

# The Definite Article



## WATESOL Newsletter Summer 2022

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- \* Community Schools Model in Support of Immigrant Students
- \* Integrating Translanguaging Pedagogy into Teaching Practice
- \* Two Years of Change at Washington English Center
- \* Using the Newseum's Resources to Teach a Media Literacy Class
- Qatari Teaching Assistant's Observations of American ESL Teachers

# WATESOL NEWS

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## *From the editors:*

Dear WATESOL Members,

This is our first newsletter, and we hope you will be as excited as we are reading the deep, creative and practical contributions from our fellow members that are published in this issue.

We are almost at the end of the first post-pandemic school year. Students and teachers are finally back in classrooms. We have all experienced life-altering changes during the pandemic, professionally and personally. Now is a perfect time to look back and celebrate the big discoveries made, the new approaches created and the lessons learned. A powerful theme we see is the value of community, communication, and student-centered approaches using new methods and modalities.

We hope to hear more about how your teaching community has changed during the pandemic. Please consider sharing your experiences with a [written contribution to \*The Definite Article\*](#).

Very best wishes,

Kathleen F. Kearney and Marina Dewees  
Co-editors



WATESOL welcomes submissions from members for publication in *The Definite Article*. Deadlines and detailed submission guidelines can be found [on our website](#).

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.

# Letter from the President

Dear WATESOL Colleagues,

I'm honored and excited to be starting out this year as your WATESOL President. The past few years have brought forth new and unprecedented changes that have shifted the field of education and the way we plan, implement, and deliver instruction to English language learners. I would like to thank all of our WATESOL members and board members for supporting us as we shifted to a virtual Fall 2021 Conference and hosted a successful spring webinar series.



**WATESOL Fall Conference 2022**  
**Saturday October 29, 2022**  
**Catholic University**  
Stronger Together: Adapting to an Era  
of Change  
*Community, Collaboration & Advocacy*

We are excited to finally offer our Fall 2022 Conference in person. I am grateful we will all have the opportunity to network and see our WATESOL community again in person.

Here are some of the things that WATESOL is currently working on:

## **Fall Conference Presentation Recordings on YouTube:**

Many of our previous Fall Conference Presenters generously agreed to have their sessions recorded. You can check out past sessions or re-watch sessions that resonated with you on [WATESOL's YouTube channel](#), curated by our Professional Development Team.

## **New Spring Webinar Series:**

WATESOL continues to offer a spring/summer webinar series. There are many opportunities to join webinars on a range of TESOL topics. You can view the full schedule [here](#). This series is free and open to all; webinars will be recorded, and these recordings can also be found on [WATESOL's YouTube channel](#).

**Book Discussion Series:** The WATESOL Higher Ed SIG is pleased to present a series of book discussion meetings to take place biweekly this summer. All WATESOL members are invited to read and discuss *Speak Not: Empire, Identity and the Politics of Language* by James Griffiths. A native of Wales, Griffiths presents a fascinating examination of current efforts to preserve endangered languages. Higher Ed SIG Chair Max Rhinehart will host a series of discussions of the book, focusing on learning, sharing, and welcoming all those who are interested. Please email Max Rhinehart directly at [higheredsig@watesol.org](mailto:higheredsig@watesol.org) for more information.

**Grants:** WATESOL continues to offer a variety of grants and scholarships. We plan to offer another round of grants and scholarships in the summer. Our newest addition includes a Graduate Student Action Research Grant. Please check out our grants and scholarships offered on the [WATESOL website](#).

Looking to the year ahead, I'm interested in what you'd like to see WATESOL do in 2022. Feel free to email me at [president@watesol.org](mailto:president@watesol.org) to introduce yourself and share your ideas. I hope to hear from you or to see you at one of our upcoming events. Thank you for being a part of WATESOL! Best of luck in the year to come—and continue to make a difference in all that you do.

*Greer Mancuso*

WATESOL 2021–2022 President



# Pittsburgh Convention, March 22-25, 2022

## Reflections on the Hybrid TESOL International Convention and English Language Expo *Inspiring Innovation. Empowering ELT Professionals!*



Krisztina Domjan, Ph.D.  
WATESOL Vice President

I consider myself lucky for spending three refreshing days joining the global community of English language professionals for the TESOL 2022 event. The attendance was moderate, which definitely reflected a fairly cautious attitude of ESOL teachers, (lots of people joined the virtual events) and perhaps a lack of funding in institutions which were hit hard by the pandemic. However, it did bring out a global audience for sure! As I sat down to listen to the keynote speaker on the opening day, I was surrounded by a group of enthusiastic teachers from Pakistan who were clearly ready to mingle!

The next day I attended a session held by a group from George Mason University called “Teaching for Global Competence with Global Thinking Routines” where I sat and brainstormed about implementing [Boix-Mansilla et al.’s global thinking routines](#) with teachers from overseas, and later that day I watched one of them, an extremely creative teacher from Kyrgyzstan, Anara Tazhibaeva, presenting on “Shaping Global Competence Using [Humans of New York](#)”.

She explained how she was developing intercultural understanding of her students in monolingual settings. There were so many fascinating sessions to choose from! Because I normally teach graduate level international students, at American University, I was curious to see how a team of teachers from Saint Louis University were able to redesign their program as they feared that the former curriculum and coursework might not have adequately prepared EAP students for their program’s linguistic demands (“A Research-Based, Data-Driven EAP Graduate Program Redesign and Evaluation”).

As the current co-Vice President of WATESOL, I attended an insightful discussion/coaching session facilitated by former Maryland TESOL Presidents Doaa Rashed and Debra Suarez, exploring women’s development as leaders in TESOL. It was inspiring listening to them “unpack the intersectionality of the multifaceted nature of female leadership identity development.” This was also an opportunity for networking, which is always a great reason to visit the conference. The event organizers promised that if I attended, I could “Press reset and get away from your classroom or office” - indeed, I did just that, and I thank TESOL for the opportunity!



By Liz England, WATESOL member

For me, as for many WATESOLers and TESOLers everywhere who were able to attend, the Pittsburgh TESOL Convention 2022 was a welcomed end to two years of face-to-face professional isolation! It was wonderful to see friends – emotional reunions each day! So wonderful to smile, look in the eyes of friends, and hug!

The virtual TESOL 2022 event was held simultaneously with the live face-to-face convention. I was told there were about 2,000 people at the face-to-face convention and about 5,000 at the virtual convention. I loved TESOL 2022 in Pittsburgh!

Since most TESOL Conventions include more than 2,000 people, the 2022 face-to-face convention felt different: much “less” – no lines, no crowds, no standing-room-only at presentations. Live feed presentations – face-to-face and virtual – were a new discovery for me. And the use of pre-recorded sessions with live Q/A – all new for me. TESOL International Association did a great job of juggling an extraordinarily complex convention 2022. I loved the convention and was grateful to attend.

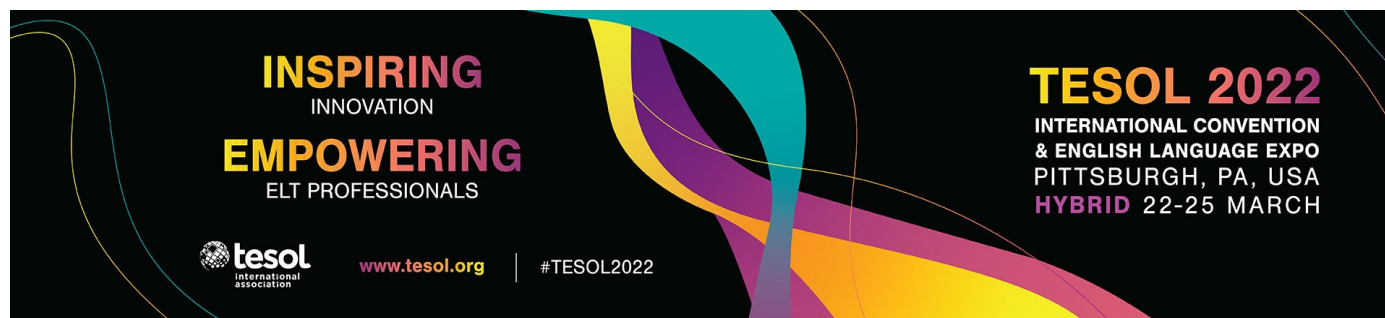
I had three presentations on the convention program. Other TESOL CPD PLN leaders presented, too.

Here are mine:

- ***“Publishing in the TESOL Field: Insights and Tips for Success”***  
(Presenters: Sidury Christiansen, Liz England, and Luciana de Olivera)  
Virtual Convention (pre-recorded)
- ***TESOL Career Path Development PLN - Riding the Waves of Change***  
(Presenters: Liz England, Shirlaine Castellino, Julie Lake (in-person) and Linda Chu, Lynne Rankin Clark, Damon Anderson, Rezwana Islam, Weiyu Zhang (livestream, we hope!))
- ***“Unexpected Empowerment: Sustainable Remote Professional Development”***  
(Presenters: Lynne Clark, Liz England, and Steve Kroman)



“Pittsburgh TESOL Convention 2022 was a welcomed end to two years of face-to-face professional isolation! “



# WATESOL Board

## Reflections and Plans



**Tabitha  
Kidwell**

**Professional  
Development Co-  
Chair**

After nearly two years teaching online, it was exciting to get back in the classroom for Spring 2022!

Back in Spring 2020, my major challenge was to figure out how to transition what I normally did in the classroom to an online environment. In Spring 2022, I found that I needed to figure out how to transition what I had become accustomed to doing in an online environment back to the in-person setting. I was surprised to actually miss some features of Zoom, like being able to quickly form breakout groups and share materials in the chat, but I remembered how exciting it was to see students all in the same place, making connections with each other and with the content.

