

AMTESOL News

ALABAMA-MISSISSIPPI TEACHERS OF ENGLISH TO SPEAKERS OF OTHER LANGUAGES

VOLUME XXIV, NUMBER 1

SPRING 2006



Free TESOL Memberships

AMTESOL has been given five (5) free TESOL memberships to be distributed to members of AMTESOL. These are basic memberships and can only be given to people who are not members of TESOL.

If you are not a member of TESOL and would like to be a member, please contact Verniece Goode, 2006 AMTESOL President, at Benz_mom@hotmail.com



Money for schools hurt by Hurricane Katrina

At our 2006 AMTESOL conference, we announced that WATESOL had collected money at their fall conference to donate to schools hurt by the hurricane. AMTESOL matched those funds and the money is ready to be distributed! AMTESOL has received letters from interested schools. The grant recipients will be announced in the next issue.



AMTESOL Announces "Best of Conference"

Each year, conference attendees cast their votes to recognize the best presenters at our winter conference. We congratulate **Dane Anderson**, **Janice Cate** and **Anne Matheny**, and **Charlotte Tabereaux** for being voted this year's best presenters! Best of Conference presenters receive a stipend to give their presentations at a regional or national conference. Read some of their award-winning presentations inside.

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DATES TO REMEMBER

SETESOL Regional Conference

wolves.dsc.k12.ar.us/arktesol/arktesol.htm

Nov. 29 - Dec. 2, 2006

Little Rock, Arkansas

AMTESOL Conference

www.antesol.org

January 2007

Mobile, Alabama

TESOL Annual Convention

www.tesol.org

March 20-24, 2007

Seattle, Washington

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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 at the address on this page if you would like to contribute an article or have news of interest that you would like included. Please send material by e-mail 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.

Advertising Rates

Newsletter Ads

Full page - \$100.00
Half Page - \$50.00
Business Card - \$25.00

THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

I want to thank everyone who participated in AMTESOL's 2006 annual conference in Jackson, Mississippi this past January. It was a delight to see "old" friends and to meet new people. This meeting is always a valuable opportunity to share experiences and ideas with colleagues from the ESL field. Our presentations were most informative, and the displays were excellent! I am especially appreciative of the time and efforts given by **Marlynn Martin** who worked with the presenters and **Sherry McWhorter** who secured the vendors. **Julia Austin**, our treasurer, deserves the "most valuable player" award for all the time she spent helping in registration and answering numerous questions!

I was amazed by the number of people who told me they accidentally heard about the conference and were not familiar with the AMTESOL organization. I want to encourage our members to promote membership in AMTESOL and attendance at conferences by sharing information with coworkers and other ESL professionals. Please occasionally visit our website at www.amesol.org, and give the address to others who may be interested. **Lifei Ji** does a great job maintaining and updating the website with information on membership, conferences, and other issues.

One of our hardest working members is our newsletter editor, **Carol Behel**. The *AMTESOL NEWS* is a membership benefit and a wonderful source of information about student/teacher concerns, educational materials, and professional growth. Our newsletter is one of which we can be proud. Carol, we can never thank you enough for all your time and energy.

As you are no doubt aware, currently there is much public discussion about immigration as well as congressional debate concerning recently introduced bills. Because these are complex issues with no easy answers, please educate yourself on the various bills that have been introduced and make your opinions known to your congressmen. Many of us work with the people at whom these bills are targeted. I see it as our responsibility to inform ourselves and make our voices heard.

Verniece M. Goode

2006 AMTESOL President

NEWS FROM ALABAMA

By Heidi Goertzen

★ WIDA ELP Standards Regional Training Dates

July 24, 2006
Reid State Technical College
Wiley Salter Auditorium
Evergreen, AL

July 25, 2006
Athens State University
McCandless Auditorium
Athens, AL

July 26, 2006
Hillcrest High School Auditorium
Tuscaloosa County Schools
Tuscaloosa, AL

★ 2006 MEGA Conference

July 10-14
Riverview Plaza Hotel/Mobile Convention Center

ELL Sessions include
Helping Parents Support Their Children's Learning
Cristina Sanchez-Lopez
Illinois Resource Center

Effective Vocabulary Instruction for All
Maria Elena Arguelles
University of Miami

NEWS FROM MISSISSIPPI

Check out the website
<http://www.mde.ms.us/acad/osa/specpop.html>
for the latest questions and answers regarding
ELL Students, services, testing, and the law.

