I hope this note finds you all enjoying the much needed summer and sunshine after such a long, hard winter. Soon we will be transitioning back into the world of academics and preparing for an exciting fall conference. Colleen Brice and the team are hard at work preparing for a conference focusing on expanding our perspectives about just how diverse the state of Michigan is in its communities.

The board is working on its own transitions. We now have the new website up and running with the new membership renewal process in place. We are working on joining Facebook and Twitter to join the world of social media. We are hoping to reach out to more people across Michigan to let them know we are here. Hopefully this will help us increase membership and expand communication.

I want to thank the board members and friends I have met this year as your president. I pushed myself to do many things I didn’t think possible and along the way learned a great deal about my own capabilities. Helping to organize a statewide conference and lead a board of such an outstanding organization as MITESOL has stretched me as a professional and personally. Again I thank all of the wonderful people who have made this year possible: the members of MITESOL!

As we look to replenish the ranks of our leadership this fall, several opportunities present themselves. I strongly encourage membership, especially K-12 educators, to become part of this organization in some capacity. If you have been thinking of next steps in your professional growth, this is the place. I promise you both personal and professional growth, as well as friendships across the state. Have a fabulous school year.

Jeanine Clever
As mentioned by our president, Jeanine Clever, on the first page, the coming fall season means MITESOL conference time. As such, one of our humble editors just can’t help revealing his excitement that this time it’s not only in his home town, Grand Rapids, but at his alma mater, Grand Valley State University. There is enough in the three plus page spread included here to get all our members interested. Event chair Colleen Brice covers everything from the hors d’oeuvres to the keynote speakers, but pay special attention to the registration information on page 5.

Between here and there, you’ll also find listed the current MITESOL leadership along with board notes from Ellen Brengle. Concluding the organization news section on page 7 is a great segue into updates from the field: It’s where we share the recent and upcoming publications, presentations, and awards of our members . . . but only those who let us know. We so appreciate those listed there, but we’d love to hear from more of you as we try to establish that relatively new feature.

When the rubber hits the road, Jacquie Osborn starts us off on page 8 with her discussion of the results from a Saginaw Valley State University study of its English Language Program overhaul, especially relevant to instruction of Saudi Arabian students. However, if you want to know how to teach what “rubber hits the road” means maybe you’ll take Patrick T. Randolph’s advice. He warmly overviews a book on teaching idioms authored by Paul McPherron and himself. Patrick not only gives us a clear image of the book, he puts us in touch with the joy of publishing on page 13. Before that is Andre Scholze et al.’s snapshot of a four course unit on speaking and listening. The authors start page 10 off with a teaching design around the idea of saving money, billed for incorporation in an Eastern Michigan University class, to mention our other humble editor’s alma mater. Along with co-author Clarissa Codrington, Michigan Markwadt winner Trisha Dowling also shares a teaching unit. Theirs is aimed at adult ed, and centered around TV sitcoms. And that’s still not where this issue tails off. There remains Ohud Alderaan’s important reminder of the fundamentals of ensuring rapport with students, so important to their readiness to learn.

For many of us, though, it’s high time we ready ourselves to teach. With that then, we ask you to please enjoy.
Ellen Brengle, Secretary

As always, our major annual project, the fall MITESOL conference, has consumed much of the board’s time and energies since our February publication. And once again, this year’s conference offers a new and intriguing theme: **Expanding our Perspectives: From the Classroom to the Community.** Participants will be engaged by an array of informative and instructive sessions on our ESL work as it includes both students in classrooms, as well as families and adults in our communities.

