



The Definite Article

WATESOL Newsletter

Spring 2020

Featured in this Issue:

- Foundations for Sketchnoting
- Supporting Students with Disabilities
- High Yield Strategies to Support Secondary English Learners Across the Curriculum

WATESOL NEWS

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ON THE COVER

The Washington Monument with cherry blossoms - photo by Heather Gregg Zitlau

From the editors

Dear WATESOL Community,

As we compiled this issue of *The Definite Article*, the world has been in a state of uncertainty. From social distancing, to the cancellation of the TESOL International Convention, and many schools and universities moving to online instruction, we are currently facing new challenges in our personal as well as professional lives that may prove to stretch us beyond our expectations.

We're all quite focused on health at the moment—our own, that of our loved ones, and that of our neighbors here and around the globe. At the same time, we continue to focus on professional excellence as well—and we hope that the content of this issue will prove useful as you find new ways of teaching effectively and meeting the varied needs of your students.

Thank you for reading, and as always: a special **thank you** to all of the newsletter contributors. We couldn't have done it without you! We look forward to hearing more from our readers as we gear up for the fall 2020 issue, which will coincide with WATESOL's 50th anniversary celebration. Please see p. 5 for more information on submissions to *The Definite Article*.

Your Newsletter Editors,

Kelly Hill-Zirker and Heather Gregg Zitlau



WATESOL TO CELEBRATE 50 YEARS!

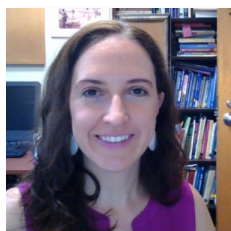


In 1995, Fall Conference attendees celebrated the organization's 25th anniversary. Join us on Saturday, Oct. 17th, 2020 as we celebrate 50 years of WATESOL at our Annual Conference!



Teaching Hack: Using YouGlish

By Heather Gregg Zitlau, Stephanie Gallop, and Andrew Screen



Heather Gregg Zitlau recently stepped back from her position as Assistant Teaching Professor in the English Language Center at

Georgetown University to care for her infant daughter. She looks forward to being back in the classroom soon!



Stephanie Gallop, an Assistant Teaching Professor in the English Language Center at Georgetown, enjoys teaching intensive

English courses across all skills and levels. Stephanie is passionate about utilizing technology & design with best teaching practices to create inclusive and supportive classroom spaces.



Andrew Screen is an Assistant Teaching Professor in the English Language Center at Georgetown

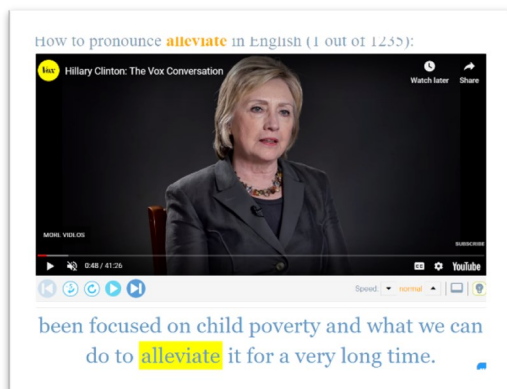
University. He enjoys experimenting with creative ways of enhancing learning for students.

*The Urban Dictionary defines a **hack** as “a clever solution to a tricky problem.” This new series in the newsletter will offer practical teaching suggestions that are immediately applicable to your classroom.*

As language instructors, one of our tricky problems is easily finding real-world spoken examples of the target vocabulary or structures that we teach; one clever solution to that problem is YouGlish.

On its home page, YouGlish is described as an online tool for improving English pronunciation with “fast, unbiased answers about how English is spoken by real people and in context,” accessing over 30 million YouTube tracks. YouGlish is not only useful for teaching pronunciation, though; it is an easily-accessible online platform containing a wealth of authentic language, and we have found that it has broad application potential in language teaching and learning.

The basic process is simple: type a word or phrase into the search box found at youglish.com, click “Say it,” and you will be taken to the exact spot in a YouTube video where that word or phrase is spoken.



Take the word “alleviate” as an example; the screen shot at left shows the first video in the YouGlish queue containing this word. A transcript highlights the search term, and with the icons below the video screen, you can easily move five seconds earlier in the clip to hear expanded context, replay the clip, pause, or click to the second video in the cue, where *alleviate* will be heard in another authentic context.

The site has a number of advanced search options, but even a simple search can yield multiple benefits for you and your students. As just one example: clicking through examples on YouGlish can be helpful in teaching students common collocations for vocabulary terms they are studying in your class; it can also be a powerful way to train students to notice collocations when they hear English outside the classroom. Let’s consider *alleviate* as an example once more.

Begin by asking students to predict a few nouns that might be objects of the verb *alleviate*, and then use YouGlish to check their predictions. In class you might simply pause after each video clip and ask students what the object of

alleviate was, creating a class list as you do so. Alternatively, students could look through examples at home and record their findings to the next class meeting. The first ten examples of alleviate would result in the following list:

- poverty (x2)
- suffering
- congestion
- disadvantage
- strain
- symptoms (x2: of mental illness, of PTSD)
- racial tensions
- problems

Using your gut instinct as a native speaker or experienced teacher – or having searched a written corpus in advance – you might encourage students to focus on *poverty*, *suffering*, and *problem*. Ask students to write sentences using alleviate + one of these objects; later, you might use one of them as a clue in a fill-in-the-blank sentence on a worksheet or vocabulary quiz.

With that same basic pattern of 1) asking students to predict/create language, 2) using YouGlish to notice patterns (and perhaps to correct predictions or student sentences), and 3) designing a follow-up task, we have explored grammatical patterns (such as noun clauses following “wish” and in indirect questions) and pronunciation patterns (such as the reduction of “have” in past modal constructions – illustrated in the sample chart).

should have	should've	shoulda
the right to.... a diverse group of people that vaccine two parents done	been prosecuted been undergone been	been applying to college put it in a slide

If you’d like to incorporate multiple real-world examples into a task or activity such as those described here – or if you’d simply like to quickly provide examples of a term or phrase that comes up in class, YouGlish is your hack.