★ TEST-WISE

Since August 2005 all new ELL enrollees in Alabama schools have been screened for English proficiency with the WIDA-ACCESS Placement Test (W-APT), a screening instrument designed by the [WIDA Consortium](#).

During the entire month of March 2006, K-12 ELLs were administered the ACCESS for ELLs™ state English Language Proficiency test to measure the students' academic language proficiency. The W-APT and the ACCESS for ELLs have replaced the Idea Proficiency Test (IPT) and Language Assessment Survey (LAS).

★ PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

WIDA English Language Proficiency Standards
The Alabama State Department of Education will provide follow-up training this summer on implementing the WIDA English Language Proficiency (ELP) Standards which are aligned with the ACCESS for ELLs™ state English language proficiency test as well as the Alabama Course of Study Standards. A consultant from the WIDA Consortium will present regional workshops using the train-the-trainer approach. District level ELL Coordinators will select 4 participants from their school systems to attend the training, as space is limited.

★ TITLE III PROJECT

Comprehensive Needs Assessment The State Title III Program is conducting a Comprehensive Needs Assessment (CNA) project which will determine its program initiatives and systematic professional development plans. The University of Alabama at Birmingham College of Education and ESCORT, formerly the Eastern Stream Center on Resources and Training, located at the State University of New York at Oneonta, will collaborate with the state ELL Advisory Committee on the Comprehensive Needs Assessment and assist with the development and application of training modules.

Getting to Know You: PROGRAMS IN AND AROUND AMTESOL



NORTHWEST SHOALS COMMUNITY COLLEGE

By Brannon Lentz

English as a Second Language instruction has been a part of the NW-SCC **Adult Education Program** since the 1970s. What began as one class in the Shoals area has grown to include day and evening classes in three counties of our five-county service area. Since the 1970s we have served approximately 2000 adults who needed to learn to speak, write, and understand English.

Currently, our program offers ESL instruction in Florence at the Burrell-Slater Community Education Center and through the EvenStart program at Handy School. In Muscle Shoals, services are offered on the campus of Northwest-Shoals Community College. Three classes are offered for Franklin County residents at Russellville High School, Old Reedtown School, and GoldKist, Incorporated. All of our services are free to participants.

With the large growth of Spanish-speaking families who have moved into the Shoals area, especially in Franklin County, we are working to expand our ESL services to more communities in our service area. We offer a Children's Learning Center at two of our Russellville sites, where parents can leave their children while mom and dad attend ESL classes. The children receive English instruction, as well as homework help if they are of school age.

Interested non-English speaking adults may contact our office for additional information on class locations, days, and times. Our office number is (256) 331-5438 or toll-free at (800) 645-8967, ext. 5440.



By Leah Thayer



Using Rhymes, Stories, and Songs in the ESL Classroom

By Joy L.M. Brown, Ph.D.

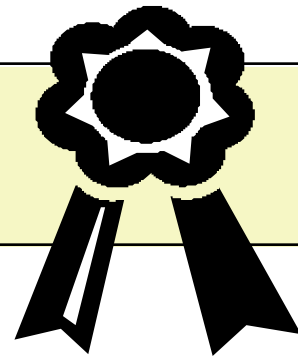
The ESL program, offered through the Adult Education Department at Calhoun Community College, is a free program that teaches English to non-native speakers. The Huntsville campus offers ESL at three levels: beginning, intermediate, and advanced. However, the program also has satellites throughout Madison, Morgan, and Limestone counties that offer multi-level classes. Each of these classes covers all five foreign language components: reading, writing, speaking, listening, and civics/culture.

The largest site, the Huntsville campus, has centralized testing/orientation. New students may sign up for the monthly testing/orientation at any time during the month. During orientation, students fill out their registration form, sign their attendance contract, and complete their initial testing. Before they leave, students are placed in a level-appropriate ESL class that meets either in the morning or evening. While students are in their regular class, they can also take some of the elective classes. These classes are designed to

Continued on page 14

Brannon Lentz has been involved in Alabama's Adult Education Program since 1997. Brannon was named the Shoals Area Adult Education Teacher of the Year in 2000 and Alabama's Adult Education Teacher of the Year in 2002. Brannon has bachelor and masters degrees from the University of North Alabama, as well as Adult Education special certification from Auburn University. Brannon taught middle school and high school Language Arts for nine years, as well as one year in the Intensive English Program at the University of North Alabama. Brannon is married to the former Teresa Cornatzer and they have one child, Caroline.

