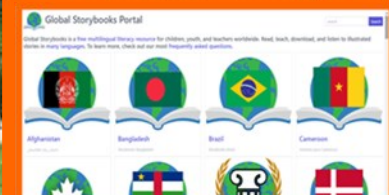


The Definite Article

WATESOL Newsletter

Fall 2022



Fall Conference Saturday, October 29, 2022
Pryzbyla Center at Catholic University

Featured in this Issue:

- Conference Information
- Interview with Dr. Bonnie Norton
- Culturally Responsive Teaching in International Online Settings:
Case Studies
- English Speaking Nation: Uzbekistan
- A Letter to English-Learning Seniors Going to College: Vocabulary, Rumors,
Resources, Next Steps

WATESOL NEWS

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ON THE COVER

Pryzbyla Center [List of Catholic University of America buildings - Wikipedia](#)

Photo courtesy of Dr. Bonny Norton

African Storybook screenshot [African Storybook](#)

Global Storybook screenshot [Global Storybooks Portal | Literacy for all](#)

Storybook DC screenshot [Storybooks D.C. - English \(global-asp.github.io\)](#)

Photo WATESOL Fall Conference swag by
Greer Mancuso

From the editors:

Dear WATESOL Members,

Despite the many challenges thrown at us over the last two-and-a-half years, we continue to teach English! Much of this issue focuses on WATESOL's Fall 2022 conference at the Przybyla Center on October 29, and we are looking forward to seeing all of you in person again.

The theme of the conference is "Stronger Together: Adapting to an Era of Change," and you will see this theme reflected in the more than 20 presentations at the conference. Additionally, Dr. Bonnie Norton, our keynote speaker and a distinguished university professor at the University of British Columbia, will expand on this topic in "Identity, Investment, and Storybooks" and tell us about her work on the *African Storybook* and *Storybooks DC*.

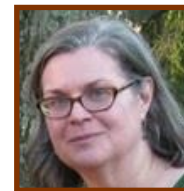
At the conference, the detailed program will be digitally available through a QR code posted throughout the site. Be sure to download a QR code reading app before the conference! Try the QR code below with the preliminary schedule and program:



Before we meet at the conference, this newsletter will give you details about the conference, an interview with Dr. Norton, and articles from WATESOL members and beyond!

Very best wishes,

Marina Dewees and Katheen F. Kearney
Co-editors



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

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

Letter from the President

Dear WATESOL Members,

It's time for our major professional development event of the year: WATESOL's annual conference. We are excited to return to an in-person conference and have an opportunity to network and greet our WATESOL community face-to-face with warm smiles—rather than from behind a computer screen. I would like to thank our WATESOL board members who have worked tirelessly during the past few months to support this shift back to an in-person fall 2022 conference. **The conference details are listed below.**



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

WATESOL is currently working on the following items:

Grants

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

Membership Survey

The WATESOL Board recently sent out a survey to obtain feedback on how we can best serve our membership in upcoming years. If you have not yet completed the membership survey, there is still time. Please click here: [membership survey](#).

Spring Webinar Series

WATESOL will continue to offer a spring webinar series in 2023. There are many opportunities to join webinars on a range of TESOL topics. Please check the WATESOL website and our social media platforms for additional information. This series is free and open to all; webinars will be recorded, and these recordings can also be found on [WATESOL's YouTube channel](#).

Fall Conference Presentation Recordings on YouTube

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

Book Discussion Series

The WATESOL Higher Ed SIG hosted a series of book discussion meetings during the summer. The book was *Speak Not: Empire, Identity and the Politics of Language* by James Griffiths.

Social Media

Please check out WATESOL on our social media platforms.



These opportunities to engage the WATESOL community are reflective of the board's commitment to continually meet the evolving professional development needs of its members. In the year ahead, we'll continue our efforts to identify new and creative ways to support our caring community of TESOL practitioners. It has been an honor to serve the WATESOL community during such a pivotal year. I look forward to staying involved with this inspiring organization in my new role as Past President!

Greer Mancuso
WATESOL 2021–2022 President

WATESOL Fall Conference

The WATESOL Fall 2022 Conference is coming up on Saturday, October 29, and it will be in-person for the first time since 2019!

WATESOL Board selected the theme “*Stronger Together: Adapting to an Era of Change*” in response to the many ways our lives, the TESOL field, and the world have changed over the past three years. Over that time, we have transitioned between in-person and online teaching, engaged with issues of racism and inequity, and served the needs of immigrants, refugees, and international students. Community, collaboration, and advocacy have been essential to our success in this era of change, and the conference will offer an opportunity to engage with those important themes.

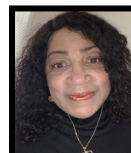
A highlight of this conference is welcoming Bonny Norton as our Keynote Speaker. Dr. Norton is a Professor and Distinguished University Scholar at the University of British Columbia. Her research and scholarship introduced the influential concepts of investment, imagined identities, and imagined communities, and has offered a foundation for continued investigation of and discussion about these concepts in the language education field. Her keynote will share about her recent research on digital storytelling and will include a demonstration of Storybooks Washington D.C., one of the freely available sites in the [Global Storybooks](#) project.

We also are looking forward to the many interesting concurrent sessions, which cover topics including sustainable language teaching, inclusive class discussions, and community engagement projects. The program includes a new session type this year: technology tips! In these flexible sessions, presenters will offer a brief demonstration and discuss the use of a technological tool in a roundtable format.

We hope to see many of you on October 29th at Catholic University. The Fall 2022 Conference will offer us an opportunity to reconnect, renew, and re-emerge **stronger together!**

WATESOL Professional Development Co-Chairs

Tabitha Kidwell, Débora Amidani, and Rebecca Mercado.



The conference will be held at the Pryzbyla Center at Catholic University in Washington D.C. on Saturday, October 29, 2022, and will feature keynote speaker Bonny Norton of the University of British Columbia.

Registration fees are as follows:

Regular registration, \$80 for members and \$105 for non-members, through Tuesday, October 25

On-site registration, \$90 for membership and \$115 for non-members.