Interested in submitting to the newsletter?

Contact newsletter@watesol.org for questions. Contributions can include:

- feature articles connecting research to practice
- book reviews
- interviews with an inspiring student, dedicated colleague, or expert in the field
- teaching abroad column
- graduate student perspectives
- teaching hacks

For more details on submission guidelines, please visit <https://watesol.org/News>

Authors are responsible for the inclusion and accuracy of their references. The articles published in *The Definite Article* reflect the research, classroom experiences, and opinions of a wide range of contributing authors and do not constitute policy statements on behalf of the organization. WATESOL welcomes articles that reflect diverse perspectives on practices and issues relevant to those in the TESOL field.

Readers Respond

We asked YOU what your favorite skill to teach is. Here are some of your responses!

Allison Crolla,
Fairfax County Public Schools

*My favorite skill to teach is **paralinguistics**, especially North American, non-verbal communication skills. The idea that there is an "unspoken" language seems to baffle my students the most. This topic also has a lot of potential for fun, skit activities!*

Heidi Aboutaj,
American University

***Reading** - It's an important skill that has an impact on all other language skills. It's also a gateway to approach a wide array of topics.*

Betsy Lindeman Wong,
Northern VA Community College,
American Culture and Language Institute (ACLI)

***Sentence stress**—that is, which words to emphasize (or de-emphasize!) in a sentence. It's amazing to see the "Aha!" flash across students' faces as they realize the difference in meaning they can make with their choice of word(s) to stress!*

Robin Anne Floyd,
LADO International Institute

*I love to teach **speaking and pronunciation**. Every level of student can benefit from more practice speaking. Advanced students often need work around pronunciation and intonation. Beginning and intermediate students are sometimes desperate to become comfortable speaking. I have seen improvement in speaking translate into improvement in other areas: listening, grammar and writing.*

Be on the lookout for the next issue's question, to be posted on social media and distributed via email. Share your thoughts, and you may see your answer featured here!

Krisztina Domjan,
American University

***Academic Discussion skills:** open class discussions or small round-table discussions. The students first engage in extensive reading, then they take detailed notes. They learn about the proper body language and turn takers to be able to participate actively and meaningfully. It is rewarding to see how learners thrive after 3-4 weeks of constant practice.*

Interview: In Conversation with the NNESTS

With Eda Alagdali Yoon



Ozge Cakmak, a member of the NNEST Caucus, has been teaching in the *English Language and Training Academy* at American University since 2019. She recently talked with Eda Aladagli Yoon, WATESOL's NNEST Cau-

cus Liason, about her experiences relating to teaching and cultural adjustment to the United States.

Could you please tell us a little bit about your personal and professional background? What led you to become an English teacher?

I spent most of my childhood years in Istanbul (Turkey) and was lucky to have enjoyed its beauties before it lost its charm. I earned my Bachelor's degree from Middle East Technical University and Master's degree from Bilkent University, Ankara. Looking back to those years, all I wanted was to study English, linguistics or translation studies. I have always been interested in studying English, and I have been a keen translator since secondary school years. I wish I had kept those papers I translated when I was just 14 years old! Maybe having an aptitude for language learning determined my career path.

I taught English to young learners for a year. Then, I pursued my teaching career in BUSEL (Bilkent University, Turkey). I had the pleasure of working with some of the most talented people in ELT. I can say my experience there has

What I noticed in daily life here is that people love having small talk.

been a key contributor to what I am today. This experience has certainly helped my transition to a new work environment and teaching context in American University, English Language and Training Academy, where I enjoy a professional environment encouraging open, sharing and inquiring culture.

What is one difference between the two cultures and how did this difference impact your adjustment process so far?

What I noticed in daily life here is that people love having small talk. Whether you're waiting in a slow elevator with

a co-worker or chatting with a complete stranger while taking a ride or at a networking event, it is very common. People are very skilled in engaging in these conversations and I believe that it requires a special set of skills to initiate and maintain small talk. I like interacting with people going beyond a simple 'hello!' and smile, which actually helped me go through my adjustment process more smoothly. I admire the genuine interest people show during these conversations as they really care about other people's stories.

I also like the way grownups treat children as individuals and how they explain things clearly and patiently without any rush. Children are raised with hearing positive words about their achievements or failure. They are encouraged to voice their opinions at any age, which I find remarkable.

What advice would you give to NNESTs who would like to pursue a teaching career in the United States?

Considering voluntary work and being a member of organizations like WATESOL certainly help a lot to meet with people in ESL or other professions. It is very useful to interact with people from similar or different backgrounds and gain useful insights regarding professional development opportunities.

What is one of your teaching/research interests?

I am interested in peer review in particular because it enhances learner efficacy and confidence as an instructional strategy.

Could you share one of your favorite lesson activities? Why do you like this activity?

I find teachable moments quite valuable. They give the learners a great opportunity to have a meaningful learning experience. I also value personalizing the content delivery to involve learners in their learning process as it becomes more meaningful and memorable. For example, I integrate their life stories to speak or write using the target language.

To provide input for writing or speaking lessons, I am interested in integrating sustainable development goals which emerged during negotiations in the UN. The SDGs inform my text choice, learning outcomes, task types and assessment procedures. For example, in a given text, I guide learners to prepare a semantic map including some words, lexical collocations etc. In the following stages, students use the carbon print calculator to see how their actions generate greenhouse gases. They reflect on their actions to decrease their carbon footprint in a discussion or share their views by creating a wiki thread. Finally, they write about some other small or big changes people can make to help the environment or about ways people can lead a green life. They can also add these ideas on the semantic map, which helps them during the prewriting pro-

cess. They can narrow it down by choosing alternative energy, housing, daily life, or transportation. Integrating these issues into teaching practice increases learners' understanding with regards to sustainability.