BEST OF CONFERENCE



Vocabulary Acquisition in the ESOL Classroom

By Dane Anderson
Best of Conference Winner

After 11 years of teaching K-12 and after 4 ½ years of being a coordinator, I decided to not only uproot my life in Georgia, but to also change professions. It was important to me that when entering the publishing world, that I become a part of an organization that was academically oriented, had materials that I had actually used in the classroom and saw success with, and that the teachers and students were the number one priority.

I felt lucky when I found a job as an ESOL Specialist for Oxford University Press. Oxford University Press is a non-profit, academic, university press whose mission is to provide training and scholarship for teachers in addition to providing classrooms with the highest quality materials.

Teaching is still my passion, and that is why I truly enjoy what I do with Oxford University Press. I get to continue to work with teachers and demonstrate knowledge that I have obtained both through teaching and through meeting and speaking with incredible, knowledgeable authors.

My presentation at AMTESOL came directly from three sources:

1. Jayme Adelson-Goldstein, the author of the [Oxford Picture Dictionary](#).
2. The wonderful resource books for the [Oxford Picture Dictionary](#) and the [Oxford Picture Dictionary for the Content Areas](#).
3. My own teaching experience.

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Literature Study Works!

By Janice Cate and Anne Matheny



Janice and Anne enjoyed attending and presenting at the TESOL Convention in Tampa. They reported having a great session and receiving many compliments on it. In Jackson, their presentation was called “Literature Study Works,” but in Tampa, they called it “Book Clubs for Middle Schoolers”.

They are already working on their proposal for next year! Do you have a great idea to share?

Janice encourages you to “Get your ideas together, share them with AMTESOL, and then try for big TESOL. Your district will be proud to have some of their staff presenting at an international conference.”

We are proud of Anne and Janice! They represented their school district, their state, and AMTESOL very well!

For a summary of their winning presentation, turn to **page 8**. **Page 9** has an article about their experiences at the TESOL Convention.

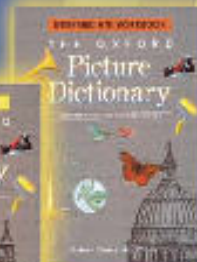
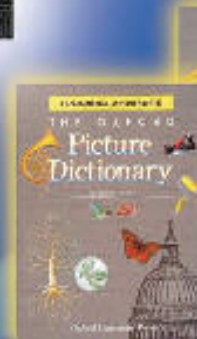
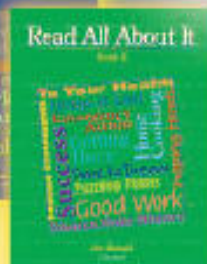
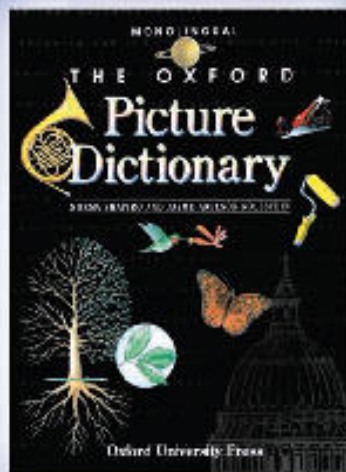
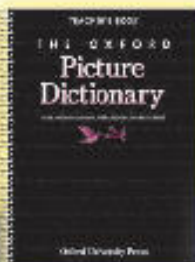
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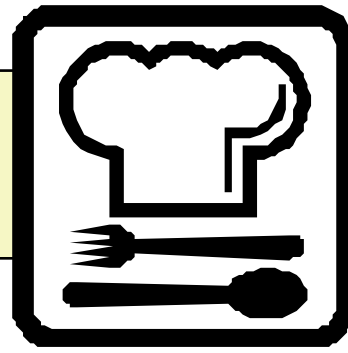


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OUR SUMMER READING RECIPE



By Anne Matheny
Best of Conference Winner

How could we “spice” up our ESL summer school program and get the students really excited and involved in their required reading? That was the question before us as we tried to create a new recipe for reading for our students. We knew that we did not want to continue the tired tradition of: read the book answer the question type of scenario. Thus, we decided to cook up a batch of reading lessons that would engage our students into discussing their books, developing their higher order thinking skills, and expanding their comprehension while at the same time making sure that the students completed their required summer reading.

