

AMTESOL News

ALABAMA-MISSISSIPPI TEACHERS OF ENGLISH TO SPEAKERS OF OTHER LANGUAGES

www2.una.edu/amtesol

VOLUME XXIII, NUMBER 1

FALL 2004

2005 AMTESOL CONFERENCE

Today's ESL: It's Not Your Granddaddy's ESL Anymore

Don't Miss It!

Mark your calendars for this year's Alabama-Mississippi TESOL Conference which will be held on January 28-29th at the University of North Alabama in Florence, Alabama.

Agenda

This year's conference will focus on new innovations in working with English language learners of all age levels, including K-12, university level, and adult learners. It will also look at the unique needs of the English language learners in our part of the country. Educators and administrators are encouraged to come learn and share. This is a great way to gain new ideas and inspire new ideas in others in the field. We look forward to seeing you all in January!

Featured Speaker

Teresa O'Donnel (Terry) is the Executive Director of the Commission on English Language Program Accreditation (CEA) which accredits postsecondary English language programs in universities and colleges and

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independent language schools. Prior to assuming this position, she served as Director of Field Services and Deputy Executive Director of TESOL. Her responsibilities included support for TESOL affiliates, interest sections, and committees; coordination of advocacy and government relations activities; education programming; and information services. Terry has taught and has administrative experience in adult education, K-7, university, and community college ESL programs. She is the co-author of *Independent Writing*.

Special Invitation to Teachers in the Mainstream Classroom

There will be some concurrent sessions targeted at how to work with students in the mainstream classroom. Please encourage any teacher or administrator who works with English language learners to consider attending this conference.

Accommodations and Directions

For more information regarding accommodations and directions, please visit our website at www2.una.edu/amtesol or contact Joy Brown at jmbrown@una.edu.



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AMTESOL News is a twice-yearly newsletter serving the Alabama and Mississippi TESOL affiliate.

Contributions from members about teacher preparation, student concerns, classroom ideas, educational material and services, opportunities for professional growth, and information of general interest are welcome.

Contact the newsletter editor if you would like to contribute an article or have news of interest that you would like included. Please send material by email attachment.

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TESOL's office is generally open from 9am to 5pm, Eastern Daylight Time, Monday-Friday, except major national U.S. holidays.

News from MS-AL



News from Mississippi

by Marlynn Martin

Elective Courses in ELL Education

Beginning in January, 2005, Mississippi College will offer ELL (English Language Learner) coursework that will serve as electives for Master's credit in education, and ELL endorsement to be attached to a valid teaching license, or

toward a foreign language degree. There will be four 3 hour courses offered on a fast track plan for a total of 12 hours. Registration is January 6th & 10th from 8:00 a.m. until 6:00 p.m. Classes begin on January 10th. Be sure to present your district ID or current check stub when registering to receive a teacher credit on tuition. For more information, contact **Dr. Debbie Pierce**, Mississippi College Department of Foreign Languages, @ 601-925-7664, or **Marlynn Martin** @ 601-825-5590 x 222.

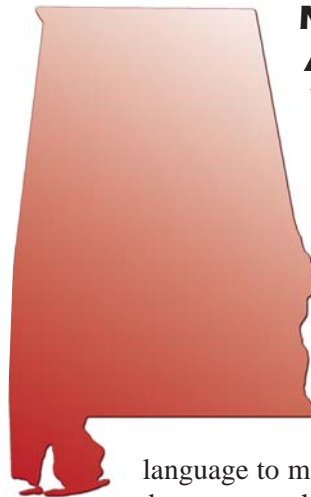
Astounding Statistics Are For Real

by Marlynn Martin

Across Mississippi our population of students of other languages and cultures is growing by leaps and bounds. Many school districts who thought they would never be touched by this "new" challenge are now joining forces with others in modifying and adapting to unique needs that our new clientele bring to the classroom.

Rankin County School District has experienced a 50 % increase over last year's enrollment in ELL students since August 9, 2004; Scott County Schools has also experienced a marked increase in their ELL population; and Desoto County Schools are overwhelmed with their registration of new ELL students. In addition, Madison County

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News from Alabama

by Dely V. Roberts

TransACT Helps Schools Bridge Cultural Boundaries

In today's global society, effective communication requires fluency in translating the English

language to many other languages. To better serve the more than 10,000 English Language Learning (ELL) students

enrolled in the state's public schools, the Alabama Department of Education is providing school systems the tool to provide parents of ELL students with parent notifications written in their native language.