What are some of your future teaching or research plans?

I am interested in instructional design, blended learning in particular. I'd like to carry out research on student engagement in online courses. Currently, I take every opportunity to enhance my knowledge and experience in these areas. I like attending workshops organized by The Center for Teaching, Research and Learning, American University.

CONGRATULATIONS!

TESOL International Convention Travel Grant

- ⇒ Xuwei He, doctoral student in Curriculum and Instruction at George Washington University

WATESOL Travel Grant

- ⇒ April Salerno, Associate Professor, University of Virginia
- ⇒ Rebecca Sachs, Associate Professor, Fairfax University of America

Jim Weaver Professional Development Award

- ⇒ Elizabeth Pandya, Educational Technology Specialist, DC Public Schools

J. Michael O'Malley Action Research Grant

- ⇒ Greer Mancuso, Teacher, Fairfax County Public Schools

Foundations for Sketchnoting with ELLs

By Elizabeth Pandya

Illustrations by Maxwell Rutman



Liz Pandya supports 28 DCPS schools with integrating technology into the classroom as an Educational Technology Specialist. Liz will be presenting on Sketchnoting at DCPS's annual EdTech Conference in June. For details follow Liz on Twitter @Pandya_Express.

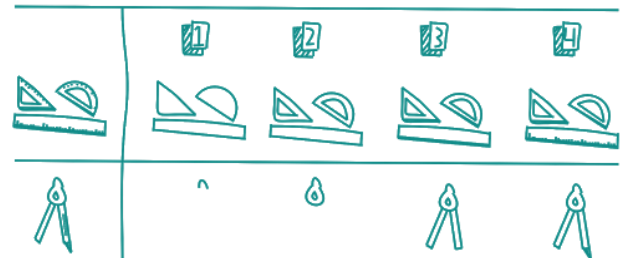
Last summer, I had the opportunity to attend the International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) Conference. I attended a session, facilitated by Manuel S Herrera, entitled “Visual Notetaking: Meeting Students Where They Are.” Within minutes, I was completely engrossed in the concept and process. It is important to note that while the graphics and illustrations of others adorned my office desk and apartment, I myself had very low confidence when it came to anything related to drawing. That was, until I discovered sketchnoting. Since attending the conference, I have used *Sketchnoting in the Classroom: A Practical Guide to Deepen Student Learning* by Nicole Carter to further my own knowledge on the concept. From working with ELL students from many D.C. schools this year, I see Sketchnoting as a powerful tool to deepen student learning and agency across academic contents.



What is Sketchnoting?

Sketchnoting is a style of visual notes containing a mixture of handwriting, drawings, hand-drawn typography, shapes, and other visual elements such as arrows, boxes and lines (Carter, 2019). It is rooted in the idea that everything can be drawn from a visual alphabet comprised of five basic shapes: circle, square, line, dot, and triangle. Using the alphabet, the notetaker develops a visual icon library when sketching a concept or idea.

In an English class, students might use the alphabet to develop icons for characters in a story. Alternatively, students might develop icons to represent character traits that they revisit each time they read a new text.



An example of a visual icon in a math classroom (Carpenter, 2019)



An example of a basic structures for Sketchnotes (Carpenter, 2019)

In addition to icons, sketchnotes have a structure that complement the brain's natural tendency to organize and categorize received information (Carpenter, 2019). While some students will be able to independently develop a structure for their notes, most students will likely need examples of potential

frameworks to get started. Returning to our English class example, students sketch their character icons within a structure to map a sequence of events in a story.

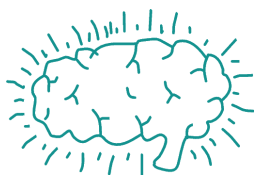
When students are first introduced to sketchnoting, a class might collaborate to develop icons and identify a structure. However, sketchnotes should be designed for the creator to internalize the content. With other forms of visual notes, a student might select an icon that they feel would be easy for the viewer to understand.

Once students are comfortable with the concept, they should be given the freedom to personalize their icons and sketchnote elements. The goal of sketchnoting is to deepen the creator's understanding of a concept, not to create a visual for others' consumption.

How Does Sketchnoting Support ELL Students?

When thinking about tools for English Language Learners, we know students have to simultaneously acquire language and develop grade-level content knowledge (Prince, 2017). To accomplish this, students must be equipped with tools that allow for more self-sufficiency across content areas. Sketchnoting is one of the tools. Once students know how to develop an icon library for the content and identify a structure, they can immediately begin practicing.

Sketchnoting also supports Dual Coding Theory, which asserts that students retain information better when they are able to attach an image to a word or concept. Most importantly, we know good teaching must include multi-sensory content. In her book, Carpenter states that people remember 10% of what they hear, 20% of what they read, and 80% of what they see and do (Carpenter, 2019). Sketchnoting provides an opportunity to actively grapple with content, while building language acquisition.



How Do I Introduce Sketchnoting to a Class?

First, you will want students to become comfortable drawing icons from the five basic shapes. Start with providing a list containing simple objects. As students gain more confidence, they will be able to transition this skill to sketching icons for abstract concepts. Next, model creating a sketchnote. Introduce sketchnoting through a concept that students are already familiar with, such as making a peanut butter and jelly sandwich. Though it can be uncomfortable, it is important for students to see that you don't need to be an artist to engage with this practice. If you are unsure how to get started with an icon, look it up. Model looking up an existing image and determining what shape to begin with.

Students can collaborate to make their first sketchnote; again, have students practice with a familiar topic. Once students are ready to implement, some students will be able to create their own structure using elements such as banners and icons, and others will need a template to get them started. The key is to meet students where they are, so they can focus on creating the notes that help them best.

