



Winter 2016

Newsletter

Vol. 37, Issue 1

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Cover photo: Breanna Rood, age 14

Message from the President

Winter 2016

Happy New Year! As I write my last article as TNTESOL President, I want to thank all the Board Members, Members-at-Large and volunteers for their commitment and continued support to the events and initiatives of our organization.

As our annual meeting and conference approaches, I would like to recognize all the time and hard work Dr. Christine Tennyson and her planning committee are investing to provide our membership with a high quality professional development. You are invited to join us during March 17-19, 2016 in Murfreesboro for **TNTESOL 2016—RTI: Responding Together to Ignite and Inspire**. Our keynote Mike Mattos is recognized for his work in response to intervention and professional learning communities. The State Day on Thursday, invited speakers and presentations on Friday and Saturday, and entertainment and fun activities during our Friday Night Event promise to be great!

I would like to remind you of the great opportunities available to our membership, such as the Gundi Resin Memorial Scholarship, TNTESOL Travel Grants, TNTESOL Teacher of the Year, and the Edie Barry Scholarship. You can learn more about how to apply or nominate deserving colleagues or individuals by visiting our website at www.tntesol.org

It has been my pleasure and a great responsibility to serve as your President, and I encourage more members to become actively involved in our organization and represent their ESL communities.

See you in Murfreesboro!

Cary Wright
Clarksville-Montgomery Schools
TNTESOL President

Conference Hotel Update

When Embassy Suites is full, there are two hotels nearby within walking distance:

Residence Inn - <http://www.marriott.com/hotels/travel/bnamu-residence-inn-nashville-se-murfreesboro/>

Hilton Garden Inn - <http://hiltongardeninn3.hilton.com/en/hotels/tennessee/hilton-garden-inn-murfreesboro-BNAMUGI/index.html>

We have not reserved rooms at these hotels with a conference rate. There are also other options in town.

Looking forward to seeing you in the 'Boro in March,

—2016 TNTESOL Conference Team



Communication



Linked In — Search for and join Tennessee Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TNTESOL).

TennesseeESL@Yahoogroups.com —
moderator Deborah Sams



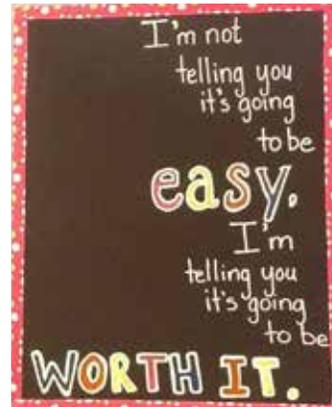
Facebook has a private TNTESOL group with closed membership. If you would like to join, please contact the TNTESOL webmaster.

Follow TNTESOL on **Twitter** —
Chat with us Tuesday evenings
at 7pm CST.

Abasi McKinzie (@mckah01)
and ChristineTennyson (@CBTennyson)
moderate our #tntesolchat



Advocacy Day — Do you know of issues that need to be brought to the attention of political leaders? The TNTESOL Advocacy Representative, Byron Booker will listen and bring your concerns to Washington. Contact him at parliamentarian@tntesol.org



TNTESOL is an active and vital organization and we encourage and promote all TESOL professionals. If you know someone who would be interested, please let us know. We look forward to hearing from you.

The **TNTESOL Newsletter** is published three times a year. Submissions are accepted on a variety of topics. We welcome book reviews, issues in the fields of K-12, Refugee ESL, Adult Ed, Higher Ed and more, as well as articles on teaching strategies, news related to TNTESOL or the field, jokes, classroom anecdotes, even recipes.

The style for submissions can be informal and articles are typically 500-1000 words. Of course, exceptions can be made! A bibliography is not necessary unless the article is research-based.

Send your ideas via **email attachment** along with your personal information by the issue deadline to:

Andrea Bontempi, Newsletter Editor
newsletter@tntesol.org

<u>Deadlines</u>	<u>Issue</u>
April 15, 2016	Spring 2016
August 15, 2016	Summer/Fall 2016
December 15, 2016	Winter 2017

TNTESOL Newsletter
c/o ESL Instructional Facilitator
Instruction Department,
Rutherford County Schools
2240 Southpark Blvd.,
Murfreesboro, TN 37128



TNTESOL 2016 Murfreesboro, Tennessee March 17-19, 2016



We hope everyone is finalizing their plans to attend this year's conference in Murfreesboro on March 17 - 19. Our Friday Keynote speaker is Mike Matos, co-creator of RTI at Work. Please see his biography at www.tntesol.org. [Mike Mattos biography.pdf](#)

Our Saturday Keynote is Trey Duke, RTI Coordinator for Rutherford County Schools and 2008 recipient of the Milken National Educator Award. As the former principal of Smyrna Elementary School, Trey led the Title I school with a high percentage of English Language Learners in the district as they earned the state of "Tennessee Reward School" for exceptional student progress.

There are plenty of rooms available at the Embassy Suites for \$135 a night. Please use this link www.murfreesboro.embassysuites.com and use the group code TNT to make your reservation.

In addition, come [celebrate TESOL's 50th anniversary with us on Friday night](#). We have planned a birthday party at Lane's Train's and Automobiles. There will be fun, bowling, and laser tag. We have reserved the adult party room for our exclusive use to hang and spend time sharing our love of being a part of such a wonderful organization. There will be an open bar as well and even Karaoke if you are brave. The cost is \$30. Please register on the website under the conference link.

We look forward to seeing you in Murfreesboro.
The 2016 Conference Committee



WEBSITE FOR MEMBERS ONLY **TN-WIDA STANDARDS AND RESOURCES**

TNTESOL strives to continue its effort to disseminate information, to strengthen instruction in the teaching of English to speakers of other languages, and to support local, state, and national initiatives through its website. In this section we provide our membership with a forum where ESL professionals can share similar concerns about the WIDA Standards, WIDA-MODEL, WIDA ACCESS and Alternate ACCESS.

The feature we are most excited about is the forum dedicated to lesson plan sharing. Our members can upload and download, free of charge, lesson plans incorporating the WIDA Standards framework.

Create a topic or contribute to these discussions:

[Q&A Forums](#); [Lesson Plans: Primary, Secondary; Resource Links](#)

Help us populate this page with your contributions! Everyone benefits with the exchange of lesson plans and when sharing ideas and concerns.

A Message from the State

Dear Fellow TNTESOLers,

Thank you for a productive year with our English Learners (ELs). We made significant growth last year and are well poised for another year of success.

The Department's Strategic Plan

If you have not had time to review the Tennessee Department of Education's new strategic plan, Tennessee Succeeds ([here](http://tn.gov/education/topic/strategic-plan)) <http://tn.gov/education/topic/strategic-plan>, please take some time to consider how it impacts you and the students in your district.

Tennessee Succeeds outlines our path toward three overarching goals:

- ◇ Tennessee will rank in the top half of states on the NAEP by 2019.
- ◇ The average ACT composite score in Tennessee will be 21 by 2020.
- ◇ The majority of high-school graduates from the class of 2020 will earn a postsecondary certificate, diploma, or degree.

These goals are supported by five key priorities:

- ◇ Early Foundations & Literacy
- ◇ High school & Bridge to Postsecondary
- ◇ All Means All
- ◇ Educator Support
- ◇ District Empowerment

ESL instructors are a critical part of our collective work toward accomplishing the five priorities and achieving our ambitious goals. For example, to see this accomplished, we have high exit criteria for ELs from the results of the WIDA ACCESS.

WIDA ACCESS 2.0

Tennessee is about to begin the second year of WIDA ACCESS testing for English language proficiency. This will be our first administration of the computer-adaptive version affectionately known as ACCESS 2.0. The department has decided that unless there is a needed accommodation, all ELs will take the computer version of ACCESS 2.0. Remember that this assessment is mandatory for all English Learners coded as L (active EL) or W (waived direct ESL service). This assessment should never be given to transition students, currently coded 1 or 2, or to any non-EL students. Alternate ACCESS is only appropriate for ELs taking the alternate version of TNReady. If you have questions about the assessment or accommodations, please contact Lori.Nixon@tn.gov.