"TransACT Compliance and Communication, a software-based collection of multi-lingual parent notifications, assists schools in breaking the language barrier between staff and parents," **Mrs. Dely Roberts**, ELL Specialist with the Alabama Department of Education, said. "The TransACT program translates more than 60 General Education school forms, notices, and letters into 22 priority languages."

Additionally, in accordance with the parent communication mandates of *No Child Left Behind*, TransACT supplies more than 47 legal and policy documents translated in six languages - English, Arabic, Hmong, Russian, Spanish, and Vietnamese.

"To comply with *No Child Left Behind*, we are required to provide information to parents in a language the parent understands," said **State Superintendent of Education Joe Morton**. "This is one tool that allows us to do that."

The majority of Alabama's 130 school systems responded to the new program by sending select school personnel to train on TransACT in a statewide

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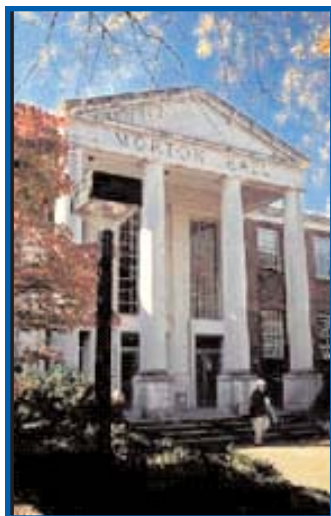
Getting to Know You: Programs In and Around AMTESOL



ESL at the University of Alabama - Huntsville

By Andrea Word-Allbritton

Mrs. Word-Allbritton has been a lecturer in TESOL and ESL at UAH since Fall 2000 and was appointed Director of ESL in Fall 2003. In that capacity, she directs both the summer Intensive English Program and the ESL program at UAH.



ESL offices at Morton Hall

Founded in 1981 by Dr. James Wilson, the ESL program at UAH is a regular academic program designed to serve students who are pursuing undergraduate or graduate degrees at the university.

Historically, the program has addressed the needs of both undergraduate and graduate international students by preparing them to handle the rigors of

academic study in a U.S. university context. Based on the results of the English Language Placement Test (ELPT), students are placed, when necessary, in the appropriate ESL courses.

The following course descriptions describe the goals and content of the current courses.

- ★ **ESL 100: Spoken English I (3 hrs.)**
For advanced beginning speakers¹, this course has evolved to focus on a review of the basics of both oral and written English discourse. Serving as a springboard into the oral discourse sequence (101/102) and/or the written discourse sequence (103/104), this course focuses on a review of the basics of English in both spoken and written com-

munication. The course materials are academically oriented, to insure a high degree of relevance for the target population of university undergraduate and graduate students.

- ★ **ESL 101: Spoken English II (3 hrs.)**
For intermediate speakers², this course emphasizes the refinement of listening comprehension and speaking proficiency through the use of academically focused materials. Students hone their listening skills in lecture contexts and are required to give both individual and group presentations. The overarching objective of the course is to assist in their acculturation to the linguistic expectations of the U.S. academic discourse community.

- ★ **ESL 102: Spoken English III (3 hrs.)**
For advanced speakers³, this course emphasizes listening comprehension and speaking proficiency in the academy. Using academically oriented materials, students listen to lectures, give individual presentations, lead discussions and participate in debates. In addition, they learn to meet the linguistic expectations of the U.S. academic discourse community.

- ★ **ESL 103: Composition I (3 hrs.)**
For intermediate speakers of the language, this course reviews the basics of composition and is designed to further both reading and writing proficiencies of non-native speakers. The course focuses instruction and practice in critical reading and in planning and writing summaries, problem-solution texts and claim-support texts. Students increase writing fluency, learn focused strategies for editing and revision of compositions, and develop vocabulary acquisition strategies.

¹TOEFL: 500-530
²TOEFL: 530-560
³TOEFL: 560-600+

★ **ESL 104: Composition II (3 hrs.)**
For advanced speakers of the language, this course reviews the basics of writing for research and is designed to further both reading and writing proficiencies of non-native speakers. The course focuses instruction and practice in critical reading and in planning and writing comparative summaries, critiques, as well as lengthy persuasive papers in the genres of problem-solution and claim-support texts. Students increase writing fluency, learn focused strategies for revision and editing and further develop their vocabulary acquisition strategies.

