific knowledge and experiences can be harnessed to provide students a more enriched exposure to aspects of the subject matter and it also breaks up the routine of having the same instructor.



Image 1: Reading with collaborative teacher support

### *Background of the Instructional Approach – Social, Cultural and Political Factors*

#### *Then*

Team teaching is not new. It's been around for some time. For the U.S. educational context, it could be said that a catalyst for educational change, even if not regarding instructional approaches, was the 1954 U.S. Supreme Court landmark civil rights case *Brown v. Board of Education*, ruling that state-sanctioned segregation of public schools was a violation of the 14th amendment and was therefore unconstitutional (Milestone Documents, 2021). This fight for access to education was followed the Freedom School movement in the 1960s and 1970s, which aimed to counter the share-cropper education African Americans received to provide access to legitimate and valuable education to African Americans and other marginalized populations on the margins of society (McAdam, 1990). In essence, it changed the objectives and access to formal schooling through alternative, independent community-based schools.

The shift in orientation to education continued in the 1960s during which the federal government under two presidential administration initiatives (i.e., New Frontiers and Great Society agendas) (U.S. D. of L., n.d.) began to increase federal aid to public education, resulting in new instructional programs and funding avenues. Additionally, at the same time the way instruction of subject matter content began to change due to the influence of the civil rights movement and the demand for equity to access to education and content material, and other significant socio-cultural and political events (i.e., Vietnam War) that impacted what was taught and how it was taught.

So, within the progressive education movement of the 1960's and 1970s and its needs and objectives, team teaching (i.e., collaborative teaching) can credit its roots. It was essentially an ancillary practice throughout the 1960's until the passing of the 1975 Individuals with Disabilities Act (Villa, Thousand, & Nevin, 2004), permitting learners with disabilities into the conventional classroom. This changed instructional practice in public schools at the time and has continued to do so.

#### *And Now*

There continues to be a shifting landscape and evolving discussion in our understanding and approach to educational inclusiveness, student mental health, and language instruction (Crawford & Filback, 2022) due to the recent and current socio-cultural local realities. To varying (Cont.)



degrees, recent changes are founded in the U.S. social justice movements, polarized political climate, and the limitations of access to effective instruction because of the COVID pandemic, the field of education has increased ELT's focus, discussion, and dedication to the mission of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI).

The action research presented was conducted in the October of 2022, which examined instructors' team teaching practices during a full year of virtual classroom instruction (i.e., 2020), accompanied by six months of face-to-face instruction data. The action research did not explore teaming teaching within elementary or secondary public schools among instructors teaching ELLs/LEP learners. It explored team teaching practices among foreign language teachers in higher education. However, the author consider how the findings can inform team teaching in ELT.

### **The Action Research Study**

#### *Framing the Study Discussion*

As mentioned, the authors conducted the action research study FL institute offering instruction provided entirely through teaching teams (De La Selva & Monte Bullard, 2006). The study was conducted by an academic executive board that the authors were lead committee members and were assigned to conduct the study to better understand team teaching.

#### *Methods*

The action research explored the practices of language instructors working in teaching teams among that had been identified as working harmoniously and whose students perform well on a summative standardized proficiency test, opposed to the students' cumulative course GPA. The study was designed and conducted based on an overarching naturalistic responsive model of inquiry, through qualitative data collection via interviews. The outcomes were derived from the topics and themes that emerge in the process of inquiry. The validity of the data collected is based on the use of multiple observers and/or interviewers (Lynch, 1996) involved in the data collection and analysis. The following sections provides an overview of the methods.

#### *Participants*

There was a total of 15 teaching teams that were selected to be interviewed for the study that had received one of the two executive leadership awards between 2019 and 2022. Across all teaching teams there were 60 instructors that participated in the interviews.

#### *Instruments*

There were two instruments: questionnaire and interview. The questionnaire was sent ahead of the interview requesting general information (e.g. age, gender) about the teaching teams' students. The interview questionnaires (Table 1) consisted of seven open-ended questions and two optional follow-up questions to gather data about teaching teams collaborative instructional practices.

#### *Data Collection*

Some interviews were conducted face-to-face in the teaching teams' departments, and some were conducted virtually via an online video conferencing platform (MS Teams). The interviews were conduct in pairs by two of the authors and responses were recorded by both interviewers electronically in MS Word during the interviews. After the interviews, the interview notes as data were coded based on the frequency of items mentioned and tallied. Next, the factors with the highest frequency for each content area and/or questions were summarized into bullet points to identify patterns. Lastly, the authors examined the patterns to determine what practices were most common among all the teaching teams.

(Cont.)

## *Data Analysis*

Within the overarching naturalistic responsive model of inquiry, deriving understanding from the topics and themes that emerge in the process of inquiry (Lynch, 1996), the study specifically utilized Constructivist Grounded Theory (CGT) (Charmaz, 2000), a research method that generates new theories through inductive analysis of the data gathered. In this analytical process approach, the researchers sought to understand the teaching teams' collaborative instructional practices and construct theories through their experiences and accounts, using iterative data collection and analysis. However, by understanding the outcome of the study as co-constructed acknowledges that in investigating social processes the researchers are not neutral observers and inform the interpretation of the data.