How do I evaluate?

In many ways, evaluation is contrary to the principles of sketchnoting. A simple way to evaluate a sketchnote is to ask your students to explain it to you. Can students explain the process or concept clearly? Are they using appropriate vocabulary? If so, then sketchnoting has been effective.

Can students explain the process or concept clearly? Are they using appropriate vocabulary? If so, then sketchnoting has been effective.

References:

- Carter, N. (2019). *Sketchnoting in the classroom: a practical guide to deepen student learning*. Portland, OR: International Society for Technology in Education
- Prince, J. (2017). English Language Learners in a Digital Classroom. *The CATESOL Journal*, 29(1), 51–73. Retrieved from <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1144336.pdf>

Teaching Abroad: An English Language Specialist in Tanzania

By Tabitha Kidwell

What program did you do and where?

I spent three weeks in Tanzania as an English Language Specialist, a program of the U.S. Department of State. I worked on a few different projects while I was there, but the project I'll discuss here was a training for the teachers of a blended English for Health Sciences course.

How did your expectations match up with reality?

I definitely had to readjust some of my expectations! For example, I knew firsthand that class sizes in East Africa are often quite large – I had taught classes of up to 80 seventh graders as a Peace Corps volunteer in Madagascar. During our first session together, however, I was shocked to learn that the teachers worked with classes of 300 students! I had to adapt my training plans very quickly to match this challenge. I tried to give teachers some concrete strategies they could use to make such huge classes more manageable, such as dividing students into learning teams and accountability groups, using predictable routines and clear directions, and encouraging students to monitor their own learning. When I observed a class later in the week, I was



Huge classes, like this one in Tanzania, present a major challenge to English teachers around the world.

pleasantly surprised at how effectively the teachers used the instructional time. Students were actively involved throughout the whole class, and they participated in many partner activities to give them the chance to build their language skills. This experience taught me to enter new settings with an open mind and not assume that the situations we encounter will be like those in which we have participated in the past. My previous international teaching experiences had helped prepare me up to a point, but

every new context has its own set of challenges and surprises!

What did program participants expect of you?

The teachers were very nervous about the logistics of conducting a blended learning course. They wanted to be able to offer students support with the online component of the course, but they were worried about potential technological challenges. They also wanted guidance about how to make the online and in-person sessions complementary but not repetitive. One of the first steps I took was to have the teachers log in to the online system and familiarize themselves with the course. As they practiced navigating the course, some challenges came up, and we discussed together how to help students through those challenges. Once the teachers had seen the online system, they realized that the technology was fairly easy to use, and they felt less intimidated. To help teachers plan appropriate in-class activities that would build on the online content, I designed a facilitators guide with detailed activities teachers could use during their in-person sessions. Teachers appreciated this practical resource.

A big challenge was the fact that these teachers had never received any language teaching preparation.

What challenged you the most?

A big challenge was the fact that these teachers had never received any language teaching preparation. In English for Specific Purposes settings, the teacher is often a content-area expert who happens to have strong English skills. In this case, the teachers were librarians and information science professionals at a medical and health sciences university. This situation meant that teachers needed support to deliver effective language instruction. I delivered a model lesson, and asked teachers to reflect on how language teaching is different from other subjects. They identified the importance of interaction, practice, and repeated exposure to new language forms.

We discussed and practiced strategies to group students, give instructions, and lead class discussions. In the end, the training participants commented that what they had learned was useful not only for language teaching, but also for teaching and giving presentations about other topics in the future!



Here I am with some of the teachers I worked with in Tanzania.

What have you learned about yourself, your teaching style, or what you want for the future?

My appreciation for interactive learning really deepened through this experience. One component of the training was providing teachers with a facilitator's guide to use as they delivered the in-person content of this blended course. I worked very hard to make the guide as clear and detailed as possible, but reading the guide wasn't enough for teachers to develop a good understanding of how to conduct the activities. They needed to practice leading the activities themselves, or observe someone else doing so. In my opinion, the best part of the training was when I stepped out of my "trainer" role and let teachers experiment and practice together. In future teacher trainings, I hope to plan more opportunities for teachers to be actively involved and to co-construct their own learning, rather than expecting them to wait for the so-called "expert" to

provide guidance.

What words of wisdom would you have for a teacher thinking of teaching in Tanzania and/or a teacher who may have students coming from Tanzania?

I was only there for three weeks, so I'm certainly not an expert on teaching in Tanzania or on Tanzanian students. I would just encourage teachers to embrace any opportunity to visit or work in Tanzania. I only was able to learn a little bit about the diversity of this fascinating place, but I hope to have the opportunity to return in the future. The most exciting aspect of my work in Tanzania was seeing the great potential of teachers and students in this country. The teachers I worked with were excited for the opportunity to learn more about blended learning and the use of technology in the classroom. The students I met were motivated to continue developing their language skills so they could connect to others around the world. Working in Tanzania would offer the opportunity to do meaningful work and grow professionally!



Tabitha Kidwell is a faculty member in the TESOL program at American University. She has taught French, Spanish, and English to students ranging from pre-schoolers to adults, and has conducted professional development for language teachers in Indonesia, Malaysia, India, Rwanda, Ethiopia, Tanzania, and the United States. Dr. Kidwell is a member of the Standards Professional Council for TESOL international, and a frequent presenter at regional and international TESOL conferences. She is currently co-chair of Professional Development for WATESOL.

Supporting ESL Students with Disabilities

By Jacqueline Whitney and Dr. Amanda Brunson



Jacqueline Whitney has seven years of experience as a tutor, instructor, and academic advisor in an IEP and three years of experience teaching ELLs in a 6-8 middle school, supporting students with diagnosed and undiagnosed disabilities in both contexts. She is passionate about accessibility and equity in education.



Amanda Brunson currently teaches freshman composition and ESL at the University of Delaware. Her interests include English for academic purposes and disability studies.