Additional issues and projects we’ve been working on this year:

- **MITESOL reception at TESOL**, organized by Jeanine Clever
- **Possible change to and more funding for a better proposal system**
- **Discount for new MITESOL members**
- Proposal-writing workshop from Andy McCullough and Michael Pasquale
- Consideration of longer, more sustained, more interactive workshop sessions at MITESOL conferences, perhaps given by board members
- Possible need for a new international partner (Czech Republic not responding to invitations and inquiries)
- Best uses of any surplus savings
- Need for conference coordinator to help in-coming presidents
- **Pre-planning for 2015 MITESOL conference at MSU, with possible theme centered on assessments**
MITESOL 2014 Conference News

Colleen Brice, President-elect & Conference Chair

We’re excited to be holding MITESOL’s annual conference at Grand Valley State University this fall—on Friday, October 17th and Saturday, October 18th—in Eberhard Center, on the banks of the beautiful Grand River in downtown Grand Rapids. Autumn in Grand Rapids is a beautiful time, and there are many exciting attractions within walking distance of the University, including museums (Public, Art, Gerald R. Ford), shops, and breweries (GR was voted ‘beer city USA,’ 2014). This former furniture capital of the world is also host to ArtPrize, a three-week international competition in which 1,500+ artists display their work throughout the city, and the public decides who wins by voting on smartphones. This year’s ArtPrize winners will be announced October 10, so much of the artwork should still be on display over the conference weekend.

Program Preview

We have an exciting program planned, including two keynote speakers who are well known for their work in ESL among low-literate populations. Friday’s speaker, Andrea DeCapua, Ed.D., is a researcher and educational consultant who co-developed the Mutually Adaptive Learning Paradigm (MALPtm), an instructional model which she will share with us. Dr. DeCapua specializes in teacher training for educators working with struggling language learners and has authored/coauthored numerous articles and books. Saturday’s keynote speaker, Patsy Vinogradov, Ph.D., is Director of Hamline University’s Adult Basic Education Teaching and Learning Advancement System (ATLAS), which designs and implements professional development for adult educators throughout Minnesota. Dr. Vinogradov is a frequent national and international conference presenter, invited trainer, and author, who will share with us the results and implications of her research on L2 reading acquisition among low literate learners in two contexts (adult ESL and elementary school). In response to feedback from last year’s conference participants, we are also including an increased number of hands-on workshops, several of which

(Continued next page)
are being hosted by our Special Interest Groups (SIGs). A workshop on ESL reading is being presented by invited guest speaker, Kathy Olson, a former National Institute for Literacy fellow who has authored numerous books for ESL learners, including, most recently, components of Cambridge University Press’s Ventures series. Finally, we’ve received many interesting proposals, which we’re currently in the process of reviewing. Primary authors will be notified of the status of their conference proposal by the end of August. A preview of the conference program will be posted on our website in late September.

Registration
Conference registration is now open online. Please go to the registration page on our website for details. Early registration rates (which include Saturday’s luncheon) will be available through September 19th. From September 20th through October 17th, late registration rates (which do not include lunch on Saturday) will be in effect. If you have questions about registration or membership, please contact our membership coordinator, Jane DeGroot, at membership@mitesol.org.

Food
The conference fee includes food—a lot of it. On Friday, we will be serving heavy hors d’oeuvres at two times—from 4-6 p.m., to sustain hungry travelers as they arrive from cities around the state—and from 9-11 p.m., following the first keynote talk. On Saturday morning, we will be serving a generous continental breakfast (yogurt, fruit, pastries, coffee, tea, juice), and on Saturday afternoon, we will be serving a sit-down luncheon (with a choice of entrée—see online registration site). Please note, Saturday’s luncheon is limited to only those attendees who register by the early deadline, which is September 19th. For attendees who register after September 19th, we regret that we cannot guarantee lunch on Saturday due to catering policies.

Entertainment
In addition to a buffet of hot and cold hors d’oeuvres, Friday’s reception from 9-11 p.m. will feature a cash bar (for which attendees will be given one free ticket) and live entertainment, compliments of Michigan’s #1 ESL band, Gerund and the Infinitives. Five members of this Americana band from East Lansing are faculty in MSU’s English Language Center. They’ve kindly agreed to play a two-hour set to cap off the first night of the conference. So, come hungry—and plan to stay to the end—for the great food, music, and dancing.