## **The Outcome - Practices Fostering FL Student Success**

The four major factors that were present within the teaching team are: i) Transformative Leadership Style, A Strong Presence of Trust & Harmony, ii) Psychological Satisfaction, Self-Efficacy & Positive Learning Environment, iii) Leveraging Skills and Resources & Making Language Useful Beyond the Classroom and iv) Integration of Teaching Methodologies, Technology and Best Practices; Leveraging Professional Development & Professional Experience. We understand from the teaching teams' discussions that these four themes that emerged are interconnected synergetic factors that function in tandem to foster student proficiency achievement.

## **Implications for ELL Teaching Team Instructors**

### *Transformational Leadership Style, A Strong Presence of Trust & Harmony*

Collaborative teaching, often referred to as team teaching, manifests in diverse forms, such as an intercultural collaboration between a native English teacher and a non-native English teacher jointly engaging in planning, instruction, and assessment within a classroom context (Luo, 2014; Park, 2014). Additionally, it takes the shape of interdisciplinary team teaching, uniting content-area educators with ESL instructors to enrich students' learning experiences (Gladman, 2015; Bell & Baecher, 2012).

All teaching teams interviewed reported a great deal of independence with a transformational leadership approach, where team members were able to make decisions within the team. This approach to leadership requires a great deal of trust, which all teaching teams conveyed as critical to operating effectively by making decisions within the team and possessing the ability to try new initiatives and adapt as needed. Leadership and team members felt confident in each other and that they had the skills, knowledge, and professionalism to operate independently. This presence of trust fostered transparency within the team and between leadership, which generated a stronger sense of trust and a perception of confidence within the workplace. There was no micro-management imposed on them by their supervisor. It may have been that leadership working with the teams interviewed recognized that empowering the team leader and teaching team to manage their classrooms and schedules was suitable as they knew the team members were subject matter experts and professionals. So, it is possible that for other teams to be as successful as the teams interviewed, initial guidance, training, and trust are needed from leadership, in addition to giving the team leader some autonomy and independence when it comes to schedules, materials, and freedom to try new initiatives.

Transformational leadership is supposed to ameliorate teachers' classroom management (Allameh, Davoodi, & Heydari, 2012; Burkett, 2011; Khany, R & Ghoreyshi, 2013; Stein, 2010). Teachers' leadership is viewed as crucial to effective teaching, student educational achievements, and attaining desired objectives in the classroom (Bolkan & Goodboy, 2009; Stein, 2010). What almost all teachers interviewed mentioned is that the cooperation with the supervisor and the trust given led to (Cont.)

### *Psychological Satisfaction, Self-Efficacy & Positive Learning Environment*

It widely understood the role the learning environment plays in students learning and success. Studies (Kiatkheere, 2018; Lizzo et al., 2002) have long shown that students' perceptions of not only the physical environment and academic environment, but also the psychological environment have a significant influence on their achievement. The participants in this study saw the collaborative instructional practices of their instructors on the teaching team, but also the interpersonal dynamic among them, which made the participants feel part of overall inclusive environment. As a consequence, they explicitly understood that their teachers believed in their abilities, which they made them more invested in their language learning. Also, the participants shared that the positive and close peer relationships and student-teacher relationships contributed to their motivation. The positive learning environment provided students opportunities to challenge each other and hold each other accountable and to encourage their peers. The participants understood themselves not as individuals in a class with various teachers, but viewed the class and the teachers as one collective group accountable to each other.

As part of this, participants shared the joy and inspiration was in watching students improve and meet their own learning goals. They also found inspiration in seeing each member of the teaching team being fully dedicated to the students' success, which in turn made each of them want to work harder as their motivation was founded in students' success. So, in a sense, teachers motivated each other through seeing other colleagues going above and beyond. Teachers are most often fully dedicated to their students' success, but as part of teaching as a team, they gain motivation and enthusiasm from one another. So, that even in times of heavier workloads, increased administrative class and/or personal challenges or out of work demands, they were better able to maintain a high level of engagement in their instruction and students' success.

Teachers working with ELLs/LEP learners in teaching teams can explore through reflective practice how their students' view the influence of the teaching team on their learning, which can be beneficial to understand what students value most to further enhance and/or leverage those elements of the team's instructional practice and collaborative interaction. Additionally, teachers through examination of how they view and value working as part of a teaching team can provide practical knowledge and affective insight to foster the team's growth in working together.

### *Leveraging Skills and Resources & Making Language Useful Beyond the Classroom*

In today's technologically advanced global landscape, ELT instructors transcend the traditional role of teaching grammar and vocabulary, evolving into facilitators who guide learners in acquiring language proficiency and applying language skills beyond the classroom. By leveraging their pedagogical skills, utilizing diverse resources and technology, and emphasizing practical language utility, ELT teachers foster communication, cultural understanding, and critical thinking among their students and promote linguistic applicability in broader societal and global domains. These efforts enable students to navigate a linguistically diverse world confidently and competently, preparing them for effective engagement in multifaceted linguistic contexts.