Recertification for ACCESS Administration

Test administrators must be certificated teachers who have also completed the WIDA ACCESS Test Administrator training. All training is located on the WIDA website ([here](http://www.wida.us)) www.wida.us under the "Assessment" tab. Unless other arrangements have been made, all test administrators, who are required to be ESL teachers, should recertify for test administration on the portions of the test they will be giving annually. This needs to be completed by **Feb. 15, 2016**. Also note that teachers administering the WIDA ACCESS Placement Test (W-APT) must be trained and certified.

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Demographic Data

During the 2014-15 administration of the WIDA ACCESS, much of our demographic data was incorrect. According to the demographic data files, there were districts that gave the WIDA ACCESS to non-ELs. This year, that data will not be used to figure the AMAOs. Any students whose demographics do not support his/her status as an EL will be removed the data file. Districts are federally mandated to test ELs and failure to do so could cause a review of the district's ESL practices and policies. Later in the winter, we will hold a webinar to give you clear guidelines for cleaning the data. If you have questions or concerns, please contact Jan.Lanier@tn.gov.

WIDA ACCESS Placement Test (W-APT)

The new WIDA ACCESS Placement Test (W-APT), which is used for screening for ESL services, will be available in February, but changes will continue throughout the summer. The department will implement the new W-APT next fall after the changes are made by WIDA. We plan to train teachers on this instrument in the fall and will ask that districts change over from the old paper and pencil W-APT that is currently in use, to the new version by **Jan. 31, 2017**. If there are issues or questions, please contact Lori.Nixon@tn.gov. WIDA will support the former screening assessment through the close of the 2017 school year.

Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)

President Obama signed the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) into law. This means that No Child Left Behind (NCLB), the previous version of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act that had been up for reauthorization since 2007, has now been replaced with ESSA. While the department is still analyzing the extensive bills, we wanted to share some initial takeaways ([here](https://gallery.mailchimp.com/b28b453ee164f9a2e2b5057e1/files/Memo_ESSA_Update_12_16_15.pdf)) https://gallery.mailchimp.com/b28b453ee164f9a2e2b5057e1/files/Memo_ESSA_Update_12_16_15.pdf.

TNTESOL Conference

Finally, we look forward to seeing you at the TNTESOL Conference on **March 17-19, 2016** at the Embassy Suites in Murfreesboro. The following are a few highlights about the conference programming:

- ◇ A WIDA representative will discuss the history and future of WIDA.
- ◇ Dr. Trish Kelly and Dr. Matthew Pepper will present research regarding the on-time graduation rate in Tennessee as it relates to ELs.
- ◇ Department staff members will discuss information on last year's Title III accountability and our strategic plan.

Thank you for all that you do for the English Learners in Tennessee.

Hoping that 2016 will bring you much joy and success,
Jan

Jan Lanier
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Facebook.com/TennesseeEducation



TNTESOL Awards Criteria

For award nomination and application forms, as well as more details, please visit our website: www.tntesol.org.

Charles Gillon Professional Service Award

Each year TNTESOL presents a Charles Gillon Professional Service Award to a nonmember who has contributed significantly to or supported strongly the field of ESL/EFL and international education. Nominations are solicited from the membership by the Board and ultimately selected by the Board of Directors. The annual recipient is recognized and presented a commemorative desk item or plaque at the TNTESOL spring conference.

Gundi Ressin Award

The Gundi Ressin Memorial TNTESOL Scholarship was established by the TNTESOL Board of Directors to provide funds to affiliate members for activities such as special instructional projects, educational opportunities (*excluding tuition towards a degree*), and travel to educational meetings or conferences (*excluding the annual TNTESOL Conference*). The Gundi funds are provided by a yearly amount in the TNTESOL budget and by contributions from members and friends in Gundi's memory. TNTESOL members may apply for a Gundi Fund award by sending an application letter to the First Vice-President at least one month before the award is to be granted. The application should state the amount requested (not to exceed \$400), the purpose for which the funds will be used, and an agreement to submit an article for publication in the TNTESOL newsletter upon receipt of an award. Donations may be made to the Gundi Fund when registering for the annual TNTESOL conference or by mailing directly to the TNTESOL Treasurer.

President's Award

The TNTESOL Board of Directors established the President's Award in January of 1999 to recognize individuals within TNTESOL who have contributed to the field of ESL and the TNTESOL organization. The award may be presented annually to a person selected at the discretion of the President with the approval of the Board. The President's Award is presented during the annual TNTESOL conference.

TNTESOL Educator of the Year

TNTESOL will recognize an outstanding TNTESOL member at the annual conference. Nominees should be K-12 ESL teachers with distinguished careers in English-language teaching and a history of service to students, schools, and communities. A winner from each state region will be announced, along with the state award winner.

TNTESOL Travel Grants

Every year, TNTESOL awards travel grants to send the three best sessions at the TNTESOL Conference to Southeast TESOL to represent our state professionals. Awarded sessions will each receive grants of up to four-hundred dollars (\$400). The goal behind the TNTESOL Travel Grants is to provide a means of financial support for dynamic presenters who may have no other means to go to the Southeast TESOL Conference and to boost morale, build professional interest, and encourage excellent conference presentations every year. (*Vendors and professional speakers are ineligible.*)

Edie Barry Scholarship

In honor of Edie Barry, this scholarship is awarded to a volunteer of a community or faith-based organization. Please see details on the next page.

EDIE BARRY SCHOLARSHIP

Scholarship Description:

Edie Barry (1948-2013) was a dedicated teacher and a committed member of the TNTESOL organization. In addition to this professional service, she actively served as a volunteer in a faith-based organization which provided ESL services to her community. (Read Edie's "How I Got Involved in ESL" on this page.) In memory of Edie, and to honor her service, TNTESOL has established a new scholarship for those working in volunteer settings. The scholarship is awarded to one recipient per year and the recipient's organization will receive a complimentary TNTESOL newsletter subscription.

Scholarship Criteria:

- 1) Applicants must be a volunteer (not paid) teacher or program administrator at a faith-based or community organization that provides ESL classes for community adults.
- 2) Must be a TNTESOL member (if not a member, you must register-paraprofessional level \$10)
- 3) Must plan to use funds within 90 days of receipt for one of the following (a detailed description must be included with the application):
 - o Materials to train volunteer teachers
 - o Training opportunities for volunteer teachers
 - o Teaching materials for the faith-based or community ESL classes
- 4) Upon selection, recipients must submit an article for the TNTESOL newsletter, describing the program and how the requested training or materials will serve the community and improve the quality of English classes. The TNTESOL board will forward communication to the Barry family.

Complete the application [here](#) or at <http://goo.gl/forms/n3FYQ9Kxqo>



How I Got Involved in ESL

by Edie Barry (1948 - 2013)

When I was in GA's, a mission organization for girls, I fell in love with foreign missions. I thought perhaps God had a plan for me on a foreign field. I took Spanish in high school and college in case I went to a Spanish-speaking country. The closest I came to a "foreign missionary" as I had envisioned it was to work in VBS one summer in Texas and Mexico.

Instead of pursuing missions, I chose to teach school. After a year and a half of teaching, I married David, and we moved around the country for five years. When we lived in Amarillo, Texas, I had my first, but very brief experience with the ministry of teaching English to internationals.

When we moved to Ooltewah, I wanted to put down spiritual roots and do something to make a difference in the name of Christ. For a few years I was very involved in the mission organization of the church and association. Then I had heard about the Conversational English program at East Ridge Baptist Church and the training the Hamilton County Baptist Association provides for volunteers. When I sat in on one class to observe, I knew that's what I wanted to do. I started fifteen years ago with the new center at Concord Baptist Church. Helping people from all over the world to be more functional in our language has been an extremely rewarding ministry.

In 1992, I was offered a part-time position teaching English as a Second Language (ESL) at Chattanooga State under the Adult Basic Education program. This was a stretch for me, but now I see it as a spiritual marker to another level. After four years, I was offered a full time position in ESL, K-12. This was a major stretch. The job is inherently very challenging. It required certification, which meant I had to go back to school.