Whereas the current ESL program addresses the needs of students matriculated at the university, we recently added an Intensive English Program to be offered in the summers. Our first IEP was conducted in Summer 2004 and provided instruction for a group of 21 Japanese students who are and/or will be continuing their studies as undergraduates at UAH. We are looking forward to expanding our IEP offerings in the coming summers with an eye toward expanding to a year-round program in the near future pending university approval.

If you are interested in learning more about our ESL program or the IEP, please feel free to contact the director of ESL, Andrea Word-Allbritton, at esl@uah.edu or by phone at 256-824-2370.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Don't miss these important conferences, all of which are within driving distance.



January 27-28: Today's ESL: It's Not Your Granddaddy's ESL Anymore. *AMTESOL'S Annual Conference* in Florence, Alabama. See page 1 for details.



February 4-6: Languages: The Key to the Future. *2005 AAFLT Conference* (Alabama Association of Foreign Language Teachers). Held at the Marriot Hotel in Birmingham, Alabama. For more information, go to <http://www.uab.edu/aaflt>.

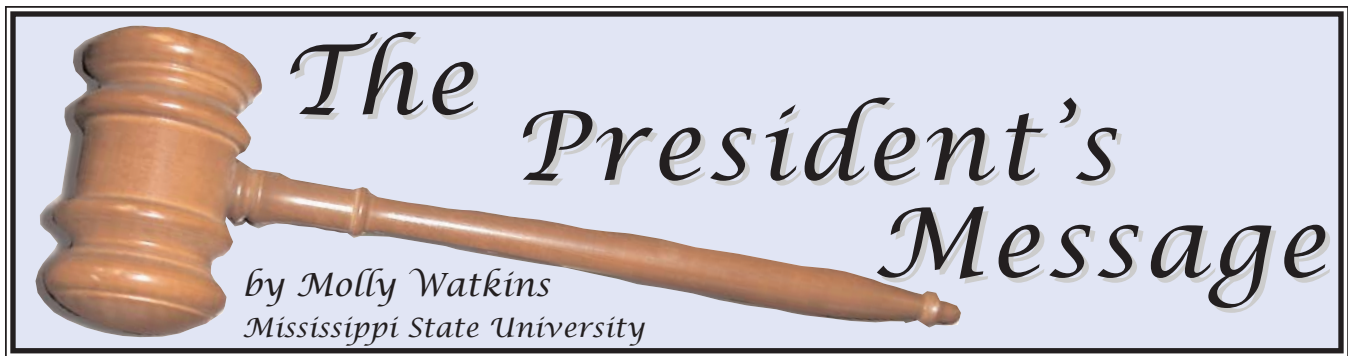
Do you want to travel for free? Try one of these wonderful Teacher Programs abroad:



December 10, 2005: Deadline to apply for the Fulbright Memorial Fund, an all-expense paid program that allows American teachers and educators in grades 1-12 to spend 3 weeks in Japan. After the trip, the participants are asked to commit themselves to sharing what they have learned and experienced with their schools and communities. Go to www.iie.org for application information.



January 10, 2005: Deadline to apply for the Toyota International Teacher Program (Alabama teachers only), a fully funded two-week study in Japan for secondary teachers in grades 9-12. Go to www.iie.org for more information.



Beyond Teaching: Being an International Advocate

As supporters and educators of ESL, we often adopt a variety of roles that take us beyond teaching in the classroom. Being an advocate for our students, their families, and the international communities in our areas can be one of the most important jobs that we have. However, sometimes it is difficult to know how to be a good champion for our students.

As the director of an intensive English language program at a university, I find that being the voice for the students is a major part of my job. I have struggled, though, to learn what makes me a good proponent for international students. Like all of you, my time is already stretched thin; therefore, I have tried to find simple yet effective ways that I can be an international advocate.