THE INGREDIENTS

We had our students, those entering 1st to 8th grades, for four weeks, five hours a day. These intermediate to advance ELLs were split into two groups: 3-5; and 6-8. Our district had a required summer reading list for all students to complete. We were allowed to modify that list to best meet the needs of our ELLs, but we maintained the standard that each student read three books. Our district was going to assess the students on the required readings. Students were required to write one book report, and the assessments of the other two books could be their choice of an Accelerated Reader Test, teacher-made test, or other project of their choosing.

DIRECTIONS:

We used the first book as a teacher-directed think-aloud model. The third-fifth graders read *Because of Winn Dixie* while the sixth and seventh graders read *Esperanza Rising*. Each day the teacher would read a portion of the book out loud and conduct a Think-Aloud, modeling the comprehension strategies that we used (for example: predicting, visualizing, inferring, connecting, etc.). We would also summarize each day's readings by completing graphic organizers (example: describing character traits), constructing story maps (who, did what, when, where, and why) or doing a shared writing.

For the second assigned reading, we needed to mix in more student involvement during the read/think-alouds. Thus, we continued to model our reading

strategies, but we gradually released the think-alouds and discussions over to the students. We continued to add similar post-reading activities for the students to complete independently or with a small group. We continued to blend the think-alouds, discussions, and activities, and the students were becoming more involved during the reading process. By the time we were ready to read the third book, most of the students were prepared to be chefs in their reading kitchen. The third-fifth grade group would read independently and then join together for a group discussion. From our discussions we would complete our journals, and we worked together to create our book report that we typed on the computer. The sixth and eighth grade students' main entrée was much more complex. They were required to write a five paragraph book report:

- Paragraph 1: Introduce the book, give title/ author; tell if you think it is historical or realistic fiction;
- Paragraph 2: Tell where the story takes place-give details;
- Paragraph 3: What is the story about? Give a description of the main character.
- Paragraph 4: Tell what happened in the story. Tell about the climax, conclusion, theme;
- Paragraph 5: Evaluate the book. Tell why you liked the book or why you didn't like the book.)

The students would work independently each day writing one of the paragraphs, and the teacher would check their work upon completion. The students would then rewrite their corrected paragraphs to be handed in to their reading teacher on the first day of school.

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THE RESULTS

We felt that the students made significant gains during the summer school experience. By cooking up lessons that enabled the teachers to model comprehension strategies, mix in group discussions, and blend with quality post-reading activities, the students were able to see first-hand what good readers do. Then they were able to gradually transfer this knowledge and experience to their independent reading.

Bon appetit!

Anne Matheny is a graduate of LSU, a National Board Certified Teacher, and teaches 3rd grade.



TESOL 2006

By Janice Cate

Best of Conference Winner

TESOL 2006 in Tampa was informative, renewing, and affirming. Tuesday evening I attended the Elementary Education Interest Section Steering Board meeting. I was glad to see friends I had been emailing and had last seen in San Antonio. We had a long list of items to address plus catching up on what everyone had been doing since last year.

If you are a TESOL member you have had a chance to join an interest section. There are twenty listed on the membership application. The interest sections are given the task of reading proposals for the convention, suggesting special speakers, and organizing sessions that intersect two or more interest sections. Since I am teaching mostly elementary students, I joined the Elementary Education Interest Section. I would like to tell you about some of our activities at the convention.

Every year the interest sections are given space to set up an information booth. The elementary group always has an attractive booth decorated with student art work. At the booth convention goers can pick up a free copy of the EEIS guidebook to elementary sessions that lists day, time, place, and presenters. This is compiled from the TESOL convention book and although it duplicates the information in the convention book, it is much easier to use. Another feature of the EEIS booth is the button project. Elementary students draw pictures of their favorite books and teachers make buttons from the artwork. Conferees choose buttons and write postcards to the young artists. This year I took some for my students. We have had fun writing to our 'button pals'.