[Click here to register.](#)

Conference Day Schedule

| | |
|---------------|---|
| 8:00-9:00 | <i>Breakfast</i> |
| 9:00—9:15 | <i>Presidents Welcome</i> |
| 9:15-10:00 | <i>Keynote Speaker Dr Bonny Norton</i> |
| 10:15 - 11:00 | <i>Session 1</i> |
| 11:15—12:00 | <i>Session 2</i> |
| 12:00—1:00 | <i>Lunch</i> |
| 1:00—1:45 | <i>Flexible Interaction Session:</i> <i>Technology Tips and</i> <i>WAFESOL Special Interest Groups drop-ins</i> |
| 2:00—2:45 | <i>Session 3</i> |
| 3:00—3:45 | <i>Session 4</i> |
| 4:00 - 4:15 | <i>Closing Remarks and Raffle</i> <i>Happy Hour / Dinner</i> |

Sessions

Keynote Speech: Identity, Investment, and Storybooks Washington D.C., Bonny Norton

*** 7 Step Strategy for Pre-teaching Vocabulary**

Yeukai Chiroodza - Imeh

*** Adapting Community Engagement Projects in an Era of Change**

Sigrun Biesenbach-Lucas

*** Alphabetics Instruction for Adult ESOL Learners Beyond the Literacy Level**

Kaylin Wainwright

*** Amplifying Instruction by Engaging English Language Learners in Active Collaboration**

Adriane Geronimo

*** Beyond Zoom: How Open Broadcasting Software Can Improve Instructional Content**

Phil Rice

*** Bridging Oral Language to Academic Content with Your Multilingual Learners**

Jody Nolf, Vista Higher Learning

*** Digital Storytelling as Transformative Practice with Adult Beginner Low Literacy English Language Learners**

Polina Vinogradova, Carlye Stevens & Debora Amidani

*** Expressing Your Teacher Voice: A Framework for Exploring Professional-Identity Development**

Heather Weger

*** Get Down to the "Art" of the Matter: Utilizing Art in English Instruction**

Phil Rice

*** A Guide for Training Autonomous Student Writers**

Julie Lake & Heather Weger

*** Hot topics in ELT and Professional Growth**

EL Programs

*** How Relevant Is the Past Perfect in Modern American English?**

Heather Mehrtens & Andrew Screen

*** How to Use Storybooks Washington DC in the Classroom**

Bonny Norton

*** Inclusive Academic Class Discussions at College for ESL Students**

Krisztina Domjan

*** Language Teacher Professional Identity: Narratives from Egypt**

Sierranicole Butler

*** Socrative: A Technology Tool for Formative Assessment**

Adriane Geronimo

*** A Structured Writing Approach Ensures Academic Success**

Melissa Hauke & Rebecca Van Vranken

*** Supporting English Learners at Community Colleges Beyond ESL Classes**

Diego Hernandez

*** Teaching & Engaging English Learners with Ellii**

Lei Kayanuma, Ellii

*** Teaching English During War Time: How Is It Different?**

Yuliia Rybinska

*** TESOL Lessons for People and the Planet**

Abby Watkins

*** The World Is Your Classroom: Teach with English Language Programs**

EL Programs

*** Vidback: Using Short Video Explanations for Corrective Feedback**

Andrew Screen

*** Why Media Literacy for English Learners Matters in a Changing Modern World**

John Silver

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Interview with Keynote Speaker

Dr. Bonnie Norton

Professor and Distinguished University Scholar

The University of British Columbia



Dr. Norton's Keynote Speech is "Identity, Investment, and Storybooks." She will also lead a session "How to use Storybooks Washington DC in the Classroom."

You have lived and worked on three continents and in several countries. How has your personal experience shaped your professional interest in language identity?

When I was in my early 30's, I moved to Canada with my partner and two young children. My father in South Africa said to me, "Bonny, now you will need to decide whether you are a South African or a Canadian." This question was very unsettling to me, as I considered myself a South African, a Canadian, and a global citizen. It was only when I became familiar with poststructuralist theory, in the course of my PhD at the University of Toronto, that I realized such binaries were social constructions that essentialized identity. Poststructuralist theories of subjectivity enabled me to theorize identity as multiple, changing, and a site of struggle. This led me to theorize identity as the way a person understands her or his relationship to the world, how that relationship is structured across time and space, and how a person understands possibilities for the future.

Could you explain how the African story project is connected to equity and justice language learning?

UNESCO has found that 750 million youth and adults cannot read and write, while 250 million children worldwide are failing to acquire basic literacy skills. This is a huge equity and social justice issue, for both local and global communities. Low literacy rates are partly due to the lack of mother tongue reading materials, which is the best way for children to learn to read, and to create a foundation for learning other languages, such as English. The ground-breaking African Storybook initiative ([African Storybook](#)) developed by the South African organization, Saide, seeks to address this literacy challenge through a free digital initiative which ensures that children across the African continent have access to engaging picture storybooks in local languages, reflecting familiar cultural practices. At present, the site has over 3,400 storybooks in over 7,000 translations, available in over 220 African languages, as well as English, French, and Portuguese.

Since I have been active in the African Storybook since its inception in 2013, I have seen the potential of leveraging this project for a wider global audience, thus democratising flows of information from the Global South to other parts of the world. Working with a remarkable team at the University of British Columbia, most notably Espen Stranger-Johannessen and Liam Doherty, we launched the free digital site, Storybooks Canada ([Storybooks Canada](#)) in 2018, which has already had over 400,000 visitors worldwide. The project draws on the African Storybook to provide 40 beautifully illustrated stories for children, youth, and teachers. Users can read, teach, download, and listen to stories at 5 different levels, toggling between multiple languages, including English and other widely spoken languages such as Arabic, Bengali, Chinese, French, Hindi, Punjabi, Spanish, and Tagalog.

We then developed multiple sister sites to Storybooks Canada, which are available on the Global Storybooks project ([Global Storybooks Portal | Literacy for all](#)), which has over 50 sites worldwide. One of these sites is Storybooks Washington DC, which may be of particular interest to your readers ([Storybooks D.C. \(global-asp.github.io\)](#)). These projects promote both mother tongue and multilingual literacy, while raising important questions about the relationship between language, identity, and power.