As WATESOL PD Co-Chair, I encountered similar challenges. The last two years have offered WATESOL opportunities to develop our online PD programming, including by hosting two online Fall Conferences. We also were able to establish a Spring Webinar Series that we hope to continue for many years. Plans are underway for an in-person Fall 2022 Conference, and we are so excited for WATESOL members to again be able to learn from each other and network face-to-face. We hope to see many of you there!



**William Newman**  
**K-12 SIG Chair**

As we near the end of the 2021-2022 school year, I can't help but feel encouraged by some of the changes that I have seen over the past 10 months.

Principal among these is what seems to be a greater emphasis on students' social and emotional learning and well-being. ESOL teachers have long understood the value of engaging with students on a variety of both academic and non-academic topics. In our work to help students learn to clearly communicate their everyday thoughts and needs in English, we also give them an opportunity to share and to express themselves. In my interactions with other K-12 teachers this year, I have noticed an increasing number of SEL activities extending this opportunity to a greater number of students.

Looking forward this year, I am excited about working with other K-12 educators to build on what we have learned over the past few years. As a SIG, I hope that we can provide not only formal PD events, but also informal opportunities for K-12 ESOL teachers to get together and hang out. I'm always open to suggestions and happy to help in any way that I can. I can be reached at [k12sig@watesol.org](mailto:k12sig@watesol.org).

**"We are so excited for WATESOL members to again be able to learn from each other and network face-to-face."**



**Max Rhinehart**  
**Higher Education**  
**SIG Chair**

I don't need to tell anyone in higher education that the last two years have been unusual. It would be only slightly more novel to suggest that, despite the challenges, the move to online instruction offered us an opportunity to reevaluate our methods, try new things, and integrate uses of technology that will still serve us and our students well after we return to the classroom. This brings me to my own specific experience, which was indeed both challenging and a chance to develop new approaches that I continue to use in my in-person classes

For example, the necessity of requiring students to take extensive notes or make a recording of their small-group discussions while we met over Zoom has led me to continue the practice in my face-to-face classes, giving students some extra writing and note-taking practice when previously they would have only been practicing their listening and speaking skills.

We all had to make this kind of adjustment, and while it was unanticipated, being forced to adapt yields enduring benefits. I try to keep all of this in mind while also simply enjoying being back in the same room as my students.

Being able to see and hear them all, at the same time, is both a tonic and another spur to innovate. The limitations of Zoom required teachers to adapt, to our benefit. With the removal of those limitations comes an opportunity to continue to try new things.

One new thing I'm trying is joining the WATESOL board. I teach at American University's ELTA program, and though I'm no stranger to service to my school or my department, this is my first foray into service to the profession. One thing I was told is that, during the tumult of the pandemic, engagement in

professional organizations waned.

As Higher Ed SIG chair, my main goal is to encourage participation and connection. Just as our return to the classroom is an occasion to reconnect with our students, I hope that our emergence from lockdowns will lead us to engage more with our professional colleagues.

To that end, I've chosen a book discussion series as my first Higher Ed SIG initiative. By reading and meeting to discuss an interesting and accessible book on endangered languages, we can ease into our return to the classroom, reconnect, and have some fun.



**Maria Silva**  
**NNEST Caucus Liaison**

Greetings WATESOLers! I am pleased to be the NNEST (Non-Native English Speaker Teachers) Caucus Chair 2022. I was part of VENTESOL (VENEZUELA TESOL) for five years, and I still have those great memories of working and volunteering for the organization and the English teachers of my country.

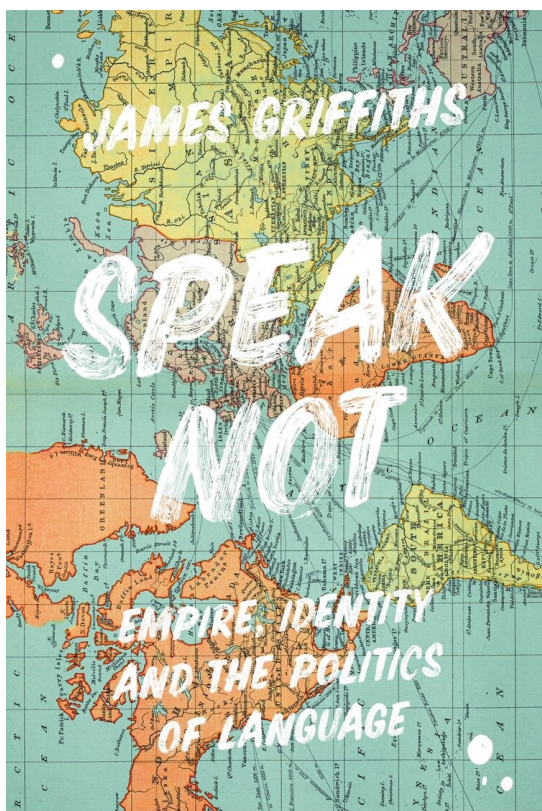
I invite you all to work together and participate in different projects for NNEST. First, let's get connected, and establish meaningful relationships among NNEST in the Washington area and other International TESOL organizations. Second, let's encourage our International English teachers to participate in the webinar series, annual conferences, and other presentations to share our best teaching practices.

Finally, let our culture shine by planning a NNEST International Festival this year. These are some ideas for our Non-Native English Teachers this year 2022 and more years to come.

**WATESOL welcomes submissions from members for publication in the Definite Article.**

**If you have an idea, please check our website for categories and requirements or reach out to the editors Kathleen F. Kearney and Marina Dewees at [newsletter@watesol.org](mailto:newsletter@watesol.org)**





Griffiths, J. (2021). *Speak Not: Empire, identity and the politics of language*. Zed Books. <http://dx.doi.org/10.5040/9781350237865>

The WATESOL Higher Ed SIG is pleased to present a series of book discussion meetings to take place this summer. All WATESOL members are invited to participate in reading and discussing *Speak Not: Empire, Identity and the Politics of Language* by James Griffiths (2021).

A native of Wales, Griffiths presents a fascinating examination of current efforts to preserve endangered languages. Higher Ed SIG Chair Max Rhinehart will host a series of discussions of the book, focusing on learning, sharing, and getting to know each other.

The book itself promises to be fascinating reading. Touching on issues of linguistics, language acquisition, globalization, indigenous studies, and the legacy of imperialism, James Griffiths documents the demise of and modern attempts to preserve endangered languages in Wales, Hawaii, Asia, and southern China.

The sessions themselves will each focus on a designated section of the text, with discussion questions distributed beforehand. We hope to have a lively discussion of the ideas contained within the book and our own reactions and experiences. The host will be happy to provide summary and support in each session, in the event that any participants have not had the time to carefully read the designated section. Our goal is to interact, discuss, have fun, and build community.

We will meet for biweekly (every two weeks) discussion of the text and your thoughts. We will begin around third week of June (12<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup>) and meet every two weeks for an estimated five sessions, concluding in early August.

Here's the best part – WATESOL will buy you a copy of the book!

Just provide your preferred shipping address when registering for the discussion group, and we will have a book sent to you.

Please email Max Rhinehart directly at [higheredsig@watesol.org](mailto:higheredsig@watesol.org) by **June 5** to sign up. After registration is completed, we will settle on specific dates and times that suit the most people.

We hope to see you there!

According to the publisher:

“In *Speak Not*, James Griffiths reports from the frontlines of the battle to preserve minority languages, from his native Wales, to Hawai'i, Tibet, southern China and Hong Kong. He explores the revival of the Welsh language as a blueprint for how to ensure new generations are not robbed of their linguistic heritage, outlines how loss of indigenous languages is the direct result government policies both past and present, and examines how technology is both hindering and aiding the fight to prevent linguistic extinction.”



# Recent Webinars

## *Using SKELL to Support Vocabulary Development in Academic Writing*

*April 7, 2022*

- \* **Presenter:** Lily Lewis
- \* **Session Type:** Practice-oriented
- \* **Focus:** Higher education, Intensive English Programs, Teacher training, Technology
- \* **Targeted Skills:** Writing, Grammar, Vocabulary, Technology

Even for advanced learners, choosing the words and structures that sound “natural” in English can be quite difficult. As a result, L2 writers tend to overuse a small repertoire of highly frequent collocations (Durrant & Schmitt, 2009). Student writers can develop valuable self-editing skills through the analysis of corpora, collections of naturally occurring texts. The main advantage of using corpus-based tools is that they draw from authentic sources, rather than the contrived examples we often encounter in other pedagogical materials.

Using corpus tools for language exploration (a technique often referred to as Data-Driven Learning) has been growing in popularity, but it still presents technological challenges for students and teachers alike (Boulton & Cobb, 2017). For instance, some instructors may be familiar with [COCA](#), the Corpus of Contemporary American English. While COCA’s powerful interface enables a variety of interesting analyses, it can also be intimidating to use at first. Thus, I’d like to briefly introduce SKELL, a straightforward corpus tool that is 100% free and does not require a user account.

[SKELL](#) (Sketch Engine for Language Learning) is based a corpus of over 1 billion words from a variety of mostly web-based texts in American, British, and other varieties of English (visit [English corpus for SKELL | Sketch Engine](#) for more details).

The two most useful features of SKELL are Examples and Word Sketch:

1. The Example function allows you to search for a word or phrase and get examples in context (known in corpus linguistics as concordance lines). The examples are specifically chosen by an algorithm designed for language learners: short, simple sentences with enough context to understand them.

work 1,220.43 hits per million

1. Their local maternity unit was **working** overtime.
2. But leather upper near heel is **working** open.
3. Its **working** method was often direct action.
4. The western style futuristic cities quite **worked** .
5. Higher debt often means **working** long hours outside music.
6. These experimental stands are still **working** today.
7. Faith without such **works** is dead faith.
8. Orders are sent within 2 **working** days.
9. This **works** both ways here tough guy.
10. Neither bourgeoisie nor **working** class was significant.