Last year the EEIS had a writing/art project called stories from home. The interest section got a

special grant to cover the cost of printing the book and gave copies away at the booth. There was so much interest in the book that it is now available online. Download a copy for your students to read. It may inspire them to write their stories.

Another feature of the EEIS and probably other interest sections, is the list serve. EEIS has over a thousand members but less than 150 take advantage of the e-list. I have found this group very helpful when I have a problem student or question about any ESOL related topic. Discussion varies from what are some good videos for learning English to what to do about grading for ELLs. If you are an EEIS member, you can join by sending a blank email message to: join-eeis-l@lyris.tesol.org.

Interest sections choose the proposals for next year's conference. If you are interested in being a proposal reader, contact your interest section president. At our meeting we were told that the process of deciding how many sessions each interest section can offer is going to change. In the past the number depended on how many proposals were sent to the interest section. This next year the number will be determined by the size of the interest section and the number of convention attendees the interest section had.

EEIS is one of the top four in size but for the last several years the attendance has been low. We will see how that affects the sessions for TESOL in Seattle.

Janice Cate is a graduate of MSU, a National Board Certified Teacher, and teaches K-5 ESL.



Spotlight on New Board Member

Heidi Goertzen is an ELL Education Specialist at the Alabama Department of Education. She taught content-based ESL for nine years using the sheltered instruction approach in Texas, Indiana and Alabama in grades PK-8. Ms. Goertzen earned her PK-12 ESL certification in Texas where she served on the ESL and Bilingual Education Textbook Advisory Committee. Heidi has a Master's degree in Language Education from Indiana University where she was a Project Specialist/Teacher Trainer for the Interdisciplinary Collaborative Program. An avid TESOLer, Heidi also served on the 2003 Indiana TESOL board. Ms. Goertzen lives in Auburn with her husband, dog and two cats.

Promoting ESL Parent Involvement



Colbert County Schools Organize "Family Fiesta" By Peggy McCloy

"Family Literacy" was the theme of an evening event organized for ESL students and their parents by the Colbert County Schools in Northwest Alabama.

The purpose of the program was to encourage parents to become active role models for their children by supporting reading in the home and by continuing their own education in community adult education programs. About half of the district's ESL families attended.

The evening included a catered dinner provided by the Alabama National Guard. Information about community resources was available at exhibits set up in the banquet room. These included information on adult ESL programs and medical resources for ESL families.

Students from the Spanish classes at the high schools served as hosts and treated the younger ESL students to games and activities after dinner. According to the children, the entertainment and the food made the evening truly memorable.

While the children were playing, the parents heard presentations in Spanish on community resources and family literacy. An instructor in the

adult education ESL program at Northwest-Shoals Community College outlined the enormous advantages to the family of parents who were actively involved in their children's education and who committed themselves to learning English. The district ESL teacher discussed the role of parents as their children's most important teachers and gave a mini-lesson on how parents can create an environment that promotes language facility and cultural literacy.

Turnout was key to the success of the "Fiesta." Representatives from the school board, administration, and faculty attended. Colorful, bilingual invitations were mailed to each household and every student was given an invitation and encouraged to bring the family. Every family was also contacted personally or by telephone.

As part of the emphasis on literacy and learning English, every student in attendance was given an electronic translator for school and home use. Teachers report that the ESL students are using these regularly in class, where they were seldom using their dictionaries.

The positive response to the "Fiesta" by the district's ESL community has encouraged the Colbert County Schools to plan similar events as a regular part of its Federal Programs comprehensive parent involvement program.

Peggy McCloy is the K-12 ESL teacher for the Colbert County Schools. She has taught ESL at the American International School, University, and Volkshochschule in Duesseldorf, Germany, as well as English, German, and remediation for the AHSGE.

Classroom Tips



Using Rhymes, Stories, and Songs in the ESL Classroom

By Joy L.M. Brown, Ph.D.