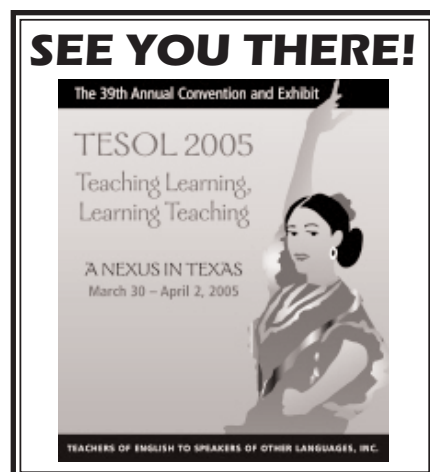
First, listening to the students and their families is extremely revealing as to the true needs in the community. Each city and school serves different groups of students with very different needs. Whether it is a lack of transportation, a lack of entertainment, or a lack of cultural understanding, we can only begin to find solutions when the problems are clear. We may not be able to fix the problems, but, given our understanding of American culture, we have the knowledge to help find the answers.

Another important way to be an international advocate is to point out what we have learned to those who can help. Often the leaders in our community are unaware of challenges facing our students and their families. We can be a liaison that brings the international community and the local communities together. I'm certainly not suggesting that we attend

every town meeting, but perhaps we can work on a small problem by finding those who can assist us. People are often more willing to help than we realize.

Finally, we need to educate ourselves. If we are not continuously learning how to serve our students, we do not have the tools to really advocate for them. The AMTESOL community provides an excellent forum to learn from each other and grow in our field. I encourage all of you to attend the conference in January. We have so much to learn from each other.

We all have a love of our field—the pay is too low and the challenges too great to face if we didn't really care. We can be better educators if we allow ourselves to work to meet all of the needs of our students. "Today's ESL: It's Not Your Granddaddy's ESL Anymore"—what a fitting title for this year's conference. ESL is a varied field, and allowing ourselves to be international advocates is a great gift we can give our students.



For more information, visit www.tesol.org

STATISTICS

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Schools' enrollment has nearly doubled in the past 14 years. Madison's foreign-born population increased by 263 percent in the 1990's.

In Desoto County, where the foreign-born population increased by 579 percent in the 1990's, school enrollment rose from 15,400 in 1996 to 21,000 in 2002, a 36 percent increase in six years.

In Olive Branch, the foreign-born population increased by a whopping 1,406 percent during the 1990's. School enrollments here are projected to increase an average of eight percent every year (Green & Zhou, 2004).

Naturally, the next concern is where the funds will come from to finance meeting the needs of ELL students. There are funds available through Title III-LEP/Immigrant and Title I to provide ELL tutors, translators/interpreters, instructional materials, professional development, and parental literacy and involvement.

Great interest is indicated in an article in the *Mississippi Professional Educators' Journal* (Fall, 2004), expressing concerns about educating illegal immigrants. We all are aware of the costs of educating children in our schools.

Thus, we should not single out any particular group in assigning value to "these" children. The bottom line is that "good instruction is good instruction" and because of this we will meet the needs of all children, regardless of race, color or creed. That is why our schools will "leave no child behind".

TRANSACT

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workshop held in early September and late August. Any school systems who have not registered for TransACT should contact **Mrs. Dely Roberts** at 334-242-8199, 1-888-725-9321, or droberts@alsde.edu. For more information about TransACT, visit www.alsde.edu.

BOOK CORNER

Walking a Mile in their Shoes, Or Should I Say in their Slippers?

by Carol Behel

In this issue, you will find no book review. Instead, I would like to recommend an excellent resource to you that will require no reading at all, unless, of course, you are proficient in the Japanese language.



I am talking about the trip of a lifetime. So, pack your suitcases and have a nice trip!

Ideally, all teachers, especially those who work with English Language Learners, should have an opportunity to visit other countries so that they can fully appreciate what *culture shock* really is, understand what not being able to read feels like, and struggle with everyday communication.

During this summer, I was fortunate to get a taste of all that and to experience the wonderful hospitality of the Japanese people. I was one of 200 American teachers who traveled to Japan for three weeks.

I met important Japanese dignitaries, visited schools, attended many quality lectures about Japan's economy, education, society, and the arts, and lived in a traditional Japanese home. I even learned how to say a few things in Japanese.



Now, back at home, I am sharing what I learned with my school and my community. If your limited budget prevents you from traveling abroad (you are a teacher, right?), but you have a strong desire to experience other cultures, the **Fulbright Memorial Fund Teacher Program** could be the answer for you. It will impact your life in ways that you only can begin to imagine. So, put that book down and apply! For more information about this teacher program, see page 5.

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