- Word Sketch is a feature that displays the most frequent collocations using a particular word. For instance, searching for “work” will give you phrases like “the working class” and “work out”. Clicking on any of these collocations will automatically take you to the Example tab to see sentences with this phrase.

work    verb    ✓ Show context

subject of work		object of work		phrasal		phrasal with object	
1. people	people working	1. class	the working class	1. out	work out	1. out	work out
2. employee	employees working	2. hour	working hours	2. on	to work on	2. around	to work around
3. system	system works	3. condition	working conditions	3. through	to work through	3. through	work it through
4. thing	things work	4. day	working days	4. around	to work around	4. off	work off
5. experience	experience working with	5. fine	works fine	5. in	worked in	5. up	work up
6. year	years working	6. relationship	working relationship with	6. upon	to work upon	6. over	work over
7. team	team working	7. group	working group	7. along	work along with		
8. woman	women working	8. memory	working memory	8. up	worked up		
9. student	students work	9. shift	working shifts				
10. staff	staff working	10. life	working life				

In my experience, SKELL can be helpful for both instructors and students. Instructors can identify the most relevant collocations to teach and find authentic sentences for creating activities and assessments. Students can find examples of tricky vocabulary in context and self-edit by searching for appropriate collocations to express their ideas.

However, like any other teaching tool, there are also several limitations to keep in mind:

- Corpus data comes from real people, and real people often make mistakes! You will likely find some sentences that you judge to be “incorrect”.
- SKELL includes texts from different varieties of English that may or may not be appropriate to your teaching context.
- Search results may contain content that is inappropriate for learners in K-12.
- Frequency should not be the only factor we consider in selecting appropriate collocations. We need to examine the search results with a critical eye.

Happy searching!

## References

- Boulton, A., & Cobb, T. (2017). Corpus use in language learning: A meta-analysis of corpus use in language learning. *Language Learning*, 67(2), 348–393. <https://doi.org/10.1111/lang.12224>
- Durrant, P., & Schmitt, N. (2009). To what extent do native and non-native writers make use of collocations? *IRAL - International Review of Applied Linguistics in Language Teaching*, 47(2). <https://doi.org/10.1515/iral.2009.007>



Lily Lewis is a postgraduate researcher in corpus linguistics at the University of Birmingham and a Lecturer in Linguistics and TESOL at California State University, Dominguez Hills. Lily has worked with a wide range of English language learners over the last 10 years, including university students, diplomat spouses, and professional athletes.

# *Create Materials for Authentic Sources without Giving up Your Entire Weekend April 30, 2022*

- \* **Presenter:** Nancy Overman
- \* **Session Type:** Practice-oriented
- \* **Focus:** Adult education, Higher education, Intensive English Programs
- \* **Targeted Skills:** Reading, Vocabulary, Technology

## **Let Your Students Make the Reading Worksheets**

We have all spent time creating reading questions for authentic articles that we want our students to read. But what if you could pass that responsibility to your students? It would save you time and teach them valuable reading skills. Here are four strategies for creating reading worksheets that will prepare your students for reading in the real world.

### **“What I’d Like to Know”**

One of the easiest strategies is to have students come up with questions that they have about the topic. Before reading an article about how a board of directors works, my students suggested questions they had (during class), and I typed them into a Google doc as they talked. Some of the questions they came up with included the following:

- What are the qualifications for being on a board of directors?
- What are the board members’ responsibilities?
- How do they make decisions?
- How can they make better decisions?

Then, for homework, students read the article and looked for answers to their questions. (There were a total of ten questions.) Having this worksheet encourages students to read with a purpose: to find the answers to those questions. This context ensures that students will pay attention to what they’re reading, evaluating the information and judging whether it answers any of their questions.

Of course, students might not find answers to all of their questions. However, they should do their best to find an answer or to find any instances where the author implies an answer. This gives students practice in answering difficult questions, e.g., “The author did not directly state whether...but the fact that....suggests that...” A teacher could always tell students that for every question they cannot answer, they should create a new question that they *can* answer, so that they will still have a worksheet with ten questions.

#### **One tip for creating this kind of worksheet, where each student needs a copy:**

After you’ve created the worksheet with students’ input, get a share link. But then, replace the word “edit” at the end of the link (and all words after “edit”) with the word “copy.” This will force students to make their own individual copies when they click on the link.



### **“Eight questions for a partner”**

You can also assign students to read first and then create questions for a partner to answer the next day in class. I often assign five comprehension questions (factual questions with answers that can be found in the text) and three opinion/personal experience questions. For both types of questions, give students some models or sentence stems, e.g. “For comprehension questions, use the 5Ws. For opinion questions, start with ‘Do you think...?’ or ‘Why do you think...?’ For personal experience questions, ask ‘Have you ever...?’ or ‘Do you have any experience with...?’”

### **“Best questions for another group”**

A variation is to ask each student to bring in 5 comprehension questions and 3 opinion questions. Then they meet with 2-3 partners and choose their 5 best comprehension questions and best 3 opinion questions for another group to answer. They can enter their chosen questions on a google doc and then share that doc with another group.

### **“Turn subtitles into questions”**

Another useful reading skill is to teach students to turn any subtitles into reading questions. They can do this with a partner during class. Then, for homework, they read to answer those questions. If students need help, you can give them a way to start. For example, if the subtitle is “Make Your Money Count,” a comprehension question could be “How can you ...?” or “What are some ways to...?” If the article does not have subtitles, they can do the same with key topic sentences.

Training students to create their own worksheets saves the teacher time, but it also makes students better readers. It also gives them transferable skills that they can use with any text in the future, whether they plan to study in the US, use English in the workplace, or live in an English-speaking environment.



*Nancy Overman recently retired from Georgetown University's English Language Center, and is now Emeritus Associate Teaching Professor. She specialized in preparing students for undergraduate work, graduate research, and professional interactions, putting special emphasis on helping students to take charge of their own learning. She taught English in Japan and Panama and conducted teacher training in Cuba and in China, (supporting English programs at medical schools for WHO).*



**YOU CAN NOW FIND US ON YOUTUBE!**

Access recordings of previous webinars and conference sessions at the new [WATESOL YouTube Channel](#). Subscribe to receive updates when new videos are posted!

# Teaching Hack

## A 10-Step Activity to Provide Students with Meaningful Student-Talk Time, Vocabulary Practice, and Communication Strategy Development

By Andrew Screen

If you want your students to speak more, laugh more, and enhance their communication strategies, this activity might help.

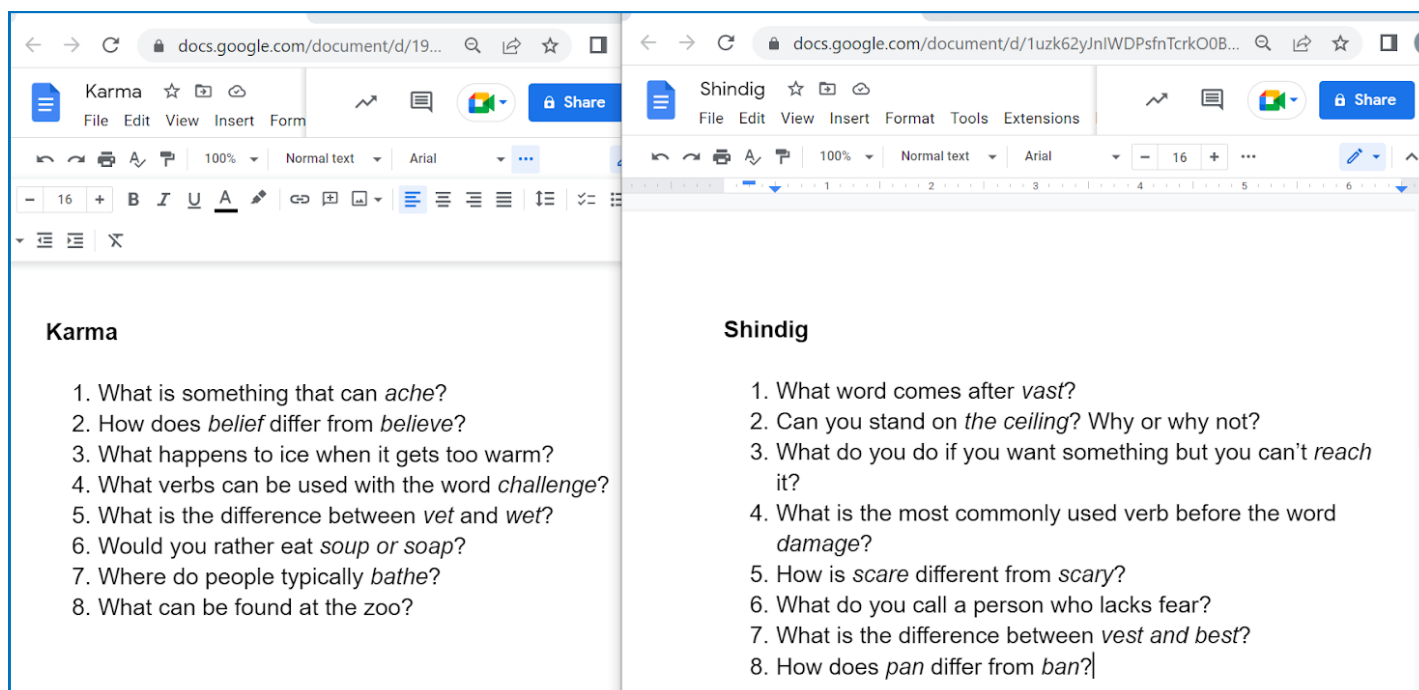
### 1. Identify “nuseful” (new and/or useful) vocabulary in your course.

Sample list below \*these words were chosen from 3,000 Core Vocabulary Words from The Britannica Dictionary, source: [3,000 Most Common Words in English | Britannica Dictionary](#)

*ache, scare, melt, damage, belief, ceiling, challenge, reach, vast, bathe, lack*

### 2. Write questions that incorporate your selected vocabulary and keep them in two separate, openly accessible Google Docs (see below). Name each Doc something that you can easily refer to anytime when you want your students to do this task.