Introduction

At the 2019 WATESOL conference, we had the pleasure of leading a workshop on applying Universal Design for Learning (UDL) to ESL instruction in order to support ELLs with disabilities. UDL, an educational framework created by Anne Meyer and David Rose in the 1990s, allows classroom teachers to make their materials and instruction more accessible to all students, thus seamlessly and discreetly supporting students with disabilities. In both our higher-ed and K-12 teaching experiences, we frequently encounter students who have a disability, often undiagnosed and unknown to the students themselves. Often, these students sit in our classrooms day in and day out, only to feel as if they are attempting a Sisyphean task. Their struggle resonates with us on a deeply personal level, as we both struggled with disabilities that were undiagnosed until we were well into our twenties.

There are many definitions for what constitutes a disability, but this definition from the Centers for Disease Control most accurately encompasses what we see in our classes:

"A disability is any condition of the body or mind (impairment) that makes it more difficult for the person with the condition to do certain activities (activity limitation) and interact with the world around them (participation restrictions)." ("Disability and Health Overview", 2019)

What This Article Is

This article is an explanation of how to incorporate the principles of Universal Design for Learning into your materials development and instruction in order to make your classes more accessible to all students. The article will outline the core principles of UDL and describe some examples of how they can be incorporated into your day-to-day instruction. It is not practical to apply all of the principles and strategies to every component of every lesson that you teach, but it is helpful to keep the general framework in mind when planning your lessons so that you can incorporate elements where it makes sense to do so. The principles and strategies in this article can be applied whether your students are five years old or 95 years old, whether you are teaching ESL or content based classes, and whether you teach in a K-12 setting, a university affiliated Intensive English Program, or a church basement on Tuesday evenings.

What This Article Is Not

This is not about diagnosing students. As classroom teachers, we are not qualified to diagnose disabilities. Some accommodations that your school may offer might only be available to students who have received a diagnosis from a physician or psychologist.

This is not a substitute for accommodations outlined in Individualized Education Plans or 504 Education Plans. Those plans are legally binding documents that detail the legal responsibilities that schools and classroom teachers have in order to best serve students with diagnosed disabilities.

The Principles of Universal Design for Learning

We are teachers, first and foremost, so let's start with the end in mind. The goal of UDL is to develop learners who are "Purposeful & Motivated, Resourceful & Knowledgeable, and Strategic & Goal Directed" (CAST, n.d.). Each of these goals corresponds to one of the three principles of UDL: "Engagement, Representation, and Action and Expression."

1. Engagement —> Purposeful and Motivated Learners

The principle of Engagement is really the "why" of learning, and it aims to develop purposeful and motivated learners. The key instructional elements of this principle are recruiting interest, sustaining effort, and facilitating self regulation. As teachers, we have clear ideas of what we expect from students in terms of engagement, and we may see deviation from those expectations as evidence of disengagement, a sure sign of a poor student. However, invisible disabilities such as anxiety, depression, and others that impact executive functioning act as a hurdle for student engagement. By clearly establishing routines and utilizing timers, schedules, and calendars, students who thrive in a structured environment are primed to maintain engagement. Engagement is perhaps the easiest principle to incorporate into a lesson, as many of these strategies can be applied while planning the night before or even during a lesson.

Examples of Application:

- Establish a routine
- Use timers, schedules, and calendars
- Allow choice when possible
- Grade only the final drafts of assignments
- Give frequent, timely, and specific feedback

2. Representation —> Resourceful and Knowledgeable Learners

Representation addresses the "what" of learning with the hope of supporting learners in strengthening both their knowledge and resourcefulness. Representation is primarily concerned with perception, language and symbols, and comprehension. This principle requires a little more planning time to implement, but ultimately the relevant recommendations are things that most ESL teachers do on a daily basis. Incorporating graphic organizers may seem like the most time consuming application of this principle, but keeping some generic graphic organizers on hand can make this much easier for you while still providing the support necessary for students who need to process material in a more visual manner. For example, it is very easy to use the same blank T-chart or Venn Diagram that you would use for teaching the compare/contrast text structure for multiple reading and writing assignments.

Examples of Application:

- Closed captions or transcripts of video/audio (not while assessing listening ability)
- Pictures or other visual aids
- Graphic organizers
- Video clips (especially useful for building background knowledge!)

3. Action and Expression —> Strategic and Goal Directed Learners

Action and Expression is really the "how" of learning, and applying this principle helps learners to become strategic and goal directed. This is probably the most labor intensive of the three principles for both the teacher and the student because it encourages providing choices for physical action, expression and communication, as well as executive functions. Executive functioning is the ability to set a goal, break down the steps necessary to reach the goal, and then take action. Executive functioning is impacted by a variety of disabilities including anxiety, depression, ADHD, autism, trauma, and even the typical student state of chronic exhaustion. By supporting students in developing planning strategies

to complete assignments, their personal toolbox of success strategies can grow.

Examples of Application:

- Options for final project
- Essay, podcast, film, comic strip, etc.
- Using tools
- Spellcheck, grammar check, predictive text
- Multiple modes of feedback
- Written and oral comments
- Breaking large projects into multiple smaller tasks

Additional Support

We would be remiss if we did not address the question of what to do if you suspect that one of your students is struggling with a disability and needs more support than you can reasonably provide in your classroom. If you are in a school setting, be it K-12 or higher ed, you will likely be able to enlist the expertise of a variety of professionals on campus. When basic in-class accommodations are not sufficient, you can refer students to an academic advisor, the office of disability support services, or the counseling center. You may even consider working with an advisor and the student to develop an action plan together.

Final Thoughts

Remember that UDL is not an accommodation for individual students, but is a set of guidelines meant to make classroom activities and assignments more accessible to all students by providing multiple means of engagement, representation, and action and expression. It benefits everyone, not just those who have disabilities. We have found this framework to be helpful in our own ESL classrooms, and we hope you do too.