Has your perspective on language and identity changed over the years? Have the pandemic, BLM movement, new perspectives on DEI or other recent changes in social discourse added dimensions to your views?

In recent years, there has been increasing interest in the way advances in technology are impacting language learning and teaching, and the ways in which the forces of globalization are implicated in identity construction. To accommodate these changes, I have collaborated with Ron Darvin to develop an expanded model of identity and investment. This 2015 model develops more fully the ways in which investment in language learning (developed in my earlier work) operates at the intersection of identity, capital, and ideology. By providing a multi-layered and multi-directional approach to investment, Ron and I sought to explain how power circulates in society, at both micro and macro levels, constructing modes of inclusion and exclusion through and beyond language. In our model, the construct of ideology is drawn from the work of Bourdieu, who is interested in the way symbolic power imposes arbitrary constructions of reality as “normal” and “natural”. In this view, ideology positions learners in multiple ways even before the learner speaks, inscribed by characteristics such as race, ethnicity, gender, social class, and sexual orientation. In terms of this model, learners invest in learning not only to advance their capital, but also to claim recognition for the capital they already possess. This enhanced theory resonates well with the central insights of BLM and DEI.

With regard to the pandemic, my graduate students and I have been researching the ways in which online teaching is impacting the identity of teachers. I have just published an open access article with Asma Afreen on “Bangla and the identity of the heritage language teacher”: [Bangla and the identity of the heritage language teacher \(degruyter.com\)](#) Our project has also raised interesting questions about the identity of the translator, and Asma has just published an article on this topic in the *TESOL Quarterly*.

What practical suggestions, from your research, would you give our members about teaching English learners in the classroom?

In my language teacher education classrooms at the University of British Columbia I have discussed the construct of investment with language teachers, many of whom wish to better understand the language learners in their own classrooms. The central questions I ask in my teacher education classrooms are, “What is the student’s investment in the language practices of the classroom? How can teachers ensure that they structure classroom activities in ways that foster and encourage investment?” Of central interest is the desire to build a classroom culture of mutual respect, where language learners feel comfortable speaking and taking risks.

One very practical suggestion for teachers is to learn about the particular strengths of the English language learners in their classrooms. For example, are they good musicians? Do they play soccer? Are they good artists? Then, develop classroom activities or offer suggestions for afterschool activities in which English language learners can demonstrate their talents to their peers. Once it is clear that the English language learners have a range of talents, this will increase their cultural capital in the eyes of their peers, and encourage further social interaction. For older English language learners, encourage learners to see themselves as

“ethnographers” of their new society, who observe, record, and analyse the activities of target language speakers. The identity “ethnographer” places the learner in a position of greater power with reference to target language speakers.

Teachers might also find helpful the free multilingual digital Storybooks Canada resource ([Storybooks Canada](#)) or Storybooks Washington DC ([Storybooks D.C. \(global-asp.github.io\)](#)) which can be used in both the classroom and the home. The beautifully illustrated stories are available in print, audio, and download formats. A recent article I co-wrote with Liam Doherty for teachers in the United Kingdom explains the many ways that teachers can use these tools ([norton 2020 ealjournal.pdf \(storybookscanada.ca\)](#)). We also have freely available teacher’s guide for the Storybooks Canada site: [Story-books_Canada_Teaching_Guide_ELL.pdf \(storybookscanada.ca\)](#)

What would you suggest educators absolutely do or not do while teaching?

I have given some suggestions for what teachers can do while teaching. What they should not do (based on recent research), is to strive for an “English only” classroom. Teachers should value the home languages that English language learners bring to class and use them as resources for learning English. It follows that teachers should not tell parents that children should “speak more English in the home.”

Would you say that there is a hierarchy of identities (gender, language etc.)? How may it affect language learning?

I don’t think there is a hierarchy of identities, but I do think that some identities are more salient in a given time and place.

What trends do you see in English-language learning research and teaching?

There is increasing recognition that teachers need to acknowledge and harness the existing languages and cultural knowledge of English language learners, and conceive of them as “multilingual” language learners.



Townsend Press
Learning Center

Research Study Opportunity for 6th Grade ELL Classrooms

Attention 6th grade ELA teachers looking to engage and motivate your ELL readers!

WestEd, a non-profit research and development organization is conducting research on LoomVue, a web application which transforms any webpage into a mix of Spanish and English text, allowing ELL students to read interesting and advanced content rather than oversimplified elementary-style books.

The purpose of the study is to determine student reading comprehension and vocabulary knowledge gains after using LoomVue and garner insights into teachers' impressions of the product. During the study, teachers will be asked to have their students complete 40 minutes of 'free reading' using the LoomVue tool and 30 minutes of studying vocabulary words on the LoomVue website per week, for 8 weeks. **Participating teachers will receive up to \$500** for completion of all study activities!

To participate, teachers must: a) be a 6th grade ELA teacher of Spanish-speaking ELD students, b) have approximately 10-20 Spanish-speaking EL students enrolled in your classroom, and c) have students with 1:1 access to internet connected computers or laptops.

If you are interested in participating in the study or learning more, please fill out an interest form: [LoomVue Pilot Research Study Interest Form \(airtable.com\)](#).



Kimkinyona Fox is a Research Associate in the Learning and Technology Program at WestEd. Ms. Fox has led multiple studies involving evaluation of educational technology products under the Department of Education IES SBIR awards, including Phase I & II grants, recently including a \$900,000 grant to study LoomVue Browser: Supporting Language Learning with a Dynamic Diglot Weave, a \$200,000 grant to study the STEM Collaboration Performance Assessment Prototype, a \$300,000 grant to study the Multi-modal Bilingual Platform and Formative Evaluation Dashboard for English Language Learners and a \$300,000 grant to study the Game-

WATESOL MEMBERSHIP

Is your membership current? Do you have a colleague who might not currently be a member of WATESOL or who was once active in WATESOL but no longer is? Go to watesol.org/membership-benefits to ensure that your membership is active, or refer a friend to watesol.org/join to join. Contact membership@watesol.org with questions.