\*Pro Tip: Ask students to come up with the questions.



### 3. Post the link to Karma\* and Shindig\* in a communal place (e.g. LMS) within your course.

\*Karma and Shindig are just fairly random names for the documents that I have chosen instead of “Student 1” and “Student 2”; these are not vocabulary items.

\*Low-tech Tip: Type or write the questions on paper and distribute.

4. Instruct your students how to access each link and try a practice Karma/Shindig together as a class.
5. Create pairs with one student as “Karma” and the other as “Shindig”. \*If you have an odd number, 2:1.
6. Shout out, “Begin!” and sit back, observe, take notes of effective communication skills and note possible communication breakdowns.
7. Stop the activity once one or two pairs have completed all of the questions.
8. Ask students to share their reflections on the task.
  - a. What caused communication breakdowns? In other words, if you or your partner ever said, “What?”, “Huh?”, “Please repeat”, etc., see if you can identify why.
  - b. What is a strategy that you or your partner used that enabled you to communicate effectively?
9. Share your observations.
10. Add content to your two documents regularly throughout your course, and once you have played a few times, you should just be able to say, “Karma/Shindig” and....clockwork!

#### When to play Karma/Shindig?

- A warm-up at the beginning of class
- When you are transitioning between tasks and could use a moment to collect your thoughts

#### Recap: Karma/Shindig...

- should provide students with meaningful talk time because the pair-speaking task requires that the students speak;
- forces students to use the vocabulary to communicate, which might lead to more meaningful interaction

#### \*Communication Strategies

- **Give examples**
  - \* What is something that can *ache*?
  - \* Huh?
  - \* For example, last night my tooth hurt, so I had a toothache. What do you think is something that can ache?
- **Use synonyms if a word is unknown**
  - \* How many *siblings* do you have?
  - \* What?
  - \* How many brothers and sisters do you have?
- **Spell words when necessary and use the Phonetic Alphabet or something similar to distinguish between similar letters**
  - \* What is the difference between *vest* and *best*?
  - \* Best and best?
  - \* No, “vest, “v” as in “victor”, vest and then “best”, “b” as in “boy”.



Andrew Screen is an Assistant Teaching Professor in the English Language Center at Georgetown University. He enjoys experimenting with creative ways of enhancing learning



# Teaching Hack

## Encourage English Learners to Engage with the Community

By Daniel Graff

In our intensive English program, we look for ways to help students engage in their community so that their experience extends outside the classroom.

For the past two sessions, our students have competed in the Hoya Passport, a bingo game passport to adventure in the DC area. Students compete to complete the most bingos by taking pictures of themselves completing the tasks listed on each square and collecting a stamp from me.

This is the most customizable part of the activity; ours primarily consists of activities meant to get students exploring DC, like visiting museums, using public transportation, and trying new foods.

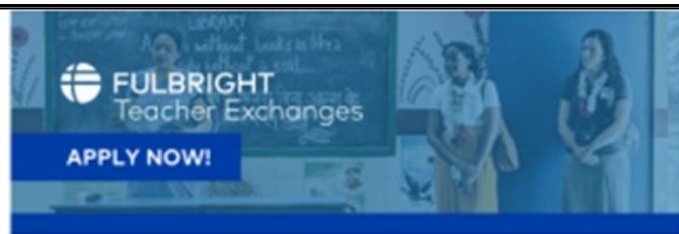
Because the goals can be changed, this activity is useful for children and adults alike. These can be changed to be more language skill focused, location bounded to a school or small community, or interactive. At the end of the session, we rewarded the highest earners with small prizes.

All of the students who participated in this activity benefited, from their newfound confidence in spending time in DC to the English skills they'd honed in daily interactions. As we exit the pandemic, this is a great starting point for learners of all ages to get to know their community.

*Daniel Graff is the Student Services Manager at Georgetown University's English Language Center.*



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# Feature Article

## *Community Schools Model In Support of Immigrant Students*

*By Elena Morozova, ESOL Teacher, MCPS*



I have been an educator for over 30 years, first teaching English in my native Russia in 1986-1991, then teaching Russian in the US from 1991-1999, and finally teaching English as a Second Language (ESOL) in MD public schools since 1999. In the last eight years I taught in Montgomery County, MD, which has one of the biggest immigrant populations in the country.

As a first-generation immigrant and a single mom, I have a unique perspective of what it means to navigate a new culture and educate an immigrant child in the public schools in America. My personal and professional experiences taught me that “it takes a village to raise a child”. I think it is imperative to involve the community in the process in order for any child to be successful. It is especially crucial for sons and daughters of first-generation immigrants, who are not yet proficient in English or familiar with the new culture

2014-2015, my first year in MCPS, was the most challenging in my teaching career. That was the year when thousands of unattended minors crossed the US borders, most of them from neighborhoods of El Salvador, Honduras and Guatemala with intense gang presences. These trauma-impacted young adults left all they loved behind and made the dangerous journey to make better lives for themselves and their families. I faced many challenges while teaching them the laws of a new country, the expectation of a new school, the ropes in navigating their new emerging identities, as well as how to balance home life, work and education.

Gaithersburg HS (GHS) where I worked at the time had an amazing ESOL department, which included seven experienced teachers and three highly competent paraeducators. However, since the number of new ESOL students increased exponentially, ESOL staff tripled by the fall of 2015. Hispanic /Latino students represented almost 50% of the school population, many of them were new to the country.

GHS was one of the few schools in the county that had a Wellness Center on campus, fully staffed with Spanish-speaking counselors and a nurse. The school intentionally contracted community supplemental services from Liberty Promise, Identity, and other non-profit organizations. In addition, within school staff-sponsored student clubs emerged: Poder, La Fuerza, Sabor Latino, Association of Latin American Students and more. Those organizations were charged with supporting immigrant students in academic and social-emotional aspects of their lives, as well as educating and guiding them toward a successful future.

However, my newcomer students, many of whom had interrupted education and had endured life-changing trauma, needed more support in every aspect of their new lives. I researched the Community Schools Model, which suggested that local schools must collaborate with the community at large to further support new immigrant students and their families. This is how GHS Community Partnerships in Support of ESOL Newcomer Students was born. In July of 2015 a collaborative committee was formed, which consisted of a few GHS teachers, some Wellness Center staff, and a coordinator from JCC of Montgomery County, which provided adult volunteers to support students during classroom instruction since October 2014.



Here are a few examples of how our partners contributed to students' personal and academic success. The fabulous JCC volunteers under the leadership of Mrs. Janis Helpert supported students in the classroom, educated them about American culture (from holiday turkey dinner delivered to school, to financial literacy, to exposing them to arts as a form of self-expression for the first time). Paisanos owners Kelly and Alex had a community clothing drive one winter when our students had no coats or hats to face MD winter. They raised money and donated winter clothing to 30 students. MD Hispanic Association members connected students to numerous college scholarship opportunities and coached them on the best ways to represent themselves at a job interview.

Now that we were united in our efforts to help our students, the families were better informed about how to support their children and how to navigate the community. Most importantly, there was a new sense of mutual trust and collaboration among the school and immigrant communities, local partners, and community at large. I do not have any hard data to document the academic impact of community school teaching on students. However, there is plenty of non-statistical data of how this approach to education changed students' lives.

My efforts were recognized in 2017, when MCPS presented me with the ESOL Teacher of the Year Award for community building in QOHS, where I was able to replicate the Community School Model with new partners. In addition to the services mentioned above, students were able to benefit from a monthly guest speaker program, which brought outstanding members of the business community, mental health specialists, a Hispanic Washington Post reporter and others, who were happy to share their immigrant journeys and expertise with the students and families. As a result, students were able to network in order to contribute SSL hours. They received additional academic, emotional and professional support, as well as access to community resources to achieve their personal goals of high school graduation and beyond.

The sense of belonging in a community created life-long friendships among students and other partners. They now offer support as best men at each other's weddings and as godparents to each other's children. Many found their life partners and built families after attending the ESOL program together. Others sought employment through our business partners and guest speakers. A large number enrolled in college and became the first ones in the family to graduate. Several pursued a new career path, such as journalism, social work and nursing. The community we created lives on and continues to serve its members and society at large even now, in the age of pandemic, via social media and personal contact.

Unfortunately, the last two years have impacted all of us due to the pandemic. Now that schools are open again, it is time to look at the best practices and involve the communities again in our students' education and social-emotional wellbeing, especially those minority students whose education and wellbeing was impacted the most. I hope you will join me in these efforts in order to ensure all our children have equal access to the education and life they deserve.

The following documents are available upon request for those educators who are interested to implement a community-building initiative in their districts.

GHS Community Partnership Mission, Goals and Participants;

Community Partnership Calendar of Events, GHS 2015-2016;

*Newcomer ESOL Families Guidelines, GHS 2015-16 (available in Spanish)*



# Feature Article

## *Integrating Translanguaging Pedagogy into Teaching Practice*

*By Jessica Shirley and Kathleen Ramos, PhD, George Mason University*

In this article, we explain fundamental principles of translanguaging pedagogy followed by an example of how this approach was enacted in virtual instruction with young multilingual learners (MLs) during the pandemic. We illuminate how translanguaging practices are beneficial not only to MLs and their families but to their teachers as well.

### ***Translanguaging Pedagogy–The Fundamentals***

Translanguaging pedagogy stretches beyond a series of strategies to represent a philosophy of language and education centered on MLs (García & Kleifgen, 2018). When teachers enact translanguaging practices, they invite MLs to draw on their full linguistic repertoires as meaning-making resources. This approach reflects that teachers value and support the translanguaging practices that are the norm in bilingual communities (García & Wei, 2014; García & Kleifgen, 2018).

Through adopting a translanguaging lens, teachers can challenge the monolingual focus rooted in school policies, curricula, and practices (Osorio, 2020). Importantly, translanguaging views MLs as having a single, bilingual language system, offering rich resources for learning new knowledge, expressing understanding, and communicating with others. Teachers who integrate translanguaging practices in instruction understand that MLs' language resources for meaning-making are fused, not separated into distinct language systems (García & Wei, 2014; Osorio, 2020).