Numerous ELT instructors are currently embracing technology to foster immersive learning environments. The ELT teachers leverage language learning websites, applications, social media, artificial intelligence (AI), big data, gamification, and augmented reality etc. to facilitate various aspects of learning. These technologies aid in aiding in recording oral production to refine speaking and pronunciation, offering prompt feedback from diverse sources, curating and recommending extensive authentic materials tailored to individual language proficiency levels and interests, crafting captivating learning experiences, evaluating student progress, and creating ample (Cont.)

opportunities for extensive target language practice, both within and beyond the classroom (Kessler, 2017). For instance, social media serves as a tool to enhance ESL students' writing competency (Rusil et al., 2019). AI is a transformative technology that customizes learning content, providing personalized experiences while fostering inclusivity, diversity, and learner-centered environments within ELT (Anis, 2023). Additionally, authentic materials such as podcasts, TED Talks, news articles, and literature boost language proficiency and expose learners to various dialects, accents, and cultural nuances, broadening their understanding of language dynamism and diversity. Integrating technology into classroom instruction positively impacts student motivation and significantly contributes to learner-centered and collaborative learning approaches (Kessler, 2017). Meanwhile, there is a growing expectation for prospective teachers to familiarize themselves with these technologies, as ACTFL strongly advocates that "language educators take charge of planning, instructing, assessing, and facilitating language courses, utilizing technology as a supportive tool for language learning" (ACTFL, 2017, n.p.).

Additionally, we are in an era ripe with exceptional opportunities for genuine and captivating communication within linguistically and culturally contextualized environments (Kessler, 2017). Also, the incorporation and empathizes the foreign language culture learning and the practical application of the language extends to cultural exchange and understanding, it allows individuals to immerse themselves in foreign language literature, media, and diverse perspectives, enriching their worldview and fostering empathy towards different cultures, as well as enhance their sociocultural competency (Fleet, 2006). Within this landscape, ELT educators are pivotal in showcasing the practical application of language skills outside academic realms. They actively create avenues for students to practice their target languages by infusing real-life scenarios and authentic materials into the classroom while also encouraging participation in cultural events, field trips, language immersions, English Corners, projects, and language exchange programs etc. Through these initiatives, learners gain firsthand experience utilizing English in authentic, and real-world situations. Language educators also underscore the significance of language proficiency in diverse professional domains, highlighting how robust communication skills are indispensable assets in today's interconnected global landscape. By emphasizing these connections, ELT teachers empower their students to perceive language as a tool for personal development and career advancement and foster cross-cultural understanding. Moreover, ELT instructors prioritize cultivating critical thinking, recognizing its pivotal role in effective communication across diverse social and professional settings (Fleet, 2006). Meanwhile, the integration of AI in ELT transcends mere language acquisition; it nurtures cultural sensitivity, intercultural competence, and global awareness in learners. AI-driven tools and platforms facilitate meaningful cross-cultural encounters, offering insights into diverse cultures and perspectives so learners can engage with AI-driven resources and immerse themselves in authentic cultural materials, interactive language exchanges, and simulated multicultural interactions, and mirror real in-person experiences (Anis, 2023).

### ***Leveraging Critical Praxis Professional Development as Teaching Team***

Kumaravadivelu's (1993; 2003) work moved the field of language teaching beyond instructional methods as a focus, arguing there is no best method and certainly there is no one practice that is applicable for all teaching and learning contexts. His work fostered the growth and expansion of field and its educators' understanding that the rationale and theory behind what they do in their classrooms is the basis for sound pedagogy. ELT is moving the approach to teaching methodologies to be not only be pedagogically sound, but also socially just. One example of this is pedagogical changes is the growth of the use and value translanguaging in the classroom (Ofelia, 2009; Otheguy, Ofelia & Wallis, 2015) and teachers have been leveraging professional development opportunities and their experiences to shift their instructional practice. (Cont.)

However, the task here is how can teaching teams leverage their professional development opportunities and professional knowledge to addresses inequalities as team in the instructional practice. Miyake-Trapp and Wong (2022) offer a Critical Language Reflection Tool (CLRT), founded on transformative learning principles. The instrument assists teachers to go beyond conventional reflection and reflective practice to critically a assess themselves and their practices. Such a deep level of critical inquiry is necessary as the field possesses a diverse multicultural student and teacher population existing within a hegemonic social and political educational context. Trombino and Moore (2022) describe how critical ethnography in the ELL classroom can enhance a teacher’s equitable practices. Liu (2022) describes how the use of autoethnography can enhance a teacher’s learning and growth, while Jungheim and Vega Lopez (2022) offer a guide of culturally appropriate classroom practices.

### Conclusion

For many ELLs, team teaching may be unfamiliar based on the nature of how teacher resources are allocated to meet student enrollment needs. However, for those in team teaching contexts can benefit from the insight gained from the findings of the action research. Additionally, those in co-teaching contexts can also benefit the insight shared to support ELLs.

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