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

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

Interview



Anika E. Harris is the manager of language acquisition programs at DC's Office of the State Superintendent of Education.

What is OSSE? Tell us about your work and experience there.

The Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) is the state education agency for the District of Columbia charged with raising the quality of education for all DC residents. OSSE serves as the District's liaison to the US Department of Education and works closely with the District's traditional and public charter schools. I began working at OSSE in 2016 as a program analyst, delivering professional development and technical assistance to DC educators around English language acquisition, language instruction educational policies and programming. Presently, I serve as OSSE's manager of language acquisition programs in the Division of Teaching and Learning where I oversee the District's English as a second language and dual language programs. I also manage our division's special education training and technical assistance offerings.

What drew you to the field of education?

Initially there really was no draw; rather, when I needed a job to balance my other pursuits, there were always openings in education that I could fill. Before getting my teaching degree, I had worked and taught in private schools (nursery through graduate), and in rural schools in the US and abroad; so, I worked with students from 18 months to 72 years old! When I decided to move to a new state I went for a teaching degree because I needed a job right away and the degree granting program would place me in a paid position right away. During orientation for my TESOL degree, I was overcome by a wonderful feeling that let me know I was on a forever career path. Unbeknownst to me at the time, I am one of many ESOL professionals on my father's side of the family. I quietly went to law school while teaching (and pregnant – twice!) and did not hesitate to pick up assignments advocating for students with disabilities and asylees since I knew the experience would boost my competence as an educator. That type of advocacy work is really food for the soul!

What do you love about your career?

I have a knack for the bio-sciences, but, I think most know me as a polyglot and lifelong language learner. I use my reflections on learning languages and living abroad quite often and that is highly stimulating for me. I get even more of a rush sleuthing for clues that schools are in need of assistance with meeting their legal obligations to provide special populations of students with the instruction and educational supports to which they are entitled.

What promising trends do you see in urban education and education in general?

Social justice education! I love the idea that kids can use academic content to solve real world problems. Even better when the projects relate to the world around them and/or their interests. The increased level of engagement and application of rigorous content shines through and the educator gets a window into the students' identities, which can really help with planning for more equitable experiences in the classroom.

What are some less promising trends?

Social Emotional Learning (SEL) implementation that is lacking. This response may not match the view of readers, but it is the truth I have lived with for a couple of years now. I am a mom of four who home schooled/worked from home with no other adult presence during the pandemic. My kids were aged 1 -14 at the time. Each kid suffered in one way or another, and I hear from other parents and teachers about the dire need for non-academic support for school children all the time. Yet, given so much need, it is hard to see schools that have a SEL plan that they cannot act on, usually because there are not enough trained staff to provide the support to all the students who need it. The remedy would require more trained staff who can deliver the support in a language that families can understand, and/or use techniques for linguistically/culturally diverse students, and more time.

What advice do you have for inexperienced teachers just beginning their career?

Four pieces of advice here: Find a mentor or coach if you are not already assigned one. DO ask for all the feedback, DO observe your peers, and DO NOT be overly harsh with yourself. Getting feedback on your planning, instruction delivery, grading, assessment development is not easy at all and can feel like swallowing a horse pill, but it really is the key to thriving and improving your practice. For most of us Earthlings, teaching does not come naturally. Also, seek opportunities to observe other teachers; this helps to pick up techniques like behavior management, materials usage and management, activities that you can internalize and make your own. I had all of these things in my first year of public school teaching and it was my best year, but I *still* felt apart as I drove away from the building on the last day of school.

What advice would you give to experienced teachers?

Continue with the four pieces of advice for new teachers. I have no doubt that my first year of public school teaching, as emotionally taxing as it was, was the best because I had so many feedback loops with multiple mentors, coaches, and administrators observing me and providing the criticism I needed to be better.

WATESOL would love to hear about your work with ESOL students!
If you are interested in sharing your experiences with English learners or would like to write an article, please reach out to co-editors Marina Dewees and Kathleen F. Kearney at newsletter@watesol.org



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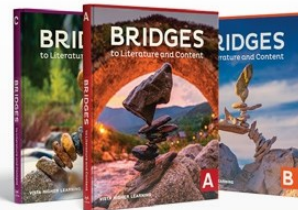
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K-12 ELD PROGRAM



Elementary



Secondary

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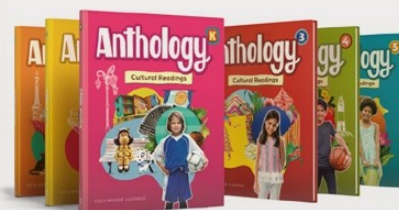
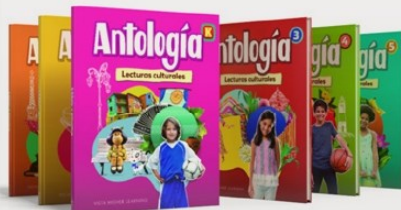
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Teaching Hack

Deepening the Discussion: Start with Online Comments

By Heather Gregg Zitlau

Student discussion of reading or listening texts often seem to lack depth. International students might be hesitant to critique a reading or listening text – or to disagree with a classmate’s opinion – as a result of deeply ingrained cultural norms, personality factors, lack of confidence in their language skills, or limited development of critical thinking skills. Using online comments to jump-start a discussion can be a great way to both model insightful responses and to provide a non-threatening prompt for students to share their honest opinions about the original text or others’ responses to it.

Not all online comments are good models (many of them are actually terrible; if, like me, you read the comments section that accompanies any online content, you realize that ad hominem attacks and other logical fallacies abound). However, if you take the time to sift through and choose three or four comments that provide different perspectives on a news article that students will read or a video that they will watch and then discuss, you’ll find that online comments can provide varied examples of the critical thinking and thoughtful, substantive input that we hope students will exhibit in class discussions. These comments can also be used as “real-world” examples for analysis (identifying a commenter’s tone, for example, or examining the strength of a commenter’s argument) – and in that case, some weak examples can be useful, too.