I work with Muslims, Hindus, and Buddhists, as well as Christians. I have been able to present the significance of Christmas and Easter as elements of American culture. I try to share my faith when I have appropriate opportunity. Just before school was out this year, I gave my high school class an assignment which required them to show who they are by telling about five things they brought to class in a bag. During her presentation, an Indian Hindu girl pulled out of her bag a picture of her god. She expressed her love and devotion to him. Up to this time I felt a kinship with foreign missionaries, but that day I was overwhelmed with the field before my very eyes. God had brought the foreign fields to me, not just one, but many!

Gundi Ressin Scholarship

New Guidelines effective March 1, 2015

The *TNTESOL Gundi Ressin Memorial Scholarship* was established by the TNTESOL Board of Directors to provide funds to affiliate members to support their continuing commitment to the teaching of English to speakers of other languages in the following areas:

- ◆ **Special Instructional Project**
- ◆ **Educational Opportunity**
- ◆ **Professional Development**

The Gundi funds are provided by a yearly amount in the TNTESOL budget and through contributions from members and friends in Gundi's memory. Five (5) Gundi Ressin Scholarships will be awarded on a yearly basis. There is no deadline for applying. Donations are accepted to the Gundi Fund year-round when registering for the annual TNTESOL conference or through the Donations link on our website.

TNTESOL members may apply for a Gundi Fund award by completing the application form. All applications must be submitted electronically to 1vicepresident@tntesol.org. In addition, award recipients must submit an article to the TNTESOL newsletter. Before applying, carefully review the criteria for eligibility. Applications must be received two (2) months prior to event deadline in order to be considered for the award. Applicants will be notified within four (4) weeks of application submission.

Criteria for Eligibility

Applicant must be a member of TNTESOL for a minimum of 1 year to be eligible.

Application must reflect the immediate impact provided to the English language learning community.

Tuition for degree-seeking students will not be considered for this scholarship.

Recipient must agree to submit an article for publication in the TNTESOL newsletter. Article submission deadline will be provided once scholarship has been awarded.

Guidelines for Applying

Requested scholarship amount may not exceed \$400.

Application must be completed in electronic format and submitted to the email address provided above.

Application must address one of the following areas: Special Instructional Project, Educational Opportunity, or Professional Development. ****Please note that conference-related travel expenses are NOT eligible for this award.****

All sections of the application must be completed in order to be considered for this award. This includes Part I: Demographics and Part 2: Application Type.

Using the following document, please submit your application.

[Click here to apply](https://docs.google.com/a/tntesol.org/forms/d/1QZW0aFgmqtMUTr4Na2wabHjInesT-X0AIR-lxNRqh04/viewform). <https://docs.google.com/a/tntesol.org/forms/d/1QZW0aFgmqtMUTr4Na2wabHjInesT-X0AIR-lxNRqh04/viewform>

Thank you for interest in this scholarship.

Tammy Harosky

TNTESOL First Vice President

For more information, please contact Tammy Harosky at trharosky@king.edu.



TNTESOL 2016 Conference Schedule at a Glance

Thursday, March 17

- 7:00 – 9:00 — Registration for those attending the State Day
- 9:00 – 3:30 — State Day with Jan Lanier
- 4:00 – 7:00 — Registration for the Conference Begins
- 5:00 -- 6:30 — TNTESOL Board Meeting
- 7:00 – 9:00 — Welcome Reception with light refreshment and entertainment

Friday, March 18

- 7:00 – 4:00 — Registration
- 7:00 – 8:00 — Continental Breakfast
- 8:00 – 8:50 — Concurrent Session I
- 9:15 – 10:30 — Keynote: Mike Mattos, co-creator of RTI at Work™
- 10:45 – 11:35 — Concurrent Session II
- 12:00 – 1:00 — Lunch
- 1:00 – 1:30 — TNTESOL business meeting
- 1:45 – 2:35 — Concurrent Session III
- 2:45 – 4:05 — Concurrent Session IV
- 6:00 – 9:00 — Friday Night Event, TESOL 50th Birthday Party

Saturday, March 19

- 7:00 -- 8:00 — Continental Breakfast
- 8:15 -- 9:05 — Concurrent Session V
- 9:30 -- 10:30 — Keynote: Trey Duke, RTI Coordinator for Rutherford County Schools
- Awards Announced
- 10:45 -- 11:35 — Concurrent Session VI
- 12: 00 -- 1:30 — Lunch, travel grant winners, installation of new board members

TNTESOL Board of Directors—Slate of Nominees



President: **Tammy Hutchinson-Harosky** is a native of Bristol, VA. Tammy received her B.A. in English/Secondary Education and her M.A.T. – English as a Second Language from Carson-Newman College in Jefferson City, TN. Tammy received her Ed.S degree from Lincoln Memorial University and is currently working on her Ed.D in Teaching English as a Second Language from North Central University. Tammy has served in the capacity as 2nd Vice President and 1st Vice President of the TNTESOL board. Tammy chaired the TNTESOL 2015 conference in East TN. Tammy worked in the public school system for nineteen years where she taught English, Spanish, Journalism, and ESL. Seven of the nineteen years were spent as the ESL instructor for Bristol TN City Schools. Tammy served ESL students from PK-12 in BTCS. Tammy has also taught ESL courses for ESL students at the Community College level and ESL survival courses for adult ESL students. In the fall of 2013, Tammy accepted a full time Assistant Professor position in the School of Education at King University in Bristol, TN. Tammy

serves as the ESL Program Coordinator. Tammy's specialty is Literacy and ESL. Tammy has been married for 15 years to Chris Harosky. They are the proud parents of two daughters – Hannah, age 14, and Haley, age 12.



1st Vice President: **Christine Tennyson** has a BA from Hope College in Holland, MI, an MAEd from Austin Peay, and a doctorate from Trevecca. She spent one year studying in Germany and earned her ESL endorsement from TSU. Her first teaching job was in preschool and she also taught adults ESL students. For the last 16 years, she has taught in Rutherford County. She currently teaches at Smyrna Middle School where she is the ESL department head. She has presented many times at TNTESOL and won several travel grants including the Best of Tennessee three times. As a result, she has presented at the Southeast Regional TESOL many times as well. She is married, lives in Murfreesboro, and has two children, 22 and 16. She and her husband welcomed their first grandchild this summer.



2nd Vice President: **Abasi McKinzie** has been with Shelby County Schools for 15 years, serving seven of those years within ESL. He has primarily worked within the middle school setting, but he also has worked within elementary schools and is currently an instructional facilitator at Lucy Elementary. He has presented at several TNTESOL conferences, at SETESOL and for MSERA. He is on the TNTESOL board and is the conference chair for the 2017 conference in Memphis, TN.

In an effort to achieve board equalization across the state with the member-at-large seats, there will be one seat open for East TN, one seat for Central TN and one seat for West TN.

East Tennessee Member-at-Large

Renee Tolliver Combs, Campbell County Schools

Renee has been teaching ESL in Campbell County since 2002 where she designed and implemented the program. Since its inception, she has been the only ESL teacher in the county serving between 20-30 students at 4 schools per day. At the age of eighteen, she left her home in Kentucky to work in Paris and spent the next eight years living and working throughout Europe. Living in various countries and traveling for work to many others, Renee has an intimate knowledge of her students' struggles. She also learned what it took to learn different languages and is fluent in Spanish, Italian, and English. Upon returning to the United States, Renee completed her B.A. in Spanish at the University of Tennessee and a Master's in Education (emphasis: Spanish and ESL). Renee is intimately involved in the lives of her students and their families. She teaches an adult ESL class at her church to serve the needs of her students' parents and provides numerous extracurricular activities for her students outside of school. They are her joy.



Pam Whitlock, Kingsport City Schools

My first experience in working with English learners was when I worked in South Korea. I taught English at the Red Cross Refugee camp there and began a class for adult Vietnamese students. They had been picked up on broken-down boats and brought to the nearest port city, Pusan. I also taught classes to Korean children in my neighborhood and several years later started a school for the Vietnamese children at the camp. When I returned to the states I knew that I wanted to earn my certification in English as a Second Language. In Hickory, that opportunity came. I was teaching the third grade and by that time, half of my class was Hispanic. Lenoir-Rhyne College offered free classes through a grant for ESL endorsement or certification. I was able to finish my coursework and pass the Praxis after two years. I am now one of three teachers in Kingsport City Schools. This year I am teaching at four of those schools. I continue to learn more about my students daily and am always open to being a better and more effective teacher.