Many of the traditional songs, stories, and nursery rhymes that people learn as children are ingrained in our culture. The mind of a child absorbs them at home, at school and from television. Teenage and adult English as a Second Language (ESL) students may lack the native speaker's familiarity with the English songs, rhymes, and stories. They are at a disadvantage when participating in conversations or watching movies if they lack the knowledge of cultural elements native speakers of English may take for granted. Use of traditional songs, stories and nursery rhymes in the ESL classroom can create an excellent learning experience for the ESL student. In addition to their cultural value, traditional songs, stories, and nursery rhymes may help with pronunciation practice, and literary skills.

Since English is a complicated language with exceptions to almost every rule of grammar, ESL students face a multitude of problems. Idioms, slang, and cultural items make learning English even more complicated. In ESL classrooms, songs, stories, and nursery rhymes are not always part of cultural studies. In movies and in conversations, there are references to songs, stories, and rhymes that English speakers learned as children. The movie, Star Trek V, for example, focuses on the song "Row, Row, Row Your Boat". When Spock, Doctor McCoy, and Captain Kirk go camping, they decide to engage in a traditional sing-a-long. After reciting the lyrics to Spock, they begin to sing in a round. Spock does not sing at his appointed time because he is busy thinking about the meaning of the lyrics. Spock does not understand the meaning of the song because he tries to take the words as literal facts. He later tells Captain Kirk "Life is not a dream." A non-native speaker of English may not have exposure to the song or understand that it is just a fun, nonsense song. Spock is very well educated and speaks English very well, but the idea of a song that is not completely factual is in content foreign to him. Later in the movie, when Spock claims to be well-versed in the classics, Doctor McCoy reminds Spock that he did not know "Row, Row, Row Your Boat."

Some ESL instructors fear they will insult their adult learners by using children's stories, songs, or nursery rhymes, but ESL students may feel separated from the mainstream because they have not learned about this part of the English speaking culture. If presented properly, ESL students will take the children's songs and nursery rhymes as an important learning experience. One of my colleagues - who speaks English as her second language and teaches ESL - once spoke of how she did not know many of the children's rhymes or songs and was upset that she could not expose her children to this cultural information. She felt that her children were missing something important.

Nursery rhymes and songs may be used in pronunciation practice. Sing "Mary Had a Little Lamb", for example, to practice the "L" sound or "Row, Row, Row Your Boat" to practice the "R" sound. The rhymes can also help a student compare how the words may not look the same but are still homophonic.

"Twinkle, Twinkle Little **Star**,
How I Wonder What You **Are**.
Up Above the World So High,
Like a Diamond in the **Sky**"

shows how 'star' and 'are' rhyme and how 'high' and 'sky' rhyme but the words do not look the same. Songs and rhymes can also build vocabulary while using a form of TPR (Total Physical Response). "The Hokey Pokey" and "Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes", for example, teach the vocabulary for body parts.

The repetitive nature of most children's songs and rhymes help students learn vocabulary and the rhythm of the language. "Old MacDonald had a Farm" is an example of a song that repeats itself. The type of animal and the sound each animal makes changes but the rest of the lyrics remain the same. Anyone learning the song should be able to memorize the lyrics very quickly. To make a lesson more challenging, a copy of the song or rhyme with words missing can be given to the students. The song can be played and the students can fill in the missing words.

Continued on Page 13

Reflections



“I Know How You Feel”

By Crystal Maness

When my students express frustration at forgetting simple grammar or vocabulary, I have always tried to soothe them by saying, “I know how you feel.” After all, my major was Spanish. I spent months in Mexico and Spain. I remember the frustration of wanting to communicate clearly how I felt or what I knew and not being able to. But that was over four years ago.

How long has it been since you studied a foreign language? That is if you ever have. In preparation for being ESL teachers, we take classes, such as cross-cultural communication. We believe that understanding a student’s culture will make us better teachers. I’m sure it does, but what about understanding the frustrating process of language learning.

I recently took Second Language Acquisition. One of the requirements of the course was to study a foreign language and keep a reflective journal of the process. I chose to study Turkish because a large part of my school’s student body is made up of Turkish students. It was a language that I had never considered learning before I met these students, but the little I knew about it had stirred my interest. I also found the political history and culture of Turkey interesting.

I began by purchasing several different books and programs and recruiting a native speaker to tutor me. I dutifully made vocabulary flashcards and listened to the dialogues again and again. I met with my tutor once a week for an hour. I would read the dialogue or a short role-play that I had written, and he would try to correct my mistakes. I could not hear all of the vowel sounds which meant that I could not correctly pronounce or write many words. I forgot vocabulary that I had studied again and again. I was confused when I tried to create my own sentences only to be told, “No, you can’t say it like that.” Learning language seemed like an exercise in frustration.