Accommodations
We have secured discounted rates for MITESOL participants at two hotels in Grand Rapids. A small block of rooms has been reserved at the Holiday Inn Downtown, located on 310 Pearl Street NW, which is just across the street from Eberhard Center. A large block of rooms has been reserved at the Holiday Inn ‘Airport’ (3063 Lake Eastbrook Drive), which is a short drive from the conference venue. The Airport Holiday Inn will be providing a free shuttle to and from the conference site for MITESOL attendees (so, you can stay for Friday evening’s entertainment without having to worry about driving). Additional information about each hotel, including their discounted rates, can be found on our website. To get the conference rate, phone the hotel directly and state that you’re attending MITESOL. Reservations must be made by September 30th to get this discounted rate. Please reserve your room as early as possible! Two other large conventions are being held in Grand Rapids the same weekend as MITESOL, so available rooms are (already) in short supply.

Credit for Participating
We are planning to offer MDE Clock Hours for conference attendance. More details about this will be provided as soon as they become available. Please check our website regularly for updates regarding this and all other conference matters (directions, information about area attractions, local restaurants, additional accommodations, parking, etc.). Best wishes for a wonderful last month of summer. I look forward to seeing you at the conference.
As immigration to the U.S. continues to grow, more and more students with limited or interrupted formal education (SLIFE) enter secondary schools and adult education programs. These learners face major challenges, including the need to develop literacy skills and a content knowledge base, often in a limited timeframe. Beyond this, however, SLIFE come to formal education unfamiliar with classroom tasks and behaviors, and with little or no experience in expected types of learning and thinking. Dominant Western-style pedagogical practices derive from culturally-based priorities for learners and learning, priorities intrinsic to this style of schooling. Educators are often unaware how pervasive these priorities are and how much they shape pedagogical practices. I explore the priorities of both US mainstream educators and those of SLIFE, and discuss how each can accommodate the other’s priorities through a culturally responsive, mutually adaptive approach, thereby reducing the cultural dissonance SLIFE confront in formal educational settings. I conclude by considering how educators can bridge the gap to culturally new ways of learning by transitioning SLIFE from preferred ways of learning to those deemed necessary for literacy and academic attainment in formal education.

"Who knows more about this, and how can we work together?" This question has become central to my work in language education. It embodies curiosity and collaboration, and it can lead us to powerful (if sometimes unlikely) encounters with colleagues. In this talk, I take up the conference theme of “Expanding Perspectives” and “Connecting Classrooms to the Community” from the lens of an inquisitive teacher. Much can happen when we look beyond our classrooms and connect with other educators from different, yet related fields. I’ll share two examples of cross-context teacher inquiry from my area of research: adult immigrant and refugee students with little or no literacy in their first languages. These are students who are now living in the U.S. and are facing a double challenge: acquiring English while learning to read an alphabetic print language for the first time. Their teachers must be reading specialists, language experts, and resettlement workers all rolled into one. This is no easy task! Add to this complexity the fact that such learners are largely neglected by both researchers and materials developers, and resources are scarce. However, from challenge comes innovation. Within our communities, right down the street from many adult ESL programs, early elementary teachers are teaching literacy and language to young new readers every day. Some of their students have extreme difficulty with reading, and the field of dyslexia education has much to offer us as well. I’ll share concrete discoveries two teams of teachers made that changed our thinking and our classroom practice for low-literate adult students.
MITESOL News

MITESOL 2014 Conference News (Continued from previous page)

READING WORKSHOP

Kathleen Olson

Creative Rereading Activities to Provide Essential Repetition for all Learner Levels

Repetition is important in any learning situation, but repetition needs novelty to maintain student interest and engagement. The presenter will share many creative activities derived from one reading passage to provide valuable repetition for all learner levels and in all skill areas.

MITESOL Member Publications, Presentations, and Awards

Editors’ plea: The call for submissions to the February 2015 issue goes out mid-December. Besides the usual requests, please send recent and upcoming publications and presentations. MITESOL is honored to recognize its members’ achievements.

Recent Notables

Dowling, Trisha (see photo, right) (2014). Recipient of MITESOL’s Michigan Markwardt Travel Grant toward attendance of the TESOL conference.


Randolph, P. T. (March 2014). Exploring Creative Writing and Critical Thinking with ELLs. TESOL Connections.