Becky Young, Dayton City School

I received my M.S. in Education/ESL Emphasis from the University of Tennessee - Knoxville in 2003 and have worked at Dayton City School for the past 13 years. I serve as Teacher, ESL Coordinator, Title III Director, and Migrant Director. There was no ESL program at DCS at the time I began teaching, so I began the program. We now have 2 full-time ESL teachers. I work to ensure that our program is excellent and that administrators and classroom teachers are trained in the needs of EL students. I have also served as an adjunct instructor for Bryan College since 2005. I have taught "Introduction to TESL" and "Methods and Assessment in TESL" for them. I also designed the TESL minor that was put into place by the English Department at Bryan. In addition, I taught one summer for the Migrant School in Rhea County and another summer, I taught TEFL in Romania with a mission group. I have served one term as a Member-at-Large for the TNTESOL board (2012-2015), maintaining membership in TNTESOL and TESOL throughout my career. During that time, I headed up the project to set up the Edie Barry Memorial Scholarship. I encouraged ESL professionals in the east to participate in the TNTESOL organization and encouraged several



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to run for the board. Since being on the board, I have continued to participate in groups of ESL professionals, such as the SouthEast Core office's EL Directors' PLC. I have co-presented at SETESOL and have co-led discussion groups for TNTESOL. I believe that I can be a voice for the ESL professionals who face the challenges of working in small school systems, where one or two teachers are responsible for all aspects of ESL services, often with little support or understanding from administrators.

My goals include excellence in teaching and encouraging others in their teaching. I also want to be an advocate for the population I serve in any way possible. I believe it is important for ESL professionals to work together and for teachers in isolated settings to find the support and encouragement they deserve. I have served as a resource for other ESL teachers and small system ESL Coordinators in my region to the best of my ability.

Middle Tennessee Member-at-Large

In an effort to achieve board equalization across the state with the member-at-large seats, there will be one seat open for West TN, one seat for Central TN and one seat for East TN.



Todd Beard, Lipscomb University

Todd Beard has been in education for over a decade, primarily working with non-native English speakers. Though a native of Nashville, Beard has lived and worked in Europe nearly ten years in teaching and administrative roles in public and private education institutions – from primary to higher education – in the UK and Germany. In the USA, he has worked with public schools in Kentucky and Tennessee in ESL programs as a teacher, workshop leader and program coordinator. Beard is a trained and certified teacher, licensed to teach English as a Second language in Tennessee schools and has Qualified Teaching Status (QTS) in the UK. Beard is currently serving as the program director of English for Academic Purposes at Lipscomb University. As one who not only loves to travel and teach, he has a passion for international education and opportunities for student success.



Tanya Bush, McGavock Elementary School

My name is Tanya Bush, and I have been teaching for almost 15 years. I have taught ESL at the elementary and middle school levels, and I love teaching ESL students. I have learned so much through my students as well as their parents.

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Lori Jameson, ELS Nashville (Middle Tennessee State University)

I began teaching international college students English as they prepared to enter the university in 2007. In 2014, I served as interim director of an ESL program at a university in Alabama. Fall 2015, I became Center Director of ELS Nashville, an English language school located on the campus of MTSU in Murfreesboro, TN. As a teacher and director, I have had the opportunity to not only teach all levels of various English skills, but also mentor students, work with families, and assist in various needs students had. I hold an Adv. Certificate in TESOL as well as my EdD (Doctorate in Education with focus on Teaching English Language Learners). Furthermore, I have had the opportunity to speak to various community groups and academic organizations regarding ELL students. On a more personal note, I am an avid traveler; having volunteered and/or traveled to China, Taiwan, Thailand, Laos, Cambodia, Haiti and Honduras. I am passionate about providing education to the people in need of it around the world. Those experiences and connections have provided me much insight to the specific needs of ELL students here in Tennessee. I look forward to the opportunity to serve with others to better equip the students and families within our schools.



LeNaye Pearson, Cheatham County Schools

College - Lee University; Graduate degree - UTC; ELL Endorsement - David Lipscomb University, Dr. LaWanna Shelton; Travel - Asia, Europe, Mexico; Taught - Jamaica (3 summers). Upon arriving at my new teaching position, I established a Saturday school to teach children and adults, which would meet bi-weekly. Today, those meetings still continue bi-weekly one night per week. Life quote: Attitude is the difference between an ordeal and an adventure. -unknown



Lisa Pray, Ph.D., Vanderbilt University

Lisa Pray, Ph.D. is a Professor of the practice of teaching English learners at Vanderbilt University, Peabody College Language, Literacy and Culture Program where she teaches courses in linguistics and second language acquisition and language assessment of English learners. She received her M.Ed. and Ph.D. from Arizona State University. Dr. Pray's research interests include analysis of language assessments given to English language learners, issues involving English language learners in special education, appropriate classroom pedagogy for English language learners, and curriculum and program development for teachers of English language learners. While at Peabody, she has worked closely with MNPS's EL department through weekly visits with 5-6 teachers per year, instruction of teachers in our first PROPEL grant, and participation in the MNPS EL Executive Council led by the director of the MNPS EL Office. In addition, she has researched and published articles related to the professional development of teachers of English language learners in *The Bilingual Research Journal*, *TESOL Quarterly*, *Research in the Teaching of English*, and *The Reading Teacher* and has received teaching excellence awards at Utah State University and Universidad Internacional in Cuernavaca Mexico.



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In an effort to achieve board equalization across the state with the member at large seats, there will be one seat open for West TN, one seat for Central TN and one seat for East TN.

West Tennessee Member-at-Large

Debra Frantz, Shelby County Schools



Debra Frantz has been in the field of education for 20 years, half of those as an ESL teacher and leader. She has her Bachelors degree in elementary education from the University of TN at Martin, an endorsement credential in ESL from the University of Memphis, and her Masters degree in Educational Leadership from Grand Canyon University. She is currently serving as an ESL Instructional Advisor for Shelby County Schools (SCS), is a TNTESOL Member-at-large, and TNTESOL Membership Chairperson. Additionally, she has recently been asked to serve as the SW Regional ESL Advisor for the state of TN. She has presented at past TNTESOL conferences on the topics of What Makes an ESL Program Work?, Using Multicultural Books in Instruction, Summer School Camp Start Up, and What is WIDA? She has presented at the 2012, 2013 & 2015 LEAD Conference sharing the successes of the SCS ESL program and on the topic Differentiation. Debra is a WIDA Certified Trainer. Having completed her training in August 2015, she has had the opportunity to present

WIDA focused PD within the Shelby County School system for ESL teachers and school leadership teams. Outside of SCS, she has presented at the Dyersburg Mini-Conference and for several municipal school districts within Shelby County regarding the upcoming ACCESS 2.0. In her role as ESL Instructional Advisor, Debra consistently arranges for ESL colleagues to work in PLCs to share information on such topics as: ESL instructional strategies, the current evaluation rubric, and integrating WIDA Standards in the ESL classroom. For the past two years, Mrs. Frantz has worked to coordinate ESL Summer Camp and as SCS Summer Camp Site Coordinator for one of the two elementary ESL Summer Camps in Memphis, TN. Prior to that, she taught summer school six years in Shelby County School's award-winning ESL summer school program.

Agnes Pokrandt, ESL/EFL Coach/Teacher



Agnes Pokrandt has over 30 years of experience in education, training and development and human resources, with management experience in manufacturing, construction, sales, and retail. She has trained and educated adults throughout the U.S., Canada, Europe and Asia. Prior to a successful career in business, Agnes earned a M.Ed. and taught in the U.S. and Saudi Arabia. Agnes has presented public workshops and seminars and published articles on instructional design and program evaluation. She is currently the president of AMP Associates and senior partner with REACH Human Capital, LLC, human resources consulting firms. Several decades after earning her M.Ed in Ohio, Agnes returned to graduate school at University of Memphis and earned a certificate to teach ESL in 2014. July 2013

she earned her certificate to teach EFL from the University of West Bohemia in the Czech Republic. She is currently tutoring adults in business education English through Global-LT. Over her career, Agnes has served in leadership and volunteer positions for not-for-profit and professional organizations, which include American Society of Training & Development, twice as president of the board with the YWCA of Memphis and Network of Memphis, active involvement with the Memphis Zoo, Live at the Gardens, WONDERS and the Orpheum. Recently she completed a 2-year term as the chairperson of the Board of Directors of Agricenter International; the first female chairperson in the 25 year history of the Agricenter. Additionally, Agnes and her husband work with individuals, in a volunteer capacity, who are in career transition/job search because of a downsizing.