In a recent class, my students prepared for a visit to the Smithsonian American Art Museum by watching the short TED Talk “[Who Decides what Art Means?](#)” The TED site does not include viewer comments, but [the same talk can be found on YouTube](#) – and a selection of comments there proved useful in class discussion. I gave several responses, including the following examples, to students and asked them to talk about each one, explaining why they agreed or disagreed with the commenter.



Arun Sooknarine 3 years ago (edited)

If I painted something and I had my own intention; my own message to portray then that is what I want other people to know. Yes, I would like to hear what they think it is but I don't want them to be spreading around their beliefs as 'gospel truth' or arguing over their interpretations of the piece. I WANT MY INTENTION TO BE KNOWN BECAUSE THAT'S WHY I PAINTED IT :)



M 560 3 years ago

The truth of art lies somewhere in the middle for me. Knowing the intentions of the artist can give so much more meaning to different works of art.



REPLY



wildeflowerboy 3 years ago

The artist's intentions are equally important as the viewer's intentions, as long as neither of them assumes that their idea of the artwork's meaning is the only justifiable one. It's worth listening to opinions you don't understand or cannot relate to, so why would we even need a definitive answer for such a complex discussion?



REPLY



deedlr 3 years ago

I'm an artist myself and I like to leave my artworks open to interpretation



5



REPLY

Students can read the comments at home or in class. In addition to the suggestion above (students discussing the comments and why they agree or disagree), you could ask students to find two comments with conflicting views, or two comments that make the same argument using different supporting ideas and examples. I sometimes ask students to choose the one comment that they find most convincing, or the one with which they most strongly disagree, or one that raised a point they had not considered when reading or listening. In addition to the use of comments for class discussion, I sometimes ask students to write responses as if they were clicking “REPLY” to the original commenter; these replies can be submitted to the instructor, posted on a class discussion forum, or most authentically, posted on the site from which the comment came.

Learning goals for our students often extend beyond language development to include critical thinking and good group participation. Once students have evaluated and responded to example comments, we can remove some of the scaffolding that these comments provide and challenge students to share their own relevant, substantive thoughts – and to express agreement or disagreement with their classmates just as they did in the safer, more comfortable context of responding to people that they do not know.



Heather currently spends the bulk of her days caring for her three-year-old daughter, but she keeps her professional skills active by consulting and doing curriculum development in the Writing Lab at Georgetown University's School of Continuing Studies. She also teaches an occasional class and rates standardized English test items for TEPS and ACTFL.



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Culturally Responsive Teaching in International Online Settings: Case Studies

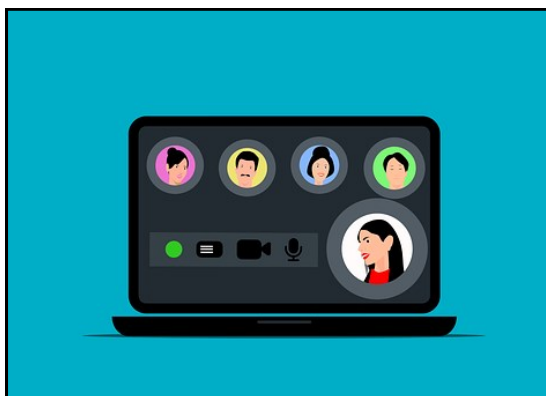
by Sherry L. Steely, Ph.D and Suzanne Matula, Ph.D.

Introduction

In March 2020, Georgetown University's English Language Center – like programs around the world – had to shift abruptly to online delivery. International, multicultural programs faced special challenges, and also created special opportunities. As we continuously reflected and adapted, learnings emerged which may be helpful going forward to expanded online delivery of international courses and programs. In case study format, this brief summary may offer concepts that will be useful to others offering educational services in similar spaces. In subsequent sections, we reflect on TEFL/TESL student teachers embarking on online student teaching with global students in lieu of an in person, classroom-based experience and, with a very different educational aim, an English training program for a group of government officials in Angola.

Transitioning these programs necessitated incorporating best practices in online instruction, and ensuring continuation of student-centered, communicative instruction to meet course and programmatic outcomes. (ACUE, 2020; Burgstahler, 2021; CNDLS, 2020; Hicks, 2020, Merisotis & Phipps, 2000). We hope that readers will consider some of these ideas for online programs and classes in their own settings, and perspectives on best practices in culturally-responsive, engaged teaching and learning in a virtual setting.

TEFL/TESL Online Student Teaching



Georgetown's TEFL Certificate Program involves 260 hours of education, including a 35-hour student teaching course offered subsequent to or during the final month of the 15-week program. During the student teaching practicum, TEFL student teachers work with their own class of volunteer students from around the Washington D.C. area who have signed up for a 10-hour free English language class with the student teachers. During the first class, student teachers conduct an introductory lesson with a needs assessment, and then plan subsequent curriculum to align with students' language needs and practical motivations for learning.

Due to pandemic restrictions, bringing community members to campus was impossible, and student teaching had to be moved online. Since TEFL students are learning to teach for the first time, the additional layer of learning how to conduct objectives-based, student-centered, communicative classes online presented an

additional challenge for students. This meant that student teaching online would require two levels of adaptation: a virtual learning environment so that student teachers could prepare, solicit feedback from peers, reflect, and develop their technology skills, and equipping them to address the linguistic, cultural, and individual needs of their language learners through technology-mediated instruction..

Under normal circumstances, “Teaching English Online” could be offered as a standalone course. Under these circumstances, however, it had to be integrated with the primary curriculum of the TEFL Certificate Program.

Designing this curriculum entailed drawing on practical experience of the instructor with best practices in online teaching, along with technology tutorials, and chunking information to parallel and extend weekly work in learning how to teach English. In brief, this meant starting with student centered online learning theory (e.g., GU CNDLS, 2020) as the class worked through second language acquisition theory, moving into how to conduct technology-mediated speaking, listening, reading, and writing materials, and development of numerous technology tutorials to keep the approaches manageable and simple. In the name of simplicity, the online practicum relied on Zoom as the conferencing platform, with extensive use of Google apps to ensure student-centered activity through surveys, jamboards, shared documents, copies of discussion questions, etc.