Patrick T. Randolph (Western Michigan University), Natalie Parra (Central Michigan University), and Ghada Mahdi (Ferris State) were invited presenters for Ferris State’s second annual Lighthouse Summer Symposium.
Updates from the Field

Giving the Opportunity to Succeed at SVSU

Jacquie Osborn

It is no secret that university English language programs have been inundated with students from Saudi Arabia thanks to the scholarship program initiated in 2006. It is also no secret that a small number of these students come with extremely limited prior study of English. The curriculum of the English Language Program (ELP) of Saginaw Valley State University (SVSU), like most university programs, was not originally designed for true beginners. In the spring of 2011, what started as a routine curriculum update became a complete overhaul of the system. When classes started in the fall, students were introduced to a three tier system. Tier 1 was the new component consisting of two levels designed to meet the needs of true beginners as a “pre-academic” program prior to admission to the academic ELP classes, now called Tier 2.

While the university approved the plan, there were also many questions to be answered. For SVSU, the number of incoming complete beginners for fall/winter ranges from 10-15 students of an average 250 per semester. Would it be worth it, practical or even feasible to offer classes for this limited number? The ultimate question needed an answer: Could students with very little English successfully achieve academic competence in the language in a reasonable amount of time and be successful in university classes? This article will share with the MITESOL community the results of a simple, limited study that attempted to gather enough information to answer these questions.

What is Tier 1?

Tier 1 has two levels; 1A Introduction and 1B Functional. This tier is designed as pre-academic based on BICS (Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills) and CALP (Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency). Establishing a pre-academic tier addresses the students’ needs based on research in the field that recognizes the fact that students must acquire the communication skills to meet everyday living needs before they can begin to develop language skills appropriate to the academic classroom. Students in 1A are true beginners with zero to three months of English study prior to entering the ELP. Students in 1B usually have three to twelve months of study. Many have already studied one semester in an American university and transferred to SVSU to be with other family members. Based on current research and best practices, all 1A and 1B classes are co-requisite as a “locked” level with the curricula integrated across the courses. Courses consist of Reading/Listening, Writing/Vocabulary and Grammar/Speaking. A student can pass from 1A to 1B or from 1B to Tier 2 by passing Reading/Listening and one of the other two courses with a grade of 75% or better. Students in 1B who have the required passing percentages take the COMPASS Test for placement into Tier 2: Academic English.

While the emphasis in Tier 1 is vocabulary building and basic communicative English, it became apparent after the first semester that the academic based skills also needed to be introduced. Tier 1 students do not have the “luxury” of spending two semesters learning how to shop, talk to the doctor, or tell about their families. They need to also do well on the COMPASS test for placement into Tier 2. Numerous revisions to the curriculum from fall 2011 to the present have introduced academic concepts. For example, in reading, simple critical reading skills such as inference, plot and summarizing a story, both orally and in writing, have been added. In writing, students leave 1B with the basic steps of the writing process and knowledge of writing topic sentences, logical order to details and ending with a concluding sentence. Both the students and teachers of Tier 1 work hard and burn the candle at both ends.

How to Measure Success?

When the ELP changed to the tier system, the Tier 1 coordinator set up a tracking system for Tier 1 students using the university Datatel system and simple Excel spreadsheets. After exiting the ELP and entering the university, at the suggestion of the English Department, “successful” students were determined to be those who passed Sheltered English 111. Sheltered English 111 follows the same curriculum and grading scale of English 111 (basic freshman composition), but is open only to international students and recognizes the fact that writing problems and issues of the native population and international population are not the same. The results are based on a very limited number, only thirty-four students.

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Giving the Opportunity to Succeed at SVSU (Continued from previous page)

The number of students tracked since the Fall of 2011 to the present who have completed the ELP and entered the university is small for two reasons:

1) The class sizes for Tier 1 are small.

2) The students need six to seven semesters to complete the program. Thus, the initial students from Fall 2011 didn’t enter the university Sheltered English 111 until Fall 2013 or Winter 2014.

However, initial results of the tracking have provided the following information.