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Michelle Sluder, Arlington Community Schools

For the past 20 years, Michelle Sluder has been in the education field, 11 of those in the area of ESL. She currently teaches at Arlington Middle and Arlington High Schools in Arlington, TN. Her experience has allowed her to reach all ages, from elementary to adults. Eight years ago, she began providing English classes at night to the parents in her community. This year, she expanded the program by having high school students come help the school aged children with their homework while their parents are involved in learning English. Michelle also provides professional development at her schools and was selected to present at the 2016 PIE conference. In addition to the school year, Michelle spends her summers teaching ESL students, as well as groups of middle school students who come from Mexico to participate in an immersion language camp. Last year, she received TESOL's Virginia French Allen award for scholarship and community. Additionally, in 2009, she was awarded TNTESOL Teacher of the Year. Michelle loves to travel, participate in her church, and spend time with her grandson. If given the opportunity to serve on the TNTESOL board, she will strive to reach all educators, expand their knowledge of the ESL field, and work for the betterment of ALL educators.



Susan Smith, Lauderdale County Schools

Susan Smith has been in the education field for eighteen years, with the last three years as an ESL teacher. She taught high school and middle school English and Language Arts for ten years, and for the past three years has been the K-12 ESL teacher in Lauderdale County, serving between 35-50 students at 5 schools per day. She has a Bachelor's degree in English from Union University in Jackson, TN and received her ESL endorsement from the University of Memphis. Before her tenure began as an ESL teacher, Susan was the Center Director and Director of Education for Sylvan Learning Centers in Dyersburg and Jackson, TN. While there, she wrote and received a state grant that allowed Sylvan teachers to tutor in local schools, with a focus on at-risk students including ELLs. Susan then moved on to become the coordinator of a tutoring program during the school year for Lauderdale County Schools, which also served at-risk students and included many ELLs. She later coordinated the summer school program for these students, funded by a three-year state grant. For the past two years, she has assisted with the coordination of the West TN ESL Mini-Conference held each year in Dyersburg, TN. Susan is a strong advocate for her students and stays in constant communication with the parents to keep them involved as much as possible. She has a heart for these students and found these last few years of teaching ELLs as the most rewarding. Susan would be honored to serve as member-at-large to continue to grow professionally and would love to assist others in achieving success with their ESL students.



Ronald Fuentes, University of Memphis

Ronald Fuentes is Assistant Professor in the Department of English at the University of Memphis. His research interests include language policy in education, language ideology and socialization, and immigration. He is particularly interested in how different social, political, familial, and educational decisions position individuals in multilingual and multicultural environments. He examines how these decisions affect individuals' language attitudes and practices and how these decisions are shaped by immigration.



New Arrivals: A Successful First Day

Todd Thevenot & Heidi Fryns
Shelby County School District.

It's a beautiful morning and you're getting ready for class, when out of the blue you are notified that a new ESL Newcomer has arrived and is waiting for you in the office. As you head to the office, you begin thinking of all the things that must happen for proper enrollment: documents must be processed, W-APT placement tests must be given, and demographic questions must be asked. Teachers are natural multi-taskers, conquering responsibilities and solving problems at the drop of a hat. But, have we stopped to think about our Newcomer's first day experience? How much focus is really put on the physiological and safety needs of these newcomers? How much attention is given to the undeniably stressful culture shock that accompanies one's first day as a newcomer?

Below is a checklist of some newcomer day one must do's, which are intended to meet their immediate survival needs and foster a sense of inclusion.

Students need to feel welcomed and expected in their classroom. The teacher should allow the new-coming student to greet the other students, and allow for an exchange of introductions. The new students should be taken to their "place"; this could come in the form of a desk, or chair at a table, or even a carpet square for younger students. It is also a good idea to label something in the room with their name, ideally their "place", a cubbyhole, or a coat hook. Being able to see their names around the classroom will promote a sense of inclusion. To take this one step further, consider taking individual pictures of each student. These photographs can later be posted on the board or on a map to show the multinational diversity of the room.

The next step in this personalized acclimation process should be taking a tour of the school. As before, the focus of your tour stops should be survival and inclusion.

Bathroom- Make sure they understand the difference between girls'/boys' bathrooms. For younger students, explain the concept of the bathroom break; for older students, explain any bathroom stipulations (hall passes, times of availability, etc...). For the younger students, you may include a lesson on how to use the community sinks/soap dispensers/paper towel dispenser.

Water- Show them where the water fountain is, and how to use it if they are not familiar. In my school, the students swear by one magical water fountain that has the best water in the building; if such a legend exists at your school, share it with the new students.

Cafeteria- One of the most important stops... Try to take the new student to the cafeteria during a slow time, when they can do a walk-through of the lunch line. Identify the procedure of selecting a lunch: how many pieces of fruit, entrée selection, milk/O.J., cutlery and napkins, etc... If there are cafeteria staff present, introduce your students to them, explaining that your new-comers might be non-verbal and may require more patience getting through the line. Most importantly, if your student has a lunch number, write it on a card and laminate it. It can be used until the student is able to say it or enter it into the numerical pad.

Uniform- Our newcomers often don't come from a schooling environment that requires a set dress code. Explain policies and expectations such as tucked-in shirttails. Perhaps your school doesn't allow the students to carry backpacks around the building during the day.

Allies- One final thing to keep in mind while touring the school: introduce your students to friendlies. These may include other students, or teachers, with similar linguistic or cultural backgrounds. Give them a lunch buddy for the first week or two, someone who

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has had previous experience at being the “new guy”. And, ensure an inviting introduction with the administration team and office staff.

The new students should be introduced to the tools, or components of the classroom. Again, the focus is on basic needs first. For example, teach them where the trash can is located, or how to access the tissue box should they need it. Point out the location of the telephone; the students will be able to see that there is a possibility to contact their family in the event of an emergency. For high school students, you may want to teach new students how to log-in to the computer system.

It's always helpful to find out if the student has other family members at the school. This initial investigation can save time in the long run when trying to contact family members. Also, the relationships between siblings and family members can surpass professional ties (student/teacher) which often helps solve major problems or misunderstandings.

The final consideration is the hustle-and-bustle of dismissal. Identify how the student will return home (walker, car rider, bus, or daycare). If the student rides the bus, make another laminated card, this one with their bus route number and stop name. If you have the opportunity, walk the student to their bus during their first dismissal and introduce them to their driver.

These five basic considerations can greatly influence the positivity of any newcomer experience. It's important to cover all bases and ensure that each student is given a solid foundation to build on. Your concentration should be focused on survival and inclusion: What do they need to survive the early days? How can you foster a sense of community? With a firm grasp on the daily needs, students can focus on making new friends and learning English.



TNTESOL would like to thank the outgoing members of the Board of Directors for their dedication and service.

An Interview with Teachers of ELLs in the Middle School Science Classroom

Barbara Finney
Shelby County Schools

Which resources have you found to be most helpful?

For example, is there a dictionary or bilingual list of science terms that has been especially beneficial to you as you prepare your lessons or to your students as they do assignments?

Are there some websites that have been beneficial, such as the Quizlet.com flashcards, using Google translate to provide bilingual versions of the science terms, students having access to their textbook online, etc.?

Have you found other resources that have been especially useful to either your students or their parents for completing homework assignments for your class?

I was given a science vocabulary list in two of the three languages my ELLs speak. The kids use this to help learn the vocabulary.

I use google translate a lot, especially for instructions so the kids will at least understand what I want them to do.

Our textbook also has the quizzes in Spanish, some of the worksheets are in Spanish, and there is a section that will read to the kids in Spanish and in English. I always give the kids BOTH Spanish and English. I have no problem meeting them where they are, but the ultimate goal is that they can read English; if I don't expose them to English, I'm not helping them.