These understandings are captured in the four purposes of translanguaging pedagogy (García & Kleifgen, 2018):

- Support MLs as they engage with and comprehend complex content and texts;
- Provide opportunities to develop linguistic practices for academic contexts;
- Make space for MLs' bilingualism and bilingual ways of knowing;
- Support MLs' socio-emotional development and bilingual identities

Also important is the idea that translanguaging offers affordances for MLs to use language flexibly and creatively across multimodal channels (Kim & Song, 2019). For example, Kim and Song (2019) describe a project in which family members interacted multimodally through speaking, listening, drawing, and writing in multiple languages to creatively develop and illustrate a given topic using digital tools. This family engagement project invited children and families to connect across diverse linguistic, multimodal, and cultural experiences and allowed teachers to play new roles by collaborating with learners and families about their cultural, linguistic, and technological expertise.

Multimodal and translanguaging approaches align perfectly with the current [WIDA \(2020\) English Language Development Standards Framework](#). This newly revised framework emphasizes that teachers should invite MLs to use their full linguistic repertoire, including translanguaging practices, as they build content knowledge and language development through instructional activities that intentionally integrate multiple modalities.

### ***Transforming Learning through Translanguaging during Online Teaching***

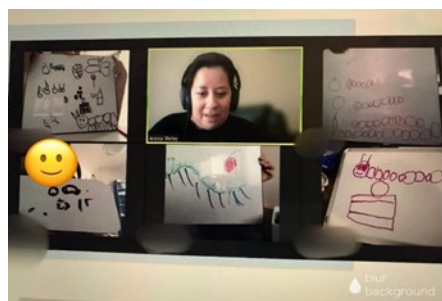
The sudden shift to online learning as a result of the COVID-19 global pandemic presented schools with challenges in how to make virtual learning more attainable for all student populations. Although virtual learning was challenging for teachers, students, and families, the following examples focus on the positive ways that translanguaging practices were fostered in online instruction.

These examples are from the 2020-2021 academic school year. I (Jessica) worked with multilingual kindergarten students as their ESOL teacher. The students' home languages included Spanish, Arabic, Amharic, Pashto, Mongolian, and Creole. These students would join me in a breakout room via the Zoom virtual platform for small group instruction. The majority of the kindergarten students had a family member next to them. This family member would ask me clarifying questions about assignments, explain things to their child, and do follow-up work at home in their home language and in English. Participating in virtual learning provided family members with opportunities to bridge their child's learning through the use of both languages.

One of the instructional activities my students worked on included listening to the book *A Very Hungry Caterpillar* written by Eric Carle. In the picture below the students drew their favorite part of the book on a small white board or paper (or whatever materials they had at home). I invited the students to share these with their family member, leaving their microphones unmuted as they shared. The Zoom breakout room flourished with the diverse languages! Thus, the shift to virtual learning also opened spaces for more communication with families. The students then returned from the small group breakout room session to share their favorite part of the story in English with the whole group.

An instructional activity that provided students with ample opportunities to engage with digital books in their home language was through [Unite for Literacy](#). This online site provides numerous stories in various languages with a more diverse representation of students' linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Many of the stories also have an option for the story to be read by the computer to the student in their selected language.

The students engaged in listening to the



*A Very Hungry Caterpillar*  
written by  
Eric Carle

story in English and then in retelling the story to a family member in their home language. The picture below depicts the students sharing about the sunflowers from the story *Garden Giants* by Holly Hartman.

Many of my students' families shared how their child wanted to reread the stories we had read and wanted to talk to their families about the story in their home language. The students described to their parents what they had learned in virtual class related to the topic of the book. This school-home connection represented a powerful experience for my students and their families and revealed how translanguaging practices could bridge from school to home.

### Virtual Culture "Boxes" and Family Engagement

Considering the role of home culture and drawing on students' experiences can positively impact learning in our classrooms. These experiences, or funds of knowledge (Moll et al., 1992), are not only valuable



*Garden Giants*  
by Holly Hartman

to students' lives, but provided me with insights for incorporating ways to make meaningful connections between my students' home languages and culture and the classroom curriculum. Welcoming my students' funds of knowledge into the virtual learning environment was essential for them to feel respected and valued. Our MLs have so much to offer that can enhance and reshape our understanding and viewpoints of their languages and cultures.

The VCBs allowed the teachers, the students, and the families to learn so much from one another! It was amazing to witness the strong rapport that this type of activity created in the virtual learning space between

teachers, students, and families. It was eye-opening to work alongside students and their families and to see how involved they desired to be in this activity. Family members joined the children during the presentation of the VCBs and guided them as they engaged in sharing with their classmates and their families. The children and their families even showed us how to cook some of their country's favorite dishes live online! Some provided a tour of some of the artifacts around their homes, shared some words in their home language(s), and showed many pictures of their home country.

Through the VCB project, families also realized that there were other families who shared the same home language. This led us to help families build a supportive virtual class community in which they could translate for one another and share resources for supporting their children at home.

### ***Translanguaging as a Transformative Practice***

Translanguaging in virtual spaces provided many opportunities for families to engage with teachers and one another, be involved in the learning process, and witness their child's learning through the connections made across linguistic, multimodal, and cultural experiences. The virtual activities we engaged in empowered my multilingual students and their families to use their funds of knowledge, home languages, and cultural experiences to make these learning connections come alive.



***Student proudly showing us their home language***

Although I am bilingual in Spanish-English, I value all of my students' languages and encourage them to use their full linguistic repertoire for learning whether online or in-person. I invite students to work with a language buddy to make connections to their learning and co-construct meaning together. For example, a way that I integrate translanguaging during in-person learning is to have students listen to a story being read

to them by the computer in their home language, orally retell it, and write about it in their home language with their language buddy. They can share their writing and retell stories at home as well. The opportunities that translanguaging practices brought me during online learning encouraged me to be creative in new ways to draw on students' funds of knowledge and meaningfully engage their families.

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# Feature Article

## *Two Years of Change at Washington English Center*

*By Jessie Ebersole, Washington English Center*

The past two years since COVID-19 was declared a global pandemic have been uniquely challenging to students, educators, and everyone involved in the field of TESOL. This article is a short account of this time from my perspective as a teacher trainer and administrator at Washington English Center (WEC), a nonprofit providing ESOL classes to adult immigrants through volunteer teachers. WATESOL would like to collect more stories about how individuals and institutions have changed due to COVID-19, to better compare the specific and the universal. WATESOL invites you to submit an article on this topic to its upcoming fall newsletter, or to share a short comment on social media and tag WATESOL.

When Washington English Center decided to close its physical location on March 11, 2020, we had two and a half weeks left in our winter term. We did not have any online offerings, and we had student and volunteer populations with varying degrees of access to, and knowledge of, technology.

***“WATESOL would like to collect more stories about how individuals and institutions have changed due to COVID-19, to better compare the specific and the universal. WATESOL invites you to submit an article on this topic to its upcoming fall newsletter...”***

It took us around a month to regroup initially. We decided to start by offering one-on-one online tutoring during our spring term, instead of group classes. We thought this would be a more manageable transition since it only required a smartphone (vs. a laptop or tablet), and the ability to start or join a video call (vs. additional tech functions that may be used in a group class). Before COVID we had offered one-on-one in-person tutoring on a limited basis, to a handful of group class students who requested extra support; at the start of the pandemic this became our primary service with hundreds of student and tutor pairs.

We realized we would need to create more structure for the tutoring program, since without group classes, students wouldn't have questions about the textbook content. We developed two types of tutoring, conversation tutoring, which drew on the conversation partner model used by WEC Academic Advisory Board Member Brock Brady in his work with the Peace Corps, and writing tutoring, which was influenced by Peyton's (2000) research on dialogue journals. This provided guidance for the tutors, while still giving them the flexibility to adapt their sessions to the individual interests and needs of their students.

Summer 2020 was tough as we prepared to add online group classes to our Fall 2020 offerings. We selected Zoom as our video call platform due to its early breakout room capabilities. We realized that Zoom's own tutorials would not provide our volunteers with enough support, since they weren't specifically developed for a teaching context, and assumed more digital literacy background than some of our volunteers had at the time. As a result we created our own video and written Zoom tutorials that took a more step-by-step visual approach to key Zoom features. We followed this same process to develop tutorials for the e-textbooks and homework provided by Pearson, our publisher. We also organized sessions where volunteers could practice using breakout rooms in small groups before using them with students. Staff who previously focused on teaching support found their roles expanded to include tech support for teaching.

Then there was the question of how to teach online. At first this seemed intimidatingly different from teaching in-person, but upon research, practice, and reflection it became apparent that while the medium had changed, the ESOL principles largely remained the same. To give just a few examples, student-to-student interaction was still essential, but became mediated through breakout rooms rather than desk clusters. Visual aids still mattered, and the screen-share function opened up possibilities beyond what could be done on the on the whiteboards and chalkboards at our former physical location.

All of the tech possibilities had the potential to be overwhelming. As we began online group classes, I encouraged volunteers to focus on getting comfortable with two things: a) screen-sharing for visuals and explanations, and b) breakout rooms for group work, before considering additional tech. Resources like the Zoom chat function, Kahoot, and Google's Jamboard, Docs, and Forms are all useful, but depending on the class context, low-tech options can be a good alternative. For example, one way to do a short informal assessment is by having students write an answer on a piece of paper and hold it up to the screen. Additionally, some volunteers have found it helpful to tell students to use their phones to take pictures of screen-shared content, particularly if they want students to be able to refer back to it while in breakout rooms.