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<tr>
<th>Letter Grade</th>
<th>Number of Students</th>
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As can be seen from the table, twenty-nine passed and five failed for an 85% success rate. It can also be noted that fully 53% achieved 80% or better. In addition, a review of the grade point averages for the thirty-four students finds that all but two are over 3.0 at the end of the first or second semester.

The Answers to the Questions

Can students with very little English successfully achieve academic competence in the language in a reasonable amount of time? The average student who begins at 1A needs six to seven semesters to complete the entire ELP. Is this reasonable?

When the tier system was introduced, SACM (Saudi Arabian Cultural Mission) was given a complete review of the proposed curriculum and time frame required by a true beginner. As you may know, SACM permits three semesters of English prior to university admission for scholarship recipients. SACM has closely monitored the new system. Students who demonstrate the ability to maintain good attendance and achieve the required 75% are allowed to continue on scholarship until completing the program. Students, themselves, have stated that the extra two semesters, given their lack of English, was reasonable.

Can students with very little English successfully achieve academic competence in the language and be successful in university classes? Given that 85% of the students pass English 111 and the majority have 3.0 or higher grade points, it may be safe to assume they can be called successful students. Have they learned everything there is to know about English? In the words of Hassan, “Of course not. Every day I learn a new word, expression, concept or cultural idea. I have to work hard, but I have been given the opportunity to succeed, and I will.”

Jacquie Osborn is recently retired from Saginaw Valley State University after 12 years in the ELP and was instrumental in designing, implementing, revising and monitoring the students’ progress in Tier One. josborn@svsu.edu 810-631-4333 or 810-922-8376 (cell)
Speaking and Listening Four-Course Unit (Saving Money): Rationale

Andre Scholze, Courtney Slucuter, Daniel Hayes, Ohud Alderaan & Richard Lysogorski

In designing our course for the TESOL methods and materials in speaking and listening class at Eastern Michigan University, our intentions were to create a four-unit course where we focused on saving money as a core theme and to teach a subtopic surrounding money saving strategies within each individual lesson. We designed our course primarily based on the four strands of a well-balanced language course according to the Nation and Newton book *Teaching ESL/EFL Listening and Speaking*. We also took into consideration several questions posed in *Designing Language Courses* by Kathleen Graves in regards to conceptualizing the content of our course. Consequently, creating a course required our group to make several choices based on our student’s needs, our resources, what to include in the course and the purpose of our course.

Our students were 25-50 years old and were attending the Ypsilanti Adult Education ESL Program or ESL classes at Jewish Family Services in Ann Arbor. Their educational background varied from elementary to high school completion, with some students holding bachelor’s degrees. The students were from different parts of the world, including Japan, Vietnam, Korea, Romania, Congo, and China. It did not seem at that point our students were focused on learning English for academic purposes so we chose our theme based on the idea that money saving strategies could be useful and relevant for any student learning about a new culture. In this way, we could focus on creating a meaningful context that would act as the vehicle to drive our lessons forward through the language features and vocabulary we wanted to teach. We decided on this theme to provide students with information that might benefit them in their communities, and to promote interest in learning. Studying money saving strategies is an important and relevant theme for ESL students. Through learning about the different money saving strategies, students were able to see common strategies that will assist them in navigating their community and a new culture. In addition, our overall theme and subtopics linked to CASAS competency standard 1.2 - Using information to identify and purchase goods.

Not only did our students’ needs play a role in our course design, we also made choices about our course based on available resources. Fortunately, we were aware that we had several forms of technology that we could utilize, including Internet access, a computer, speakers, and an overhead projector. While there were some issues surrounding technology, we were able to create our course without feeling confined by lack of resources.

As a group, it seemed most important to question what we wanted the students to learn from the course. According to Graves (2000), conceptualizing content involves answering several questions including what we wanted the students to learn and what were our resources (p. 38). Therefore, we were able to design our course based on these questions but also create a balanced course aligned with the four strands of a language course from Nation and Newton (2009). Additionally, we based our theme and our topics on ideas that we thought suited the needs of our students: money saving strategies.

We also took careful consideration in what we wanted to include in our course. Our intent was to design our course based