I notice that you have your students keep a science journal. I have witnessed its benefits to my students in Academic Exploration class. Tell us a little bit about the contents and how that helps your students access the content of your science course.

My kids have an interactive notebook. We keep all of our notes, vocabulary, lab experiments, basically anything I would want them to study goes in here. I usually give the kids one page (the right side) and then the child responds to what I gave them by doing a cut and paste to organize the notes, drawing and labelling a picture, writing a paragraph, finishing a sentence stem, etc. The notebook is a way for the kids to respond to what I give them. The more chances any child has to work with the material increases the chance he will actually learn it. I find that my ELLs especially need this because it helps them process the information I gave them.

I also type most of the notes I give in class. ELLs, especially newcomers, cannot listen to me in English, translate what I said into their language in their head, and write it down in English quickly. I still give the lecture, but instead of waiting on the kids to write it all down, I focus on getting them to highlight important words or underline the main idea. I think all of my students benefit from this.

You have very well-established classroom management routines. What are some aspects of classroom management that facilitate your ability to work with your English learners while managing a class of 30 or more students?

Classroom management will make or break you. There is NO WAY I could individualize instruction for kids speaking three different languages (Persian, Spanish, and Arabic), the kids who don't read on grade level, and the ones who just need a prod to get them going in the right direction, if my classroom was utter chaos. I have two classroom rules: be respectful, be prepared. I also have about 20 classroom procedures. If you need a pencil or paper, it is at the front of the room. If the cup or the folder is empty ask a friend. All make up work is in a yellow folder at the front of the room. If there is nothing in the folder, the student needs to come in during intervention to copy my IA book. Every table has 4 seats, each seat is numbered, and every number has a job. Ones organize supplies, twos pick up notebooks and materials, threes empty the table trash can, and fours push up the chairs. I don't waste a lot of class time answering the same

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question over and over. I spend a lot of time the first of the year training the kids how to do it themselves. I tell the kids I will never quit on you, so I do not let them quit on me. Saying I do not know is not an option, they know I will move on and come back to them. Since the room essentially runs itself, I have time to give individual attention to the kids who need it.

Do you have some recommendations for giving grades to newcomer English learners? (A recurring question among general education and ESL teachers alike is, "How can we make modifications to assignments in order to provide a grade that reflects their true learning of the material?")

I differ slightly from what most ELL teachers tell the mainstream classroom teacher to do. Basically, I am told to re-create the assignment, make it easier for the ELL child because of the language barrier. However, this year I had some really smart ELLs who told me they didn't want my "baby work"—they wanted to do what everyone else was doing, so I let them. I do use Google translate to make the instructions accessible, but then I found some of my kids cannot read their language. My oldest daughter will often read the instructions for me in Spanish, and if the kids cannot read the Spanish, I let them listen to what she recorded. Our Spanish teacher has also volunteered to read and record instructions, and she will even let her Honors Spanish kids read them, too. Once I know the child knows what I am expecting, I look for growth. I honestly am TOTALLY happy if my ELL kids learn one thing a day, but most days I find they learn a whole lot more. I grade for effort first and accuracy only on tests. If a native speaker is expected to give me a 4 sentence answer, then my ELL students may only give me one sentence. If the other kids are writing, my ELLs may draw me a picture. I look for the honest effort, did they try to learn something. I find that by expecting more from my students, I actually get more from them



because they don't want to disappoint me.

I have also noticed that you utilize PowerPoint slide presentations with visuals to convey lesson content to all of your students. Have you found that this is a useful tool

for your English learners? Does an ESL teacher or bilingual student help you translate the content to another language for your students?

I use lots of pictures and I purposely try to choose the simplest language possible for my PowerPoints. I don't translate it into another language, but if I notice some of my ELLs are not getting it, I will pull them over to a computer and run the PowerPoint through google translate.

If possible, what other resources or assistance would you like the teachers on the ESL team at your school to provide so you can make the science curriculum accessible to your English learners?

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I may like to have some background knowledge on language processing. As a science teacher, I focus a lot on how things work. If I knew more about how the kids were processing what I gave them between the two languages, maybe I could help them a little more.

Do you use special methods for teaching language skills and academic language and vocabulary in the science classroom? (e.g. the language of science as it relates to answering questions about or stating cause and effect, compare and contrast, inference, Tier 2 and 3 vocabulary specific to science)?

I use lots of pictures and visuals. We make cootie catchers with our vocabulary, we use notecards, vocabulary strips, anything I can think of to let the kids "handle" the vocabulary. As I talk about our subject, I use the vocabulary so they learn how to pronounce the words, and I require the students to use the vocabulary instead of telling me the "thingy" or "you know". Most of my ELLs have a native speaker that they buddy up with and this peer student is VERY helpful in getting vocabulary across to the others.

Have the WIDA Can-Do statements and Model Performance Indicators for science helped you meet the needs of your newcomer and beginner English learners?

For example, you were provided with their level of English proficiency and a list of Can-Do statements that inform what the student should be able to do at that level. Has that been helpful to you?

Some examples from the WIDA Standards have specific model performance indicators, or MPis: https://www.wida.us/standards/ELP_standardlookup.aspx

Standard 4 -- Language of Science, Grades 6-8

Example Topic: Light, Sound

Level 1 (Entering) - Match oral statements about light or sound with illustrations (e.g., White is made up of all colors.)

Level 2 (Beginning) Create or complete models or diagrams of light or sound based on illustrations and oral directions (e.g., circuits)

Classify examples of properties of light or sound based on illustrations and oral directions

Level 3 (Developing) Apply oral descriptions of properties of light or sound to everyday examples

Example Topic: Forms of Energy

Level 1 (Entering) Match or classify forms of energy from everyday illustrated examples and models (e.g., light, sound, heat)

Level 2 (Beginning) List and describe examples of illustrated forms of energy from word/phrase banks

Level 3 (Developing) Compare/contrast two forms of energy depicted visually (e.g., ___ and ___ are alike/different in these ways.)

I have two students who are newcomers and the WIDA statements were life savers for me because instead of frustrating myself with all the things these students cannot do, I focused on what they could. The funny thing was, I found both of them could do more. Once they trusted me and knew I was not going to embarrass them, I started getting 3-4 word phrases in English when all I wanted was for them to match up a picture with its term.

Believe it or not, I found the WIDA statements to be more of a help to me with my SPED kids. I got ideas of how to differentiate the work for my ELLs, and it actually helped my low level readers or my kids who have ADHD and can't sit still.



The More You Know...

2015 TESOL Advocacy & Policy Summit

Byron A. Booker
Assistant Principal, Knox County Schools
TNTESOL Parliamentarian/Advocacy Representative

The 2015 TESOL Advocacy and Policy Summit was held June 21-23, 2015 just outside the nation's Capitol in Arlington, VA. English language teachers, supervisors, and administrators representing more than 35 state affiliates, Saudi Arabia, and Canada TESOL affiliates assembled to study U. S. legislation and education policy and discuss its effects on English learners. Stakeholders from the Office of Civil Rights (OCR), Office of English Language Acquisition (OLEA), and U. S. Department of Education (U.S. DOE) shared information on historical patterns and current trends in education reform. Advocates examined fundamentals of advocacy in preparation for educational meetings with many members of Congress. This year marked the sixth year TNTESOL has participated in this Advocacy and Policy Summit. Debbie Vaughn who served as TNTESOL Advocacy Representative for the past 5 years retired this past year. As such, I had the distinct privilege to follow in her footsteps and represent TNTESOL this year.

Did you know our cohort of ESL professionals is 13,000 strong and we serve 5 million ELs nation-wide? Did you know that 1 in 5 students in public education comes from a home where English is not the first language? Did you know that 10% of school-aged children in public schools are ELs? Jim Ferg-Cadima and Marcelo Quinones from the U.S. Office of Civil Rights shared how these significant data impact our classrooms, our schools, our districts, and our state. By 2030, they project 40% of school-aged children in public education will be English learners. You may visit a new federal interagency website for Limited English Proficiency, <https://www2.ed.gov>, maintained by OLEA and US DOE, for additional data points and resources for ELs.