Students learned to use shared screens and documents for collaborative writing, annotation of structured group work documents, balancing small and whole group interactions, and assessment through efficient prior set up for documents in automatic copy format.

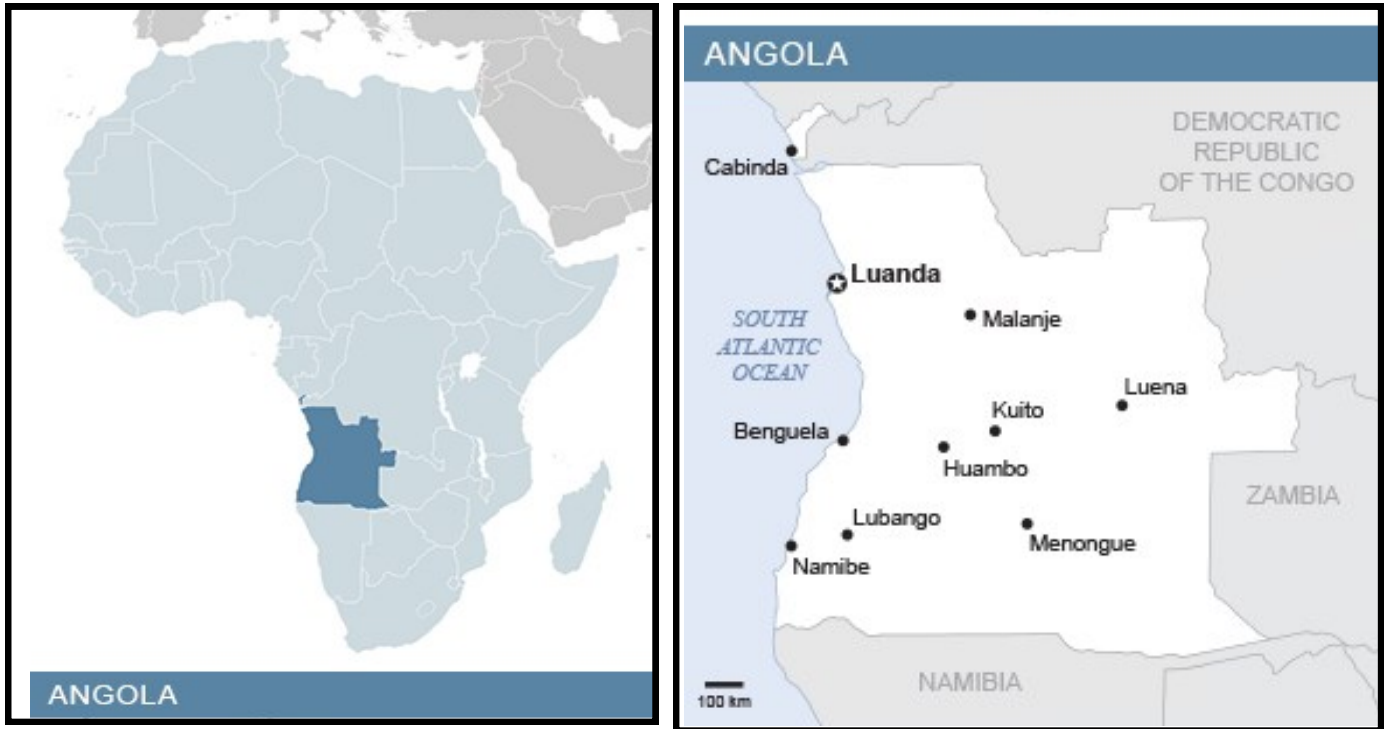
The cultural and geographic diversity of the volunteer students was an additional dimension that deepened student-teacher experience. As the online announcement of the free English class was shared and reshared on social media, students from a variety of regions enrolled, greatly enriching discussions and exchanges on practical topics like shopping, housing, education, and job searches.

Feedback sessions among student teachers also entailed additional dimensions; in addition to the peer assistance on lesson plans themselves and problem solving for classroom needs, student teachers shared experiences with apps, online activities, and cross-cultural, transnational experiences.

One of the silver linings of the pandemic has been a wider recognition of the potential for more globalized education. U.S.-based alumni are working with students around the world. International alumni are working with language schools in the U.S. The online practicum is an aspect of the program we intend to hold onto moving forward, providing students with an alternative opportunity to profit from cross-cultural and transnational teaching. We strongly believe that this new dimension of the program - while adapted in response to a horrific global health crisis - should remain, contributing to Georgetown’s mission to educate global citizens.

English Program for Government Officials in Angola

In Spring 2021 GU’s ELC launched a new synchronous online program developed to provide ESP programming to government ministry employees in the Republic of Angola. This program was designed based on the experience and “lessons learned” from the pivot to online instructional delivery in other programs, including the TEFL Certificate Program (above). The classes in the Angola program focused on developing language skills to be able to interact with international counterparts and participate in international conferences, meetings, etc – with a focus on economics, finance, and human resources. Over the course of 32 weeks (total 320 hours), 100 students (across 5 classes) ranging in proficiency from A1 to C1 developed their language skills to build confidence and fluency in using English within their professional contexts. Through extensive practice and feedback, students were able to interact with each other in English to work on solutions to challenges encountered in their work and their community.



Source: Flickr.com

The program faced challenges, including familiarity with the technology, connectivity issues, developing and maintaining a classroom community of learning and rapport, zoom fatigue, and managing group and pair-work through zoom breakout rooms. However, with training and lessons learned from earlier online programming, many of these challenges were mitigated. Instructors were able to foster rapport, present materials, facilitate practice, provide feedback and meaningful assessment while keeping technology to a minimum to create engaging classes.