There were, of course, exciting moments when I would unexpectedly say or understand something in a large group of Turkish students, but it is amazing how easy it is to forget the accomplishments in the face of so many failures. The more you learn about a language, the more you realize that you do not know.

Now that I have studied another language do I really know how my students feel? Of course not! I have never had quite as much at stake as my students do, such as passing the TOEFL or graduation exams, but studying language again has given me a fresh understanding of the need for compassion and encouragement.

It has shown me the importance of helping students focus on their accomplishments because they, like me, too easily see only their failures. Most importantly, I have stopped saying, “I know how you feel” because I have realized that I do not.

Crystal Maness has been teaching ESL for four years. She currently teaches in the Center for English Language Learning at the University of North Alabama and is completing the final semester of her Master of Arts in Education and TESOL certificate program at the University of Alabama, Huntsville.



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This helps with listening comprehension, writing, reading and spelling. The words the instructor chooses to leave off the page may change depending on the lesson. If adjectives is the topic of a lesson, the adjectives may be left out of the song or rhyme so a student can be filled in when it is played for the class. The difficulty of the lesson can be changed by the type of song or rhyme chosen and which words are omitted.

By using music in the ESL classroom, students practice their listening skills and increase their cultural knowledge. Almost any song can be used in the ESL classroom. Popular music can be employed in the same way as children's rhymes. The pronunciation and rhythm lessons are the same as for the children's songs and the lessons may help students become more interested in different types of music. Some ESL students shy away from the traditional and popular music of a culture because it is difficult (often, even for the native speaker) for them to understand the words. Practicing lyric reading, studying the vocabulary, and listening to various songs can help students become more familiar with popular music and make them more confident in their ability to listen and understand the world around them. Traditional songs can also be used in grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation exercises. They can also be used to start cultural lessons about particular historical events or traditions in an area of the world. The song, "Rocky Top", for example, is a song about the Appalachian Mountains and the culture of that region. The song is very popular in Tennessee and was adopted as one of their five state songs according to Tennessee.gov: The Official Web Site of the State of Tennessee. "Rocky Top" can be used to start a lesson on the different cultures found within the United States and their historical aspects. It may also open the door to vocabulary words such as "Ain't".

The lessons on songs or rhymes are easy to create. Lyrics can be found for on the Internet and sometimes on CD covers. Educational authors have seen the demand for rhyme-type lessons to build pronunciation and vocabulary skills and have published several books on the subject. Carolyn Graham, for example, the creator of the book, Jazz Chants, focuses on these basic skills. She has created several books with supplemental audio tapes including a nursery rhyme edition.

Tongue twisters, which can sometimes fall into the category of rhymes, make great pronunciation exercises. If a student is having trouble pronouncing a specific sound, the sound can be isolated with a tongue twister and practiced. "She sells seashells by the seashore" is a good example of a tongue twister to practice the "s" sound. Many of the rhyming words in a tongue twister show how some words can sound the same but be spelled very differently. "Which witch wished which wish?" shows students that which and witch have similar pronunciations but are very different in meaning. Therefore, it becomes necessary for the pupil to use context clues to decide which witch is which. When the regular lesson is complete but there is still some time left at the end of class, tongue twisters can be a fun activity. They are also good for vocabulary lessons. "Peter Piper Picked a Peck of Pickled Peppers", for example, may prompt the reader to ask, 'What is a peck?' The answer is two gallons, but new cultural information would not have been revealed if the tongue twister had not been used.

Watching the movie Shrek requires some background knowledge of traditional European fairy tales to understand all the jokes. While a non-native speaker of English might still enjoy the movie, it makes references to dozens of fairy tales including Cinderella, Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs, Sleeping Beauty, The Three Little Pigs, The Gingerbread Man, Pinocchio, Goldilocks and the Three Bears, and Robin Hood. Several other movies also make reference to Cinderella or other fairy tales. Popular music also has been influenced by fairy tales - Sam The Sham's "Lil Red Riding Hood", John Michael Montgomery's "I Can Love You Like That", and Garth Brooks' "It's Midnight Cinderella" all have themes reflecting popular fairy tales.