Just a few of the websites WEC volunteers have found particularly helpful to supplement online classes include [Baamboozle](#), an online flash card game website, [ISL Collective Videos](#), which generates quizzes based on YouTube clips, and [Live Worksheets](#), which offers interactive online worksheets with self-correction. All of these websites are free (or have free versions). There are a couple caveats. I recommend using the search/filter functions on each website to identify resources that relate to upcoming lesson objectives. A particular resource might seem fun, but that in itself doesn't make it a good fit for a given lesson. These websites are crowd-sourced, with multiple users submitting content, so the quality can vary. It's a good idea to fully test out a resource, using it how a student would, to catch any potential issues before introducing it to a class.

This is a broad overview, and many of WEC's struggles and ideas from the past two years can't fit in this article. Two years later, it has been far from easy, but our students now have more choices than they did be-

fore COVID. Some opt for the individualized instruction and more flexible time commitment of one-on-one tutoring, while others prefer the structure and community of group classes. As of Fall 2021, we offer in-person classes at a new location near Metro Center, with masks and proof of vaccination required. However, even when COVID goes away, online classes are here to stay as an option. WEC student surveys show some of our students prefer the lack of commute, and the convenience of remote classes, especially students with young children or demanding jobs. We've also had some students and volunteers start to join us from other parts of the U.S. and world.

A lot of my ability, and my institution's ability, to adapt has been predicated on hearing from and observing other individuals in the TESOL field. I am grateful for the communities, at WEC and WATESOL, that have supported my ongoing professional development, and I look forward to continuing to learn from how others have adapted.

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*Jessie Ebersole is the Director of Academic Programs at Washington English Center. She was WATESOL president 2020-2021.*

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# Feature Article

## *Using the Newseum's Resources to Teach a Media Literacy Class*

*By Sigrun Lucas, PhD, Georgetown University*

As an instructor who has created most of her teaching materials herself, I first considered doing the same when I was asked to design an Elective course on media literacy for upper level students in our IEP. A colleague suggested that I take a look at the resources offered through [NewseumED](#), where teachers can create a free educator account and have access to countless materials – and lesson plans – for free. Thus, I created my account, and my exploration into media literacy began. Many hours later, my new course began to take



shape. I adapted NewseumED worksheets to topics in the news at the time of the course (early 2022) and the diverse groups of students in the class (12 students from seven different countries).

Below, I will describe and discuss the eight modules/units that emerged in my final version of the course, focusing on the tasks based on the NewseumED resources.

### **Unit 1: Fundamentals of News**

Students watched a brief video on the fundamentals of news and took notes as they were watching and listening. After that, they completed a worksheet, using their notes to answer questions such as “Describe how journalism is different from news” and “Why is it important to know the difference between facts and opinions and be able to identify which is which?”

### **Unit 2: Universal News Drivers and Newsworthiness**

Students learned about what factors typically contribute to [whether or not a news event is covered by media outlets](#); then, to complete their worksheet, they had to find current news stories and determine which news driver applied to each story. However, whether or not a story is published might not actually reflect a story’s newsworthiness. On a worksheet, I had compiled several stories that appeared in the news at the end of 2021 and the beginning of 2022 – examples were the following headlines: ‘*Miracle Landing*’: 4 People, Including Infant, Survive Medical Helicopter Crash In Drexel Hill (Philadelphia); *Kate Middleton’s Kids and Husband Prince William Helped Pick Out Her 40th Birthday Portraits*; and *Cream cheese shortage was the result of a cyberattack*. Lively discussions ensued among the teams I set up, with opinions as diverse as the news stories themselves, revealing that what is newsworthy to one person may be quite unremarkable to another.

### **Unit 3: Freedom of Speech and Press**

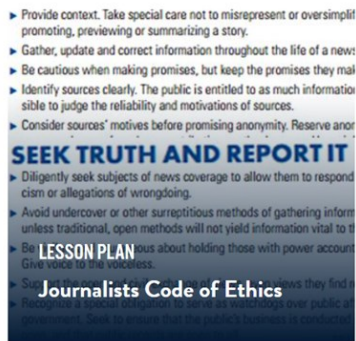
We began with a worksheet titled “What Does Free Speech Mean,” which asked students to evaluate several actions and decide whether or not these actions are “ok” or not in the United States. Actions included permitting students to print articles in a school newspaper over the objections of the school administration; using certain offensive words and phrases to convey political messages; and engaging in symbolic speech (e.g., burning the American flag in protest). Students discussed whether or not these actions are acceptable in their own countries: Brazil, Chile, China, Mongolia, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and Thailand.

Our next activity in this unit involved an examination of the [World Freedom Map](#). The worksheet task required students to compare and contrast countries ranked high on the list with those ranked at the bottom and then to examine the types of political systems in those countries as well as factors contributing to their rating. The map lists China as a country where free speech and freedom of the press are squelched, near the bottom of the list, and the students in this course had to learn to interact non-judgmentally during awkward moments with their Chinese classmates.

### **Unit 4: Media Ethics**

In this Unit, students learned about the [Journalists’ Code of Ethics](#). The four main principles consist of numerous sub-principles, and students had to identify the common points within each principle. Then, they completed

a worksheet that presented students with several media ethics scenarios, and teams had to decide which ethics code principle should guide their decision in each scenario.



Students next learned about principles of the [Photojournalists' Code of Ethics](#). They worked in teams to find ethical and unethical images. Interestingly, several students chose images from events in their

countries that had been shown in news sources, allegedly representing certain events; however, the students provided valuable historical background that invited their classmates (and me) to re-examine the image and see it in a new light, realizing how images can be both powerful and deceptive at the same time.

### Unit 5: Accuracy and Bias in the News/Media

The first task asked students to predict and then re-search the accuracy of news stories. The goal was for students to realize that sensational news story titles can in fact represent a true story while quite believable titles can headline a story that is not true. In our class, the students examined the following stories: *It's Raining Iguanas In South Florida*; *Biden confirms Kamala Harris would be running mate in 2024*; and *Demand for takeout exacerbates shortages of coffee cups, food containers and plastic straws*. The teams double-checked a number of pieces of information and then reflected on how easy or difficult it might be for ordinary news consumers to confirm a story's accuracy.

The second task in this unit introduced students to [types of bias in news stories](#), such as bias through use of headline, through use of names and titles, through source control, through word choice and tone. Then, in teams they selected news stories and examined these stories for bias. This was not an easy task. In order for any reader to notice bias, he or she needs to have some background and knowledge of the overall context of a news story, especially if it is a story that has been developing over time. Also, international students do not all have sufficient knowledge and awareness of US politics and opinion shapers, in addition to not possessing sufficient language skills to detect bias by word choice or tone. Nonetheless, this

task raised students' awareness of precisely what they may not be aware of as consumers of news in the US.

### Unit 6: Stereotypes in the News and Media

The students completed a worksheet that asked them to identify any stereotypes that they (or people in their countries) typically have about people from the students' home countries, as well as what social, racial, gender, and religious stereotypes they might harbor. With eight different countries (including my native Germany) represented in the class, this activity was eye-opening, resulting in discussions in which the students were surprised about how people from their countries may be perceived, and in which they treaded carefully not to insult each other with potentially insensitive stereotypes. For this group of students, it was the first time that they were exposed to students from such a variety of countries, and they agreed that knowing actual persons from those cultures disconfirmed a lot of the stereotypes that they had. From this springboard activity, students then worked to identify stereotypical depictions of groups of people in news stories Asian Americans, African Americans, and Muslims in the US. The students were able to show how their selected stories either reinforced or contradicted the typically held stereotypes about these groups.

### Unit 7: How the Medium Shapes the Message

The next to last unit invited students to examine different news sources and compare these sources and stories published in them. The worksheet guided students to find, among others, the following: the source with the most/fewest/broadest range/narrowest range of stories; the source with the most local/national/international news stories; the source with the most multimedia offerings and the most pictures; the most reliable source. Subsequently, students selected one news story and analyzed how this particular story was presented in different news sources. Students considered a variety of comparison categories, such as headlines, images, specific facts, organization of information, statistics, and source attribution. The activities exposed students to news sources that they had never either heard of or considered following; they also realized that some major news sources have versions in different languages. The students then created a "Students' Guide to News Sources" for other students in our program; the teams shared principles for identifying reliable news outlets and provided recommendations for specific news sources.

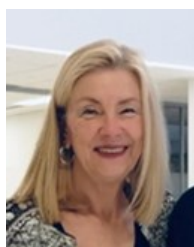


## Unit 8: Fake News

We began this unit by reviewing two stories with unlikely content (drug sniffing rabbits and a man with a fake arm trying to avoid the COVID vaccination – the first one was an April Fool’s joke, and the second one was true). Students then had to find fake news stories, but a discussion with the whole class about recent fake stories would have been more effective. Without that guidepost, students found stories that were not really fake, but had elements that were later corrected or that represented a person’s prediction of something that eventually did not happen. Fake news stories, however, are new stories that are deliberately created in order to misinform readers. The NewseumED resources provided a fascinating (and worrisome) NPR story, which reported on someone who turned writing fake news stories into a money-making business. In order to learn more about fake news, I invited the NewseumED’s Outreach Educator, Jessi McCarthy, who visited our class via Zoom and guided the students through a session that included both information and short application tasks. The students had prepared questions for our guest in advance, so she was able to tailor her presentation to address those questions.

## Course Wrap-Up

During the last two class sessions, we were ready to put it all together: student teams selected a current news story and examined this news story from all the angles that we covered during the term. Interestingly, one team located a story about a Ukrainian beauty queen allegedly joining the Ukrainian army in the early days of the conflict. A picture showed her in fatigues, wielding a dangerous looking weapon. The team’s thorough examination revealed that the image had been taken months before the conflict and that the depicted woman apparently liked to engage in paintball games wearing camouflage outfits. This discovery became even more meaningful a few days later when I saw someone’s social media post about those young Ukrainian female heroes who had taken up arms to protect their country. Within a short time, somebody – maybe one of the team members – had already posted that this story was fake news.