This period of online instruction also presented unexpected opportunities. Synchronous online instruction allowed for programming despite the inability to gather in person or to travel to the U.S., making the educational opportunity accessible to a wider audience. It also allowed for greater flexibility in working with instructors who were not DC-based, and greatly increased the availability and participation of guest speakers. The technology training and practice instilled in students and instructors a greater familiarity with digital literacy skills: skills that will likely continue to be in demand in the future (whether in an academic or professional environment).

Online instruction also presented opportunities of a more social and community-building kind. In the midst of “stay at home” decrees, students and instructors were able to create communities, not just of learning, but of support and sharing during a challenging time. Global connections were created during a period of challenge and uncertainty and an opportunity to learn from and about others. The online modality also granted educational access to students who would not normally be able to attend class, due to location or expense of travel: greatly contributing initiatives of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. Some students even reported a preference for the online environment since they felt they were able to focus more on the instruction and class activities, rather than being as distracted as sometimes happened in the physical classroom.

The shift to online instruction in response to COVID-19 was challenging for students, instructors and program administration. However, it has provided an opportunity to grow as language learners and teachers,

and has helped reflectively shape understanding of learning and teaching. It has also provided unexpected opportunities that are valuable to maintain in the return to in-person instruction.

Conclusion

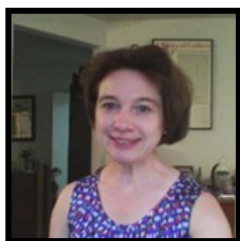
The key learning for us has been the need for preparation, flexibility, student responsiveness. In both programs, students varied in their backgrounds, comfort with technology, expectations, and learning styles. The shift to teaching in a virtual modality was one that created uncertainty, but required agile adaptation. It has also opened new possibilities for additional and expanded online language and teacher preparation programming.

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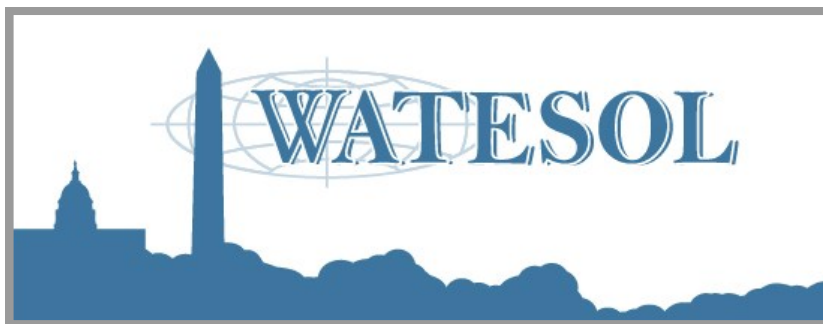
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Feature Article

English Speaking Nation: Uzbekistan

Inomiddin Imomov is the Principal of Al Khwarizmi Specialized School in Tashkent, an EFL Instructor at Tashkent State University of Economics, and a core trainer



How many English-speaking nations do you know? Wikipedia suggests 55 sovereign states! And no matter how many of these you know about, you can definitely add one more - Uzbekistan. Sounds strange, right? But since 2019, the Government of Uzbekistan and the Ministry of Public Education, in collaboration with the US government, launched an innovative and ambitious program to strengthen English language education in the country. The program is called "English Speaking Nation."



This is what we have learned from Mr. Inomiddin Imomov, a lead participant of the English Speaking Nation program:

The English Speaking Nation program is part of a larger collaboration between the United States Government and the Government of Uzbekistan (GOU), specifically with U.S. assistance and support to Uzbekistan's Ministry of Public Education (MPE). The GOU is eager to strengthen English language education and to incorporate English more broadly into public education curricula. The goal of this program is to improve graduates' proficiency in the English language by addressing deficiencies in the linguistic and pedagogical skills of the 32,000 English language teachers working in public schools.

"As Uzbekistan is trying to integrate more into the international community, the mission of improving the knowledge of English language is more crucial than ever," Mr. Shermatov, the Minister of Public Education of Uzbekistan, said. "Knowledge of English language has the utmost importance for building a bright future for our youth and for them to be able to compete more effectively in the global job

market. ESN:STT is the first step in achieving this goal. MPE is particularly interested in improving graduates' employability, opportunities to matriculate at universities abroad, and access to information, data, and resources available only in English.

To achieve this goal, the public school system of Uzbekistan needs qualified English language teachers. In order to address this deficiency, this project would meet its primary goal to support Uzbekistan's Ministry of Public Education efforts to strengthen English language education and to incorporate English more broadly into public education curricula.

A big part of teacher preparation is done through English Speaking Nation: Secondary Teacher Training (ESN:STT), a program of the Public Affairs Section (PAS) of the U.S. Embassy in Uzbekistan and implemented by American

Councils for International Education in close cooperation with the Ministry of Public Education (MoPE). It offers an integrated professional development opportunity for English language teacher trainers and secondary school English language teachers in Uzbekistan.



ESN:STT improves student skills

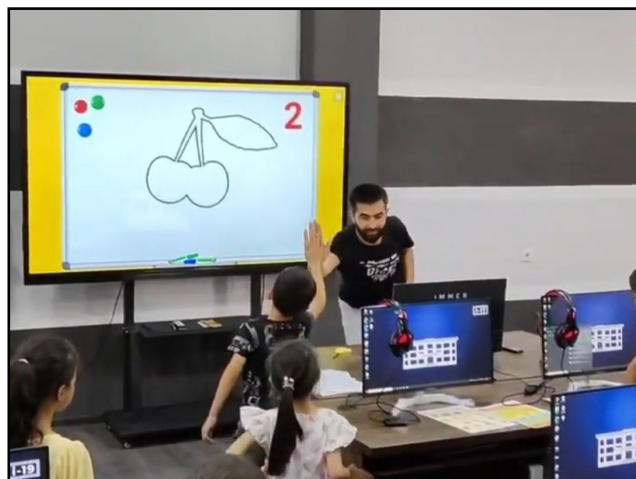
and knowledge of English by preparing more than 15,000 secondary school English teachers and over 1,000 teacher trainers to use teaching and in-service training practices that improve student language learning.