Fairy tales and children's stories can create good introductions into more difficult reading and writing lessons. Rewriting the endings, reading aloud and acting out scenes from the stories are all good language skill builders. Some children's stories have alternate versions based on the original story which tell the story from a different point of view. The True Story of the Three Little Pigs, for example, is the story of The Three Little Pigs as told from the perspective of the Big Bad Wolf. The story portrays the wolf telling his side of the story, claiming himself as an innocent who just wanted a cup of sugar for his dear old granny's birthday cake. This story can be used to help students understand point of view, and they can practice their writing skills by choosing other children's stories to rewrite from a different perspective. Students can also bring in fairy tales or other stories from their own culture to share with the class. The stories shared by the ESL students may be similar to fairy tales found in the United States or may be very different. The story of Cinderella may be interpreted in many different parts of the world including Egypt, China, Vietnam, and Korea but each version is different relative to the culture of the country in which it originated.

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supplement what is being covered in the regular classes. Examples of elective classes include Reading Club, Writing Lab, Conversation, Civics, Business Communications, TOEFL Preparation, etc.

Once students have finished their ESL classes, they may take advantage of a Transition Class and/or The Bridge Program. The Transition Class prepares ESL students for the material they will face in a traditional GED class, and The Bridge Program helps students “bridge” the gap into college and/or the workforce. With respect to faculty, Calhoun boasts an exceptional team of teachers, each with a unique background. Many are bilingual; some are even from foreign countries. Whether a student gets a native or non-native speaker as an instructor, he or she is sure to be involved in an engaging class full of fun learning opportunities. Calhoun ESL teachers stay connected and inspired through optional professional development opportunities.

So, where is the Calhoun ESL program headed? Continuing to streamline the program through curriculum improvements is always a top priority. In addition to providing stability and consistency, this will allow Calhoun to better serve its current students as well as future students.

The Adult Education Department of Calhoun Community College is directed by Ms. Christina Miller. For more information on programs offered through Calhoun, please contact our office at (256) 890-4729 (Huntsville Campus) or (256) 306-2830 (Decatur Campus). You may also email Leah Thayer at leahrthayer@yahoo.com.

Leah Thayer is originally from Winchester, Tennessee. She came to Huntsville to finish her undergraduate degree in Spanish and education at UAH, where she also completed some graduate work in TESOL. She has been teaching ESL with the same program for five years and is currently working on her MA in adult education at Pennsylvania State University. Most recently, Leah attended the International TESOL conference in Tampa, Florida. In her spare time, Leah enjoys playing various musical instruments and riding her motorcycle.

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Vocabulary is one of my favorite areas to teach because there are so many ways to make learning vocabulary fun and interesting. Did you know that it takes a person learning another language approximately 57 times of “touching” the word before they use it as their own in everyday conversation? How can you make those 57 times interesting? It is important to take the students through the five stages of vocabulary acquisition so that the student “touches” the vocabulary in many different ways. During my presentation, I demonstrated a multitude of fun and engaging activities that effectively teach vocabulary to students and take the students through the five stages of vocabulary acquisition.

The five stages of vocabulary acquisition are:

1. Get It (classroom comprehension)
2. Remember It (retention)
 - Recognize It (recognition out of the original context)
4. Use It (production in speaking and writing)
5. Own It (use of higher-level thinking skills)

The teachers also received a sample lesson plan that takes the student through all of these stages.

*If you would like more information about my presentation or about the materials that Oxford University Press publishes, please do not hesitate to contact **Dane Anderson**, at toll free **888-380-5661**.*

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Fairy tales, nursery rhymes, and songs are not just for children. They belong to the whole culture and are an integral part of society. Using them to teach ESL students can be fun and educational for everyone involved. Vocabulary, intonation patterns, sentence structure, and many other things can be taught in addition to giving ESL students another way to understand the new culture in which they live. From preschool to adult education, fairy tales, nursery rhymes, and songs are an asset to any ESL classroom.

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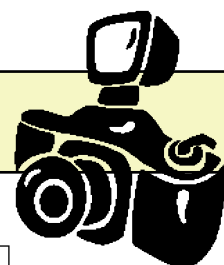
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