References and Further Reading:

CAST (2018). Universal Design for Learning Guidelines version 2.2. Retrieved from <http://udlguidelines.cast.org>

Disability and Health Overview. (2019, September 4). Retrieved September 15, 2019, from <https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/disabilityandhealth/disability.html>

MEMBERSHIP

Is your membership current?

Do you have a colleague who might not currently be a member of WATESOL or who was once active in WATESOL but no longer is?

Go to www.watesol.org/membership-benefits to ensure that your membership is active, or refer a friend to <https://watesol.org/join> to join.

Contact
membership@watesol.org
for questions.

Book Review: Breaking Down the Wall

By Rebecca Wilner



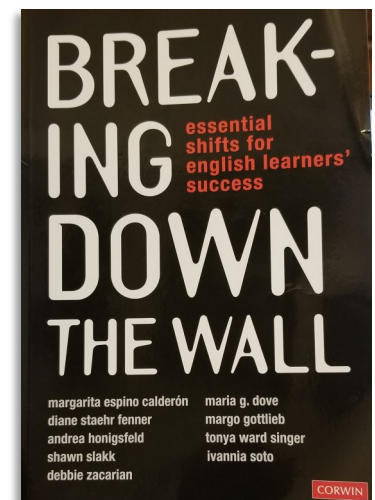
Rebecca Wilner is currently an ESL teacher with the District of Columbia Public School system and adjunct faculty member at American University. She has previously been the Panama Bilingual Program Manager at American University, Senior English Language Fellow and Academic Director of the Center for English Language Immersion (CELI) in Panama, and ESL, EFL, ESP, and EAP teacher in several contexts and countries. She holds an MA in TESOL and Spanish Translation Certificate from American University.

Breaking Down the Wall: Essential Shifts for English Learners' Success addresses a variety of important issues for educators in the U.S. K-12 realm, including how to maintain rigor in lessons and curricula, purposeful scaffolding, and advocacy for students and their families. It is clearly written, well-organized, relatable, and helpful - making it well worth reading.

Each of the book's nine chapters has the same structure, beginning with a statement of *The Premise*, followed by a *Vignette* or case study that highlights the issue addressed in the chapter. Then there is a short explanation of why the issue is important and timely, fittingly called *The Urgency*, and after that, the essential lit review, here called *The Evidence*. The meat of the chapter follows, with plentiful examples, checklists, tables, worksheets, and a section called *The Vision*, which lays out how the shift discussed in that chapter could affect - and in some cases has already affected - English learners in K-12 settings throughout the U.S. Each chapter ends with a *Call for Action* and *Conclusion* and a reference section.

The authors discuss the most pressing issues in English language education at most U.S. public schools and provide concrete and research-based suggestions of "shifts" educators must make in thinking and practice in order to improve the quality of education for English language learners (ELLs). They are:

1. From a deficit-based to an asset-based view of students. When students are pushed through a system that was not designed for them, with little support and few resources, it can be easy to hyperfocus on their needs or what they lack, and forget to incorporate their strengths, experiences, and individualism
2. From compliance with laws and regulations to excellence. That is, going beyond what is required by law, and doing what is best for all students because it is the right thing to do.
3. From watering down to challenging learners by using purposeful, strategic scaffolding of rigorous content instead of easier texts.
4. From isolation to collaboration, so that teachers can work together in meaningful, sustainable ways to meet the needs of all students.
5. From silence to conversation – when educators understand the experience of English-learning students in class, they can design more appropriate collaborative learning activities and provide a richer learning environment.



6. From focusing exclusively on language to including language, literacy, and content in teaching and learning practices.
7. From assessment *of* learning to assessment *for* and *as* learning. That is, educators can do more than assess students' language or proficiency gains and content knowledge; assessments can be learning experiences themselves. That may include changes in the way we assess, how often we assess, and how we give feedback on assessments.
8. From monolingualism to multilingualism: providing support and rewards for students' home and other language abilities, including but not limited to seals of bilingualism and biliteracy.
9. From nobody cares to everyone and every community cares. Educators can work together to build community, understanding, and respect for our students, and for teachers of English learners.

I found that this book, in its approximately 200 pages, spoke directly to my experience, concerns, and ideals. Not only did it validate my experience as a teacher of ELLs, but it also provided support from a vast field of research and other contexts. The book also offered concrete and helpful tools to begin conversations with colleagues and administrators and a pathway for me as I strive to fully realize the shifts I want to make in my own teaching practice.

The writing is clear, accessible, and concise. Each chapter includes comments in the margins, as if the authors had been working in a shared document and decided to leave in a few of the editorial comments as they pulled the final book together. At first these were somewhat distracting, but as I read on, I found them to be pointed, important additions. The case studies are very helpful to contextualize the issues, though many of them focus on ELLs of Hispanic backgrounds and thus may not necessarily represent the diversity of students one might find in the Washington, DC area. However, several chapters do refer specifically to Loudoun County, Virginia, and the work that has been done in that extremely diverse region.

Though the shifts covered in the book are certainly relevant to educators in all contexts, I expect this book to resonate most with a K-12 audience. It is not limited to teachers of ELLs, though. I plan to purchase a copy for the principals at both of the schools at which I teach and to keep the guides, checklists, and conversation-starting or reflection questions included in each chapter handy as I plan lessons and work with other teachers. *Breaking Down the Wall* has helped me prioritize my actions and advocacy, and has offered a path to follow as I go forward.

Tech Tools Corner: Using Spotify to Motivate Special Needs Students

By Lindsey Crafisi



Lindsey has been teaching literacy to adult immigrants for over ten years, focusing on adult emerging readers. Her career at Carlos Rosario has provided opportunities for curriculum, assessment and materials creation, which Lindsey finds fun and engaging. Empowering her learners and helping them achieve their goals is her mission! She is currently working on her MA in ESL from Hamline University.