HR 5, Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), is the latest attempt to re-authorize the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. Did you know ESSA proposes to continue disaggregation of student performance measures for English learners? Did you know that ESSA proposes greater discretion for accountability at the state level, proposes incentives to states and school districts to implement policies and practices that will lead to significant improvements in the instruction of English learners, proposes additional information to states and school districts to help meet the needs of long-term English learners and English learners with a disability, and proposes a new three year progression option for inclusion of test scores for newly arrived ELs? Dr. Libi Gil, Assistant Deputy Secretary and Director, Office of English Language Acquisition, John Segota, TESOL, and Ellen Fern, Washington Partners, LLC, shared invaluable policy information significant to changes in HR 5 Every Student Succeeds Act and how those changes influence English learners. Advocates spent time drilling down in the language of the proposed policy. You may access [Alliance for Excellent Education](http://all4ed.org), all4ed.org, as a resource to learn more about the key differences between NCLB and Every Student Succeeds Act.

Did you know your voice matters? Did you know your congressman or congresswoman would like to understand how federal policy impacts the “what”, the “how”, and the “why” of your ESL classroom? Did you know an effective way to facilitate this understanding is to invite your member of Congress to observe your students in action? You may want to contact your ESL supervisor, site level administrator, or district personnel to assist with this invitation. Dr. Diane Staehr-Fenner, president of DSF Consulting, LLC, shared with advocates how her voice as a small business owner has dedicated itself to the achievement of ELs through professional development, curriculum design, and research and technical assistance. Dr. Staehr-Fenner walked us through the steps of her book, [Advocating for English Learners: A Guide for Educators](#) (Corwin, 2014). She empowered us to develop our advocacy skills and give a

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voice for the students we teach and their families. You may locate your representative or senator at <https://contactingthecongress.org>.

To conclude the Summit, I had the opportunity to meet with representatives from Senator Lamar Alexander's office, Senator Bob Corker's office, and Congressman Phil Roe, 1st Congressional District. All three offices welcomed me and provided an attentive ear to listen to the concerns we as ESL professionals have for meeting the educational needs of our English learners. I look forward to continuing those conversations.

So, I returned to Tennessee with a few more steps on my Fitbit, a greater understanding of how federal legislation potentially impacts what I do at the school level, thanksgiving for the tireless efforts of our national leaders to try to "get things right" for ALL students, a quiver of contacts from other state affiliates, additional advocacy tools for my toolkit, and a sense of appreciation in the progress we have made over the past several years to meet the educational, cultural, and sensory needs of our English learners and their families in Tennessee. The more you know...

Thank you for all you do. Thank you for the opportunity to represent TNTESOL. It was indeed an honor.



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TNTESOL Conference Friday Night Event

Now we all know that it is important to ignite and inspire within our professional careers so that we can educate the young creative minds of our students, but we must not forget to have fun. After a full day of igniting our minds with educational concepts and inspiring our desire to grow and create, we will end the day relaxing and reflecting as we come together to have fun. Our theme will continue on into our Friday night event as we ignite friendships and inspire ideas. Our Friday night event will be held at Lanes, Trains, and Automobiles on March 18th from 6-9 p.m. We are going to eat, socialize, and play. Bowling, Laser Tag, and Karaoke will be the highlighted activities. All participants will receive 1 complimentary drink ticket and a specialty drink will be offered for non-drinkers. This event promises to be great fun for all!! There is limited space, so sign up early.

WEST TENNESSEE ESL MINI-CONFERENCE

Angela Rood
Dyersburg City Schools

On October 24, 2015, the third annual West Tennessee ESL Mini-Conference was hosted at Dyersburg Intermediate School in Dyersburg, Tennessee due to many requests for repeating the event. Mrs. Click, the principal of the school and the former ESL Coordinator, was once again more than willing to provide the conference location.

Having two successful conference experiences gave me the perfect foundation for organizing a third conference. Many things about the structure of the conference were kept the same; but a few changes were made based on suggestions and requests gathered through evaluations completed by previous attendees. I made purchases and budget decisions for the conference with the help of the ESL administrative staff of Dyersburg City Schools. Susan Smith, the K-12 ESL Teacher for Lauderdale County Schools, graciously prepared all of the conference certificates, along with assisting in any manner needed on the day of the conference. Krista Bradley, of Crockett County Schools, kindly spent the afternoon before the conference with me to assist with decorating and setting-up for the conference.

The only thing I really changed this year was my approach of promoting the conference and handling the registration process. Based on the recommendation of a fellow TNTESOL Board member, Dr. Abasi McKinzie, I utilized the EventBrite website to promote the conference, send email blasts, process registrations, and gather survey information at the completion of the event. I cannot say enough about how useful and time saving the EventBrite website was for me! I highly recommend it to anyone who would like to host a similar event. The TNTESOL social media sites were also very useful for the conference promotion. We had a total of 83 registrants this year!

Our conference agenda consisted of breakout sessions with a focus on current ESL issues and WIDA. All sessions were very professional and informative, but perhaps the two sessions led by Jan Lanier, TN ESL Coordinator, were the most enjoyable part of the day. Attendees were so grateful for the opportunity to receive information directly from Mrs. Lanier in a relaxed, informal setting. Mrs. Lanier updated everyone on current



Jan Lanier provided us with the latest news and updates from the state department.



Debra Frantz led WIDA sessions and demonstrated creating MPIs with this interactive activity.



Teachers had an opportunity to collaborate with others from across west Tennessee.



Administrators had an opportunity to sit down with Jan Lanier to discuss current issues and concerns.

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ESL issues, standards, assessment and WIDA concerns. Debra Frantz, of Shelby County Schools, joined Jan in presenting very relevant and informative WIDA sessions to us. Additionally, district ESL coordinators appreciated a private session with Mrs. Lanier to directly address their specific concerns. By the end of the day, participants had enjoyed six hours of quality professional collaboration and development, along with delicious snacks and lunch prepared by the cafeteria staff of Dyersburg Intermediate School.

Funding for the conference materials and food expenses was made possible by an affordable conference fee of \$20.00 and a generous \$200.00 donation from the TNTESOL organization. We received excellent feedback from our conference evaluations and had many requests to make it an annual event. If you are considering hosting a mini-conference, create a plan and contact the TNTESOL Board for their support.

The most difficult part of organizing a conference such as this is securing quality presenters. Starting early with promoting the conference and making connections with colleagues and others in your professional network can be beneficial to the process as well. I am currently in my first year in my second consecutive term of serving as a Member-at-Large on the TNTESOL Board and I can say that the experience has definitely contributed to my professional growth in so many ways. Three years ago, I would have never considered taking on the task of hosting a mini-conference; but now, I can sincerely say that doing so has been one of the highlights of my teaching career. Without the support and connections made through TNTESOL, I never would have taken that step. I was a member of TNTESOL for 4 years before becoming actively involved. Serving on the TNTESOL Board has been a metamorphosis for my ESL career. It has completely changed my level of professional knowledge and confidence. Additionally, I have developed such strong relationships with other ESL professionals. Since I am the only ESL teacher in my school system, having those connections has been invaluable to me. Consider becoming actively involved and see what a difference it can make for you!



Vikki Hayslett presenting on the effects of poverty during a break-out session.



Magda Sakaan presented a session on close reading.



Lisa Hoelmer presented a session with strategies for struggling readers.



Amanda Harville presented a technology session.



Teachers of similar teaching situations/grade levels had an opportunity to discuss best practices and current issues.

CCC: Conversation Cards and Calendars

Nelda Rachels
University of Tennessee at Martin

Learning background information about students and developing rapport with them are essential elements in teaching ELLs. Such elements aid teachers as they create lesson plans and build a learning environment to which students will respond and feel comfortable. Conversation cards and calendars are ways to achieve these results. Furthermore, conversation cards lead to an authentic interactive discourse between teacher and student which builds student confidence and second language acquisition. For the teacher, the cards may also act as name-learning, bell-ringer, and attendance-taking tools.

When we “old” ones think of the CCC, we often think of the 1930’s Roosevelt program to jumpstart the economy. For those of us teaching ESL, CCC may also mean *conversation cards* or *calendars* as a means of jumpstarting the language acquisition of our students—no matter their age. An offshoot of conversation calendars, conversation cards are an instructional strategy I use in my Tennessee Intensive English Program (TIEP) classes at the University of Tennessee at Martin. I will answer the following questions that other interested teachers may have: What exactly are conversation cards? How can teachers implement them? And, what are the pros and cons of this teaching strategy?