Among many outcomes of these efforts, we were able to open a unique public school in Tashkent in 2022. Our International Specialized School is named after Muhammad ibn Musa Al-Khwarizmi, a medieval mathematician, astronomer, and geographer, famous for his introduction of Hindu-Arabic numerals and algebra to European mathematicians. This name choice means a lot to us – the school focuses its effort on the most promising areas of study: STEM and English. Besides intense English instruction, students get deep knowledge of mathematics, technology and computer science. These subjects are being effectively taught in English. Since we are an international school, step by step, we organize teaching other subjects in English as well.

At Al- Khwarizmi International, we are very excited and inspired by the ambitious goals – to prepare our students for in-demand careers, jobs in international fields, and further education in other countries. Therefore, we bring the best research-based educational practices into the classroom

The school leadership, Principal Inomiddin Imomov, Core Trainer of ESN:STT and Khabilullo Meyliev, a regional Peer Mentor of ESN: STT participated in a rigorous training program delivered by TESOL

International Association (TESOL) and George Mason University (GMU). Not only that, we have been immersed into rigorous English-language training, and we have learned about the leading pedagogical approaches that we now share with our classroom teachers. Our student-centered approach is based on providing all students with learning opportunities in small groups and ad hoc work teams under the guidance of experienced teachers and academics. This method develops students' creativity and initiative and maximizes the benefits of learning in an intensive research learning environment Integrating the world's practical experience in the field of education, the ISSGC strives to train international-level personnel. Our



students have the opportunity to study under the guidance of leading experts. Also located in research communities, they learn effective research methods from the very beginning of the curriculum. Students develop problem-solving skills and the ability to improve their knowledge, invaluable for further education and employment.

We want to see our graduates having comprehensive knowledge in their field, critical thinking and problem-solving skills, business literacy and communication skills, leadership qualities, cooperation and ability to develop, ethical competence and international tolerance and dedication, emotional restraint and stress resistance.

The main role of the school leadership is to work closely with teachers in the planning and preparation of lessons in order to maximize effective learning opportunities for students. School administrators carefully monitor how students complete set tasks and liaise with teachers in adapting activities to ensure that educational goals are reached. We strive for our teachers to have an excellent rapport with students, be highly organized, motivated, and dedicated to making an impression in the world of education.





As our school grows fast, we are looking for native-speaking English teachers to join our team. We are offering contracts from July to end of May of next year. Our teachers are provided with resources and lesson plans, but teachers are encouraged to add and develop content for students as they see fit. Class sizes are limited to 20 students. We offer a 40-hour

work week, paid 30 day vacation, overtime pay, free living accommodations, and a round-trip ticket. Uzbekistan is an amazing country, with a fascinating history and culture, as well as great people. If you are a person who likes discovering new places, as much as sharing your passion for teaching, please contact us for additional information.

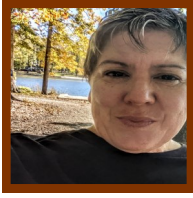


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ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROGRAMS

The World is Your Classroom

A Letter to English-Learning Seniors Going to College: Vocabulary, Rumors, Resources, Next Steps



Lisa Willson
ESOL Teacher; Fairfax County Public Schools

While working hard to improve their English and earn high school graduation credits, and simultaneously learning to adapt to American high school culture, some English learners naturally misunderstand, misinterpret, or simply miss information about the possibility of going to college. Of course, no student should make decisions for life after high school graduation based on a misunderstanding of a word or phrase – or because they thought a rumor was fact – or because no one invited them to consider that “going to college” might be different than they assumed, and no one invited them to find out just a little more.

The letter to a senior English learner, below, attempts to address these issues in a friendly, non-threatening way. Please consider adapting and using this letter to help communicate with the English-learning seniors(s) you work with, or younger students in earlier years, or their families.

Dear Senior,

You’ve learned so much English. Now you’re realizing that you’re going to graduate. It’s a great feeling, I know!

In some of our recent conversations, you told me you don’t want to go to college. I respect that. I just have to make sure of something, though. It’s a vocabulary-word-thing. I want to make sure that you realize that “going to college” has many, many meanings. And that in some languages and cultures, “going to college” translates to something different than what “going to college” means around here. What am I talking about? Well, all of the situations below can be described as, “going to college.”

- A person can go to college full time. But they can also work full time, and go to college part time. They could also just take one class.
- A person can live at home while they go to college. They could also live in a dormitory on a college campus while they go to college. Both situations are “going to college.”
- A person could go to college right after they graduate from high school. Or, they could work for a while first, and go to college later.
- They could go to college for a long time, for example, if they want to become a doctor. Or, they could go to college for a short time, for example, if they want to learn how to swim.
- They could go to a public college, which is a college connected to the government. You could go to a private college, too. You can also go to a college which is part of the military.
- You could go to an expensive college or a cheaper one.

All these situations can be described as “going to college.” We go to college to continue our education after high school. There’s not just one way to do it!

Be careful! Look for reliable sources of information. Those sources might be people, or places, or things. If you're still interested in maybe "going to college," it's time to think:

- Who are the people who can give me reliable information and help?
- What are the things that can give me reliable information and help?
- Where are the places that can give me reliable information and help?

A high school counselor or a teacher can help you get started. Go to one of these people and say, "I need information and help. I need an introduction to EVERYTHING about going to college. Can I make an appointment to talk to you about this?"

Then, while you're waiting for your appointment, find the website of the college or university closest to where you live. That's a great place to start. While you're reading, it might help you to learn these vocabulary words:

| | | |
|----------------|---|---|
| General words: | Words about what people study in college: | Words about how people pay for college: |
| application | college major | scholarship |

To summarize, please know this:

1. "Going to college" is a general phrase that can mean many different things.
2. There are rumors about college that aren't true. Get information from reliable resources!
3. Make an appointment with a teacher or counselor and ask for an introduction to everything about "going to college. While you wait for your appointment,

Look around at the website of the college closest to you.

Learn some important vocabulary about "going to college."

I can't wait to hear about what you learn, and what you decide to do next!

Take care,

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

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

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