I have authored the Tech Tools Corner column for three years and shared tips on amplifying student voices through technology, wellness apps, and ways that tech can facilitate speaking practice. For this issue, I would like to share an anecdote about how using technology in my class has helped motivate and cultivate independence in a special needs student I have in my class.

When I first met this student, I learned that she had a trauma history, that she had an extensive IEP (Individualized Education Plan) from a former high school, and that she was non-verbal. She did not make eye contact, would not relate to men, and would not complete many on-level academic tasks. I was unsure of the progress we would make this school year, but I was excited to see what I could do.

The beginning of the school year was difficult for both of us. I could tell she had a lot of emotional struggles happening. She had outbursts during class. She was missing her home country. It was hard to see her in pain. Then I discovered a new way to motivate her and also help her feel more independent.

During our first meeting, one of her caretakers had mentioned that my student did like to dance. It turned out this special student also loved to DJ. Through her broken speech and numerous (some failed!) Google searches, I found out who a few of her favorite artists were. I turned on the music as students entered in the morning and her demeanor softened. She started snapping. The next couple times we had music on, she would come up to my Spotify on the Smartboard and select the next song. She started finding other artists she really liked through the Spotify-generated playlists. Letting her choose her own music was a way she could show her independence. Then I realized that she would be motivated to complete academic tasks with the music on and used the option of choosing the next song as a reward for her hard work, in about 10 minute chunks.



Now with her hard work she can write a complete sentence, has almost mastered spelling numbers zero to three, greets her classmates and even interacts with my male paraeducator, high fives and all! I obviously do not attribute this all to the DJing in class, but I do see our system as a key factor in her progress. Spotify on the smartboard is a simple way that my student uses technology to feel empowered and to work hard. I hope this edition of the Tech Corner column inspires you to dig into your students' interests and leverage them in class, keeping in mind that technology is often a great facilitator.

High Yield Strategies to Support Secondary English Learners Across the Curriculum

By Becky Miskell



Becky Miskell is an Itinerant ESL teacher in DCPS, where she teaches content-based ESL to secondary English learners in middle school, high school and alternative settings.


Integrated content and language instruction is an authentic and meaningful context for language learning. When given the opportunity to build on their content knowledge while developing language simultaneously, English learners benefit (Echeverria, Vogt & Short, 2014, Staehr-Fenner & Snyder, 2017, & Walqui, 2010). Key to the success of this approach, however, is access to the curriculum. The focus of this article is on making content accessible for ELs regardless of English proficiency level (ELP).

As an ESL teacher at the secondary level, my professional journey has led me to integrating content and language instruction intentionally in my classroom. This has meant informing myself, collaborating with colleagues across disciplines, and teaching to content and English language development standards using the WIDA framework. The following questions have guided my instructional choices: where are my students currently in the domains of listening, speaking, reading and writing? What do they know about the content? How can I tap into their prior knowledge and experiences in order to provide a bridge to the curriculum? What do I need to teach explicitly to support their English language development and content knowledge? How will I scaffold resources and tasks for the meaningful engagement of ELs at varying proficiency levels?

Based on my research and my experiences teaching content-based ESL, I will focus here on strategies that fit into five categories: comprehensible input, scaffolding, interaction, building background knowledge, and teaching academic vocabulary.

Comprehensible input

It is not enough to provide rigorous instruction. Students acquire language when they understand the messages they hear and read (Krashen, 1985). In order for students to engage in a meaningful way with the curriculum, they must have access to it. There are many ways to make content accessible using multiple forms of input. For example, visual supports throughout the classroom can include *anchor charts* and *graphs* with key content information that students may refer to. Additionally, *interactive words walls*, which students may participate in creating, support vocabulary development and access to academic material. Another way to make content clear is through *demonstrations*. Students are able to observe as explanations are provided using *real-life objects* (cultural artifacts, microscope, maps, and manipulatives, for example). Also, when listening to passages with an audio or video component, students may benefit from *multiple* opportunities to listen to a passage or video.

Listening Activity		
Watch and listen to the video. Draw, sketch or take notes as you watch.		
		
Watch and listen. Who are the main characters in the story?	Watch and listen again. What are the main events in the story?	

One area that often poses a considerable challenge to accessibility is reading. Students must be able to comprehend what they are reading in order for learning to occur. Providing leveled texts that align with themes from the content areas provides access to the curriculum when grade level text alone is not within reach. When reading challenging text, students may also benefit from *access to high quality translated texts by reputable sources* when available to further support their comprehension.

In addition to the strategies above, technology provides access via *translation tools* and *interactive text*. In the secondary classroom, for example, PowerPoint is often used to present new information. When used within Office 365 online, PowerPoint can easily be set to provide translated captions of all classroom discussion during instruction. Imagine how empowering this might be for a beginning English learner in a social studies classroom, for example. Furthermore, within Word on Office 365 online students may read and interact with text through *Immersive Reader*. In this way, they may readily look up definitions, images and translations of unfamiliar words they select, supporting their comprehension of the text at hand.

Scaffolding

Designing instruction for ELs is not a one size fits all endeavor. ELs are not a monolith. Students may have beginning, intermediate or advanced levels of English language proficiency (ELP). They may be students with limited or interrupted formal schooling (SLIFE). They may be true newcomers to the United States. When we know our students, familiarize ourselves with the linguistic demands of the curriculum, and understand the proficiency levels of our students, instruction can be designed to be engaging, integrated, and accessible regardless of proficiency level. It is important to note that practices that are sufficient for non-EL students may not be sufficient to support the learning needs of ELs (August & Shanahan, 2006, Staehr-Fenner & Snyder, 2017).

As students develop proficiency, scaffolds are gradually released. In this way, students become independent over time.