Cris Tovani (2004) explains that *conversation calendars* are a means for teachers to learn about their students and their needs. For a few weeks every semester, Tovani gives students, who are not necessarily ELLs, a calendar page divided into two rows of boxes (Figure 1). In the top row, students write any of their questions, concerns, or comments to the teacher. Each day, the teacher responds in the lower row of boxes. The student receives a grade for turning in the calendar, which gives the calendars value. According to Tovani, these daily points can increase the grades of students who have been considered failures in the past.

I decided to implement something similar in *conversation cards*, which act as a name placard on one side and a conversation exercise on the other (Figure 2). Implementation usually begins on the first day of class before I hand out my syllabus. I want students to know that I value who they are and am determined to learn their names quickly. I explain that since I have several classes of students, it will take me a few days to learn their names, and the name card will help. Sometimes, I even lift a hank of my gray hair and joke that *this* may be why I need the extra time.

I show my own name plate and introduce myself, then pass out a half sheet of 8-1/2 x 11 inch cardboard and markers to each student. I show how to fold the sheet in half lengthwise and write their name with big letters. By watching me, listening to and following my instructions, students are already learning new vocabulary and imperative sentence structure within the first five minutes of class. Sometimes, I have already written the instructions and basic rules on the classroom’s whiteboard:

- 1) Fold your card in half lengthwise.
- 2) Write your first and last name on one side.
- 3) Place the card on your desk so the teacher can see your name.
- 4) Give this card back to your teacher at the end of class.

For lower level ELLs, I will point to each set of instructions while speaking them and showing students what to do.

Before I take up the cards that first day, I often take a picture of each student holding the nameplate. I tell them that I never put their pictures on Facebook or online though I will put them on my office wall with their permission (Figure 3). In addition, I explain that this is my homework, to study the pictures and learn each student’s name. Most students are fine with this, though some Muslim females have refused to have their picture taken. Students who visit my office, both male and female, enjoy my wall of pictures, and I find it a good ice breaker during student conferences.

After I take up the cards that first day, I write one basic question to each student on the reverse side. For the first several days, the questions may be basic background gathering: “What country are you from?” or “When is your birthday?” or “How long have you been in the U.S.?” The next

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class day I hand the cards back and instruct students to read the question on the underside and answer with a complete sentence. The following instructions can be given at this point, usually on the whiteboard once again:

- 1) On the underside of your card, read and answer the teacher's question.
- 2) Answer with a complete sentence.
- 3) Ask your teacher the same question or another question. (This last instruction is optional.)

I also tell students that I will write back to them on their cards each day.

The first week, I will usually read the question and show how to respond since one of my purposes is to pattern the English question and complete statements. Basically, I hope students will develop the necessary skill of "echoing" parts of the question in their answers and to learn the order of an English statement: subject, verb, object. I do this by responding to the question myself as if the students had asked me:

What country are you from?

I am from the United States.

I vary the instruction each day, sometimes underlining, sometimes highlighting, sometimes drawing arrows from key words in the question to the statements or answers below. This daily exercise in word manipulation and echoing underscores that the question pattern is not the same as the statement pattern.

Aloud, I will ask several students the same question. I will write their responses (corrected, if necessary) on the board. The skill level of my students will determine how I approach this mini-lesson and how long it will last. The brevity of the lesson, however, keeps students focused while the immediate modeling, correction, and repetitive practice may also aid students in language acquisition.

Both teacher and students benefit from conversation cards in many ways:

- 1) It helps me learn student names those first crucial days, especially in my larger TIEP classes. As I give the correct card to the correct student (I hope!), I pronounce the student's name, checking for accuracy each time. The name plates stay on the desk, a further "crutch."
- 2) The cards help me quickly take attendance. The cards left on my desk belong to the absentees.
- 3) The cards develop rapport. What I learn helps me plan lesson activities, developing them based on problem areas or the interests of my students. After the first week or two, I don't always ask every student the same question; eventually, conversations become more personal and authentic as I ask questions and make comments geared towards the individual. I once had a lengthy, week-long conversation with a Japanese student about his hobby, fishing. It turned out he was fishing at a lake very close to where I lived. I asked about the best locations on the lake for fish, type of fishing equipment used, and offered advice about other fishing holes in the area. Likewise, he wanted to know everything I knew about fishing!
- 4) Once students become more confident with their English and the exercise, the card becomes a bell-ringer activity. While students work on their answers and questions, I take attendance and accomplish other preparatory work for class. Often, however, after taking attendance, I make myself available to help the weaker students.
- 5) The cards provide authentic, repetitive opportunities for students to learn vocabulary and sentence structure. Students may use dictionaries and confer with classmates; however, students are responsible for writing their own questions and sentences.
- 6) I can develop questions that segue into the day's lesson. If it's a grammar lesson about future tense, I can ask a question that requires such a verb. If it's a reading class, I can ask for a summary sentence or opinion about the reading.

The major problem with conversation cards is the time factor. It only takes two-three minutes per student to write questions and responses on each student's card; however, times 40 students, one to two hours are spent each day on this one activity. Thus, I often only do it for one or two classes of students. Also, I may not hand out the name plates every day and especially not after the fourth week or so. By then, I've learned backgrounds and names quite well. I may then only hand out the cards when I want

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to ask a question that motivates, introduces, or follows up a classroom activity.

A lesser problem? The exercise can easily become rote, which is why it's important to keep the questions spontaneous and interesting and to give the cards a rest on some days.

Other matters:

Some teachers do not correct students' grammar, but I do, or use the most common mistakes for a mini grammar lesson. My students are older, often in upper level classes, and desire to enter university; thus, I insist on a certain level of correctness to prepare them more quickly for college English classes.

I vary the questions each semester and often do not require students to ask me one. Answering is good enough for lower levels and saves time.

When we fill up the card, I simply staple another inside.

Unlike Tovani, I do not give the cards a grade. Students seem to value the activity anyway because they are naturally curious and wonder, "What is teacher going to say to me?" or "What will she ask me today?" I often see students opening their cards in anticipation. For that matter, I enjoy the cards for the same reason—the element of surprise!

Though no longer a surprise, my favorite question from students is "How old are you?" Sometimes I use this question as a discussion on culture and the American taboo of asking a woman's age. Other semesters I enjoy making them guess! Or, as I did when I turned 55—I sent the questioner to McDonald's where he asked, "When does the senior citizen discount begin?"

REFERENCE

Tovani, C. (2004). *Do I really have to teach reading? Content comprehension, Grades 6-12*. Portland, ME: Stenhouse.

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday

Figure 1: My version of a conversation calendar. For a different version with student and teacher grading blocks, see p. 109 in Tovani (2004).

Figure 2: Sample name plate (mine) and sample student questions on the underside of this name-plate

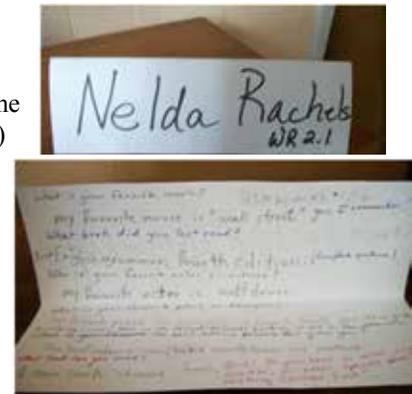
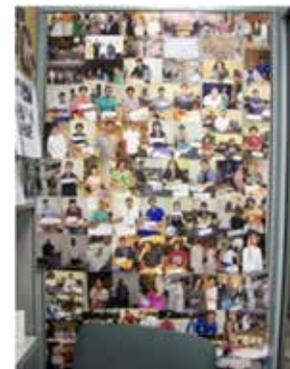


Figure 3: Wall of student pictures



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The Editorial Board of the **TNTESOL Journal** seeks articles of general interest on any aspect of the teaching of English as a second or foreign language in elementary, middle, high school, college/university, or adult/immigrant education. The topics can be varied and wide-ranging.

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