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# Interview



*Dr. Liz England enjoys semi-retirement following 35+ years in full-time graduate language teacher education. She is currently fully engaged professionally and accepts short-term assignments, publishing projects (currently working on a book with Routledge), alongside her work with TESOL International Association leadership positions, currently as Founder & Leader, TESOL Career Path Development Professional Learning Network.*

**Having worked with national and international educators for many years, what are the big trends you may have noticed in the past 2 years?**

The big trends I've noticed, and thanks for asking me to provide answers to your questions here! What fun to answer these! I hope something here is useful for readers. And please do contact me at this email any time with questions: [Lenglan2@su.edu](mailto:Lenglan2@su.edu)

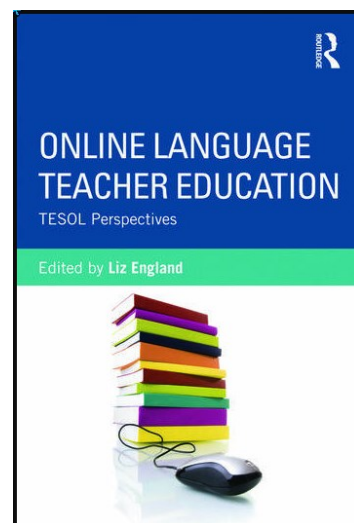
In the past year, we have way more online professional gatherings and resources: webinars, podcasts, materials available free and for many age groups and proficiency levels, more free professional development opportunities for teachers, more use of tech tools and more teacher skills in using tech skills, and finally, previously unprecedented examples of teacher resiliency, flexibility, collaborations, and engagement. I recently noted: "You can wake up in the middle of the night, scroll through email and social media and find a half-dozen webinars going on!" No shortage of professional development online these days. And with that, the world has shrunk! Where, before COVID, we'd have had to travel on an airplane to such events; now, we can log on our laptops in our dining rooms and find fantastic topics, high quality presentations – worldwide! Amazing!

**How has the pandemic changed the world of TESOL, if it has?**

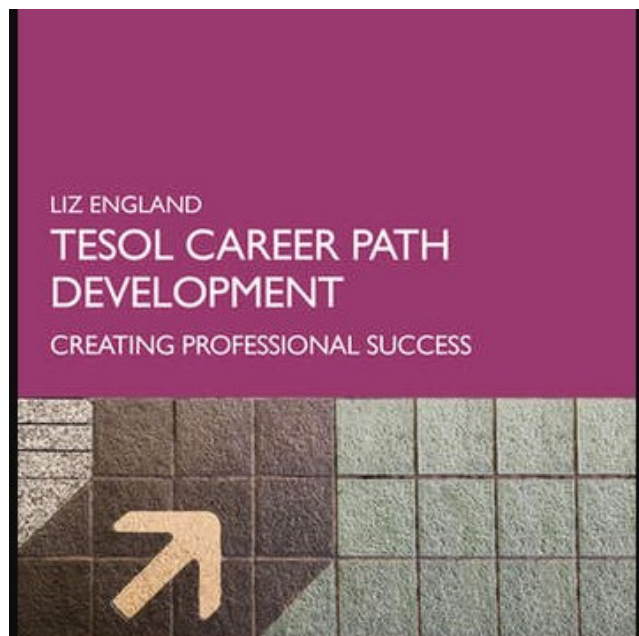
The pandemic has definitely changed the world of TESOL. Affiliates worldwide and the international association alike have worked hard and consistently (WATESOL is no exception and VA TESOL, my home affiliate, too!) to create goods and services for members as those are deemed of value to those affiliates and the international association. And the social capital – of networking opportunities and volunteer professional and community service opportunities – all of it – right there online in ways that were not available previously.

In English language teacher education (my own field of interest), changes are many: Both pre- and in-service programs have had to deal with limitations on traditional approaches to face-to-face-to-face content delivery. Incredible leaders have created, often under emergency conditions, measures to protect the safety and health of all concerned – faculty, students, staff, and administrative support groups. Content delivery modes have been expanded and adapted – quickly and efficiently in many cases - to provide a wide variety of options: face-to-face with (and without) virtual (online) instruction, pre-recorded, live, and re-recorded lectures, materials, and assessment tools – all examples of new tools for English language teacher education programs.

Largely falling on the backs of teachers, demands for adaptations were handed down and addressed by K-12 teachers across DC, Virginia, Maryland, and indeed nationwide, based on complex issues relating to student access to Internet-based instruction from home, vaccinations, mask use, social distancing, and a variety of other instructional and assessment needs. A teacher in Virginia took her car to the apartment building where four students lived and were locked down; she used her phone to provide them two hours of English instruction and Internet access! Similarly, university intensive English programs faced new instructional and assessment needs of undergraduate and graduate students in their programs.



Adult education programs, too, were forced to manage extreme adjustments to allow students to continue their studies. All of this happened in the context of US government policies drastically restricting access to English language programs for university undergrads and graduate students and refugees in adult programs. So, employment issues for those teaching in universities and adult ed added significantly added to teachers' burden: balancing downsizing, firings, and hiring freezes, on top of all the COVID issues for instructional staff there.



A long list of specific purposes programs faced similar difficulties. And who, one asks, managed these truly heroic efforts – almost always with professionalism, grace, and compassion? Teachers, of course, always teachers.

Teachers were expected – sometimes forced – to add massive numbers of hours and extremely complex tasks to their already heavy workloads. In-depth descriptions of these efforts are beyond the scope of this article; they have been, are now, and will be addressed in a variety of settings: WATE-SOL is a leader in the northeast US, nationwide, and worldwide. A variety of articles and programs have addressed examples of local teachers' efforts. And in the future, more publications will appear to address these, too.

I've personally been grateful to work with the TESOL International Association as Founder, Career Path Development Professional Learning Net-

work, to be described briefly below. And with Lia Kamhi-Stein and Georgios Kormpas, I am co-editing a book on the subject; the book is entitled *English Language Teacher Education in Challenging Times*, due out with Routledge Taylor & Francis in fall 2022.

### **You are the head of the TESOL Career Path interest group. What are the goals of the group?**

I am the founder of TESOL CPD PLN, the full (long!) name of which is this: Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages International Association Career Path Development Professional Learning Network. TESOL International Association requires a mission statement for all PLNs. Here is a copy of ours: The Career Path Development Professional Learning Network (PLN) is committed to addressing professional development throughout members' careers. This PLN will promote intentional efforts to build member career paths.

Focusing on professional excellence, the Career Path Development PLN will provide new resources for teachers in search of direction throughout their careers. Our members span all stages of TESOL career path development: pre-service, novice, mid-career and career switchers, veterans, and semi-retired professionals. We believe that the extraordinary diversity of our community creates professional growth and change opportunities for our members unavailable to them in any other context.

### **What kind of support your members may get?**

TESOL CPD PLN serves members - 882 registered members at TESOL.org, and nearly 800 active members on Facebook.com – as of today (4 May 2022). We offer members the following products and services: an international leadership team of seven TESOL professionals located on three continents, with a wide range of professional interests and representing all TESOL career path stages. At this time, we offer a wide range of services and events.

Our calendar is carefully designed to include these: regular webinar program of live presentations, a mentee/mentor program called CLIMB, a Global Voices Program, a Collection of materials on our web site, a wide range of social events online, and a regular schedule of monthly leadership meetings to guide the work of our community. You can read more at the [TESOL CPD PLN website](#).



## **What are the greatest needs/interests of the members?**

Our members have a wide range of interests: Currently, members are eagerly engaged in networking opportunities, advocacy efforts, sustaining currency in their skills and knowledge of TESOL – applied linguistics, pedagogy, and cross-cultural communications, among other topics. Find recordings of our webinars, information on CLIMB (our mentorship program), “60 Seconds of TESOL 2021,” and other materials on TESOL.org community page, on Facebook, on our web site, and at our YouTube channel.

## **I understand that you visited Uzbekistan in 2021? Can you tell us about this experience?**

I was part of a large national teacher education project as a TESOL Coach 2021. And I am particularly happy to visit and work in a part of the world where few have been fortunate like me to go and work with teachers and where COVID concerns are perhaps lesser than in other places in the world.

My impressions of the experience of working with 13 Core Trainers and 21 Regional Peer Mentors here – all secondary teachers in the ESN Program - are shaped by my experiences as a teacher educator for 35 years. Born and anchored in the United States, I’m pretty much monolingual (some French and Arabic but no Russian, Karakalpak, nor Uzbek – the dominant languages here); and I’ve completed both long- and short-term assignments in 40 countries worldwide on a variety of teacher education projects. This, my first time ever to visit Central Asia, adds to my professional understanding, contributions and expertise.

While I’ve worked with some rock star teachers (and many are TESOL leaders in their countries today), the teachers here are among the most eager, willing and cooperative of any with whom I’ve worked anywhere.

While most have never traveled outside Uzbekistan (some not even out of Karakalpakstan), they frequently and eagerly ask about ways of doing things in other countries: “What can we learn from what other teachers do?” in the words of one. With the help of the TESOL Core Certificate Program course, coaches and materials, teachers try hard to apply concepts and principles acquired in their training courses to their classroom teaching. In addition, teachers here are committed to working hard on being good teachers, to updating and honing their skills and knowledge, and to staying with it as a professional habit.

In my visits to their classes, teachers have shown

great interest in improving. And more than that, they have even enlisted the support of others.

In a family-oriented cultural environment as we have in Karakalpakstan, they enlist the support of others in their lives. Mostly women, these teachers often enlist their husbands’ support to provide transportation, to interpret and translate, and to join for a social event; principals and headmasters and headmistresses join for demonstration classes and make a point of trying to make me feel welcomed. The ESN program is not only about the teachers in Karakalpakstan: “It takes a village to build an English-speaking nation!” And



I’ve been the fortunate participant of that effort in my school visits in the past weeks and months.

English lessons are taught in schools in varying levels of depth and time on the daily schedule. Decisions on depth and time are often related to resources and sometimes to other factors too. Some schools teach English every day, others, only a few days a week. In addition, students here study what for me is an unusually long list of other languages too: Karakalpak, Russian, Uzbek, Kazak (in one school; and Tajik, and other languages in other schools). Kids are used to it. The government has determined that English language is a critical skill for the future. The ESN program plays a key role across Uzbekistan.