Scaffolding provides temporary supports so that students can participate meaningfully and show what they know and what they are learning. As students develop proficiency, scaffolds are gradually released. In this way, students become independent over time. For example, in order to support students with beginning levels of ELP with a writing task, *word banks, sentence frames, and reducing linguistic load* provide scaffolding so that students can show what they know and what they have learned. Students at intermediate levels may benefit from sentence stems and word banks. Scaffolds for students at all levels of proficiency include teaching *background knowledge, pre-teaching vocabulary, graphic organizers, modeling* and *interactive supports* (Staehr-Fenner & Snyder, 2017). Considerable work has been done in this area and examples of lessons and resources that have been scaffolded for ELs at varying levels of proficiency serve as models for effective scaffolding (August, Staehr-Fenner & Snyder, 2014).

Interaction

The interactive classroom is an ideal setting for language learning. Incorporating interactive opportunities into instruction promotes language learning in meaningful contexts (Staehr-Fenner & Snyder, 2017, Walqui, 2010). One way to increase interaction in the classroom is to incorporate *structured accountable talk* routines into instruction. Providing students with the opportunity to co-construct meaning about a topic they are studying is motivating and empowering. When supported with appropriate modeling and scaffolding in a welcoming and accepting learning environment, all students benefit. These routines can be done with partners or small groups and are most successful when structured and modeled (Staehr-Fenner & Snyder, 2017).

One strategy that can be readily incorporated into any classroom is the *Question-Signal-Stem-Share-Assess (QSSSA)* strategy. This strategy structures academic talk for students of every proficiency level. A question is posed around the topic of study.

Students are provided with think time to consider their responses and they signal when they are ready to respond. A stem (“A primary theme in the story is _____”, for instance) is provided that students may use when responding. Students then share their responses with partners or triads. Finally, a check for understanding is provided by having students complete a short task. This task could be, for example, illustrating and labeling a content related image or completing a graphic organizer.

Fan and pick activities provide students with an opportunity to respond to questions and build on each other’s ideas. Students work together in small groups to discuss a topic. The teacher creates a set of cards, each with a question, adding sentence frames or stems as needed. The first student fans the cards. The second student picks a card and reads it to the third person, who responds either on her own or using the sentence frames or stems. The fourth person listens and responds, building or commenting on the ideas of his peer. When modeled and scaffolded, everyone participates, everyone is engaged, and everyone contributes.

Building Background Knowledge

Building background knowledge provides an opportunity to link students’ prior knowledge with concepts and themes being taught. As students make connections between previous learning and new ideas and concepts, they engage more deeply and increase their understanding about topics under study. (Echeverria, Vogt & Short, 2017, Staehr-Fenner & Snyder, 2017).

Think, Know, Wonder activities can be useful in activating prior knowledge and in helping students make connections in response to new input. For example, to introduce a lesson on the Harlem Renaissance, a projected image of Jacob Lawrence’s “The Great Migration” serves as a visual text that can be discussed and annotated together with scaffolding in the form of partner or small group talk. Whether students have any knowledge of the topic or not, they observe, question and predict what they will be learning.

Anticipation guides are another way to activate prior knowledge and prepare for future learning and can be done as introductory activities or as pre-reading activities. Students are presented with 5-7 general statements based on themes or concepts in a reading, lesson or unit. Students must agree or disagree, explaining their thinking to a partner.

Anticipation Guide Pre-Reading

Do you agree or disagree? Why or why not? Explain your thinking.

Statement/Opinion	Individual Response		Partner Response	
	Agree/Disagree	Reason	Agree/Disagree	Reason
It is honorable to make sacrifices for others.				
Honor means different things to different people.				

I agree that _____ because _____.

I believe that _____ since _____.

I disagree with this statement because_____.

While I agree that _____, I also believe that _____.

My opinion is _____ because _____.

In addition to the strategies above, *explicit teaching of concise background knowledge* will support students in areas that may be unfamiliar to them. Short summaries and guiding questions support comprehension on unfamiliar topics that can be embedded into slide decks, texts, and handouts to fill in any areas where misunderstandings or gaps may exist (August, Staehr-Fenner & Snyder, 2014).

Gallery walks serve the dual purpose of increasing interaction and helping students make connections between prior and new learning. As students circulate from station to station to view and comment on posters with images related to the topic of study, they share what they know, discuss questions they have, and predict what they will learn moving forward.


Teaching Academic Vocabulary

A common challenge ELs face is academic vocabulary. Developing and building on academic vocabulary has been shown in the research to support reading comprehension and is important for success in the content classroom. The better we can prepare students to expand their academic vocabulary, the better equipped they will be academically (Staehr-Fenner & Snyder, 2017). Furthermore, additional research recommends teaching academic vocabulary intensively over several days using a variety of techniques. We can prepare ELs for reading complex texts by *pre-teaching*

academic vocabulary. For example, teachers can use slide decks to explicitly teach 5-7 key words from a text using images, translations, understandable definitions, and quotes from texts under study to support comprehension and access to the text. Furthermore, when interactive turn and talks are incorporated, students have the opportunity to interpret multiple meanings of words and to identify examples and how word parts may change meaning. This process supports deeper comprehension of new vocabulary, especially when reinforced over time.

mad
mad (adjective)
enojado; demente

"Said he not so? Or did I dream it so?
Or am I **mad**, hearing him talk of Juliet,
To think it was so?" (lines 80-82)



Definition: (adj.)
1. (informal) very angry.
2. (British) mentally ill; insane.

1. His mother got very mad when he failed his math test.
2. They say he went mad from the pain of his experience.

Turn and Talk: What are the two different meanings that "Am I mad?" could have?

We can and must ensure that our students have access to challenging, exciting and accessible curricula. We must also ensure that the focus on language within the context of content is not lost. By embracing the challenge of integrating content and language instruction and also scaffolding support for students at varying levels of proficiency, we increase educational opportunity for every English learner.

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