COVID restrictions have certainly had an impact on education. Online teaching is problematic since not all students have reliable Internet access.

As I left this extraordinary region and job, I felt a sense of gratitude. I am very grateful to Karakalpakstan, for all it has taught me, for the many kindnesses it has rendered and for the work and exciting future that lies ahead for the teenagers in those classrooms I visited. I am grateful, too, to American Councils and TESOL International Association for providing me with this career milestone.



**What would be your advice to TESOL educators who are just entering the field? to those who are mid-career and experience the burn out?**

In fact, I have written a book on the subject of TESOL career path development. In brief, my advice to TESOL educators who are new to our field are these:

- 1) **Network** – know that ours is an extraordinarily important and very big global professional community. Never underestimate the power of your tribe! I have so many stories! Believe David Crystal says there are more than five million of us worldwide. Try to be nice to people – all people; and try to maintain contact with those you like most. And
- 2) **Advocate** – all the time. It's not bragging, it's advocating. It's not being selfish; it's advocating: Advocate on your own behalf, advocate on behalf of your students, advocate for your colleagues especially for women, and advocate for your profession. We need to be seen and heard! You are the one to make that happen!
- 3) **Take care** – take care of yourself. Too often, teachers feel selfish about doing things that address their own needs – personal and/or professional; they deny themselves what they need. Buy a new phone. Order that book. Do 30 minutes of yoga. Get a pedicure. Book a massage. And go to your spiritual community gatherings – church,

mosque, temple, synagogue – feed your spirit. Body, mind and soul – I address it in the book. In these challenging times, teachers must model responsible living: While demanding professional excellence from ourselves and being resilient and creative, we must also make time to take care of ourselves: our bodies, our minds, and our souls. Each day, we need one activity that provides time and space for us to do that. Take care of your SELF, not only your students!

Thank you for the opportunity of sharing these thoughts. And please feel free to write any time at [cpdpln21@gmail.com](mailto:cpdpln21@gmail.com).

Find us on the web at this web address:

And find us at TESOL.org at this link: [Communities of Practice \(tesol.org\)](https://www.tesol.org/communities-of-practice) .

Or join us on Facebook: TESOL Career Path Development (please remember to agree to our rules)!

Thanks again! I hope you enjoy your TESOL career as much as I have and continue to enjoy mine!



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Access recordings of previous webinars and conference sessions at the new [WATESOL YouTube Channel](#). Subscribe to receive updates when new videos are posted!

# Student Reflection

## *Qatari Teaching Assistant's Observations of American ESL Teachers*

*By Al Maha Al-Merekhi*

As a teaching assistant at Qatar University, I had the opportunity to continue my higher education. Georgetown University was my first destination to improve my English Language Proficiency in order to obtain an M.A and Ph.D. in the field of politics. During my nine-month study at the ELC, I was incredibly impressed with the teaching methods that the ESL teachers used.

Even though I am teaching in the political field, observing how the teachers use different strategies by combining technology with teaching, distributing the students into groups with various tasks, and usually using a flipped learning approach motivated me to write down notes about every single detail.

These methods will be significantly beneficial soon in my academic career as a professor after obtaining my M.A and Ph.D. since the educational system in the local universities in Qatar still uses a teacher-centered approach to teaching methods.

In other words, they use one-direction discussion lectures in which a professor gives a lecture, a student takes notes, and a student does not participate or say much. Thus, observing the U.S classroom learning process brought me to a new concept, especially to me, in the teaching world, which is a learner-centered classroom culture.

Take grammar classes, for example; the professor uses various types of technology while teaching English grammar classes, such as Google shared documents named "shared class notes." The professor shares the link with the students to follow up on the exercises that were prepared by the professor and divided by student names in tables or sometimes by groups.

The main point here is to make students involved in the education processes by practicing and receiving feedback immediately through the comment section in the google docs, and that allows everyone to read the professor's comments and their peers' progress. Also, interacting with peers and the teacher through group discussions while using "KAHOOT" to answer grammar questions by using the application on the students' smartphones or by the website on other devices.

In the same class, the professor used a flipped learning approach, which takes place through three stages, starting with the teacher providing the students with the material that will be taught in the next class, and the student preparing by reading these materials to participate in class activities, then the second stage begins during the class when the students practice and applying key concepts with the

teacher feedback, lastly, the third stage comes after the class by the students when they check their understanding and extend their knowledge.

Another method used in the professional reading and writing class was the "Diigo website," which provides a great tool for highlighting and commenting on pdfs. The professor used this approach to let the students differentiate between the vocabulary, verbal phrases, pronunciation, and grammar; it was significantly helpful, especially for the students when they were asked to collect vocabulary from the chapter in pairs for the rest of the class.

Meanwhile, the professor here used google docs to allow students to create worksheets full of new vocab with definitions and examples for each new word. Moreover, this approach made it easier for both students and professors when it comes to studying or reviewing for the quizzes and tests due to the annotation strategy. Also, it was easier for the professor to create the questions for the test.

*"Thus, observing the U.S classroom learning process brought me to a new concept, especially to me, in the teaching world, which is a learner-centered classroom culture."*

There is nothing better than experience. During the communication skills classes, students had the opportunity to experience conducting their own mini-classroom as peer educators, where every two students chose a topic from

whichever discipline they preferred, presented a video about the topic of the lesson, and made worksheets for the class to engage the students in the learning process of Self-education as well as enhancing effective communication skills with other students.

Providing such an opportunity for students is valuable of showing the creative side of each student and their abilities to create their own ways of effective learning, which opens the horizon for other teachers to know the weaknesses that must be improved to provide an educational environment that suits the needs of students.

There is no doubt that education is the key to success for any society; therefore, seeking a high-quality education is the most effective way to achieve one's life aspirations. Being a student in the U.S classrooms was a great experience that encouraged me to plan to extend further in the next few years for the higher education degree stages in order to transfer new knowledge and incorporate modern educational methods into the teaching methods in my country. This will make an additional significant leap in the quality of university education in Qatar. It is one of the most important goals that I seek to achieve in the near future.

Al Maha Al-Merekhi  
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# Teaching Abroad Column

## *Finding Friends Around the Globe*

*By Cleia Peterson*

### **How did you choose to be an ESOL teacher?**

Believe it or not, I originally graduated with a business degree. My first choice at college was English, but, silly me, I changed to Business Administration. But all my life I loved English



language and English literature. I was in love with Shakespeare and Jane Austen. I was so in love the Jane Austen, that I started Austen Clubs in most place where we lived. Anyway, as an English language learner myself, over the years I wanted to learn English deeper and more professionally. Then, later on, as we moved overseas, and I began to teach ESL to foreigners, and it clicked that I needed to pursue a teaching degree.

### **What countries have you worked in?**

My family moves a lot because of my husband's work. We have lived in many countries, including Germany, AUE, Singapore, Myanmar, Uzbekistan and some others.

Everywhere we go, I get an opportunity to teach EFL as well as work with local teachers. Currently, I am working as a kindergarten teacher at the American Community School in Abu Dhabi. I have worked in British, French, American, and IB schools worldwide. While working there, I have also supported different English programs worldwide. In Myanmar, I supported the English as a second language program run by LDS Charities. In Uzbekistan, the US embassy invited me to work with the Ministry of Education and support their English

Language Learners program. I also support TLC Language Club English program in Abu Dhabi, UAE.

### **What are the common characteristics of your students across the globe?**

I have lived overseas for the past 20 years, and my exposure to ELL was constant. I could see firsthand the need for the English language. It was more than just helping my students learn an additional language – it was a way to help support their families in their home countries. In many parts of the world, being fluent in English means a good income. At the same time, all students around the globe were very curious about American culture and the way of life. Everything: from food and daily routines to holiday customs and family traditions. Some of them wanted to pursue an American degree. And many, actually, did!

### **What were the biggest surprises in your teaching / training/ mentoring practice?**

One thing that stands out to me as an English teacher is that the good command of English language in many countries means financial and personal freedom. It is how the world communicates these days. English is the language of internet. To know



English is to be part of the big world. English connects us and allows us to understand each other in so many ways. The joy to allow others to feel the same freedoms is truly precious.



Another thing that is hard to believe, is how hard it is to get the right technology and materials to support students overseas. It is very expensive for many students to have an iPad or even a laptop in many countries. Getting access to technology and/or reliable internet can be extremely challenging. Which greatly influences the way you teach.

**I am sure there were many funny stories in your travels. Can you share one?**

It happened at the Water Festival in Myanmar. Following others, I was throwing water at people near me and I started to throw water at Buddhist monks passing by me. Little did I know! It turned out that they are considered saints, and, therefore, we should never, never throw water at them! But, thinking back, I believe that they knew we were foreigners and that we didn't have a clue about these rules. So, they were very gracious about the mishap. We laugh every time we talk about it.



**What do you like the most about teaching English as a Foreign Language?**

I have taught so many people over the years. I was able to guide many of my students to get accepted in US colleges. I helped them to apply to good schools and find scholarships. Many came from very poor countries. It was a great honor to help them come out of poverty and grow, so they were later able to even help others in the same situation. Today I think of a young lady in Myanmar who was my student some years ago. I have just learned that this year she graduated with a master's degree in Social Work. She is ready to go out into the world and support those in need.



Cleia Peterson is a mother of four who has lived with her husband and kids in many countries worldwide. She is a Brazilian American, born and raised in São Paulo, Brazil, before moving to the USA as an exchange student. She has degrees in Business administration, Elementary Education and is currently working on her Master's in Learning Technology through George Mason University. Cleia speaks five languages fluently, and have learned nine languages altogether through the years. Languages is her second passion; teaching is her first. She also loves to cook, dance, read, and sing. Her greatest achievement in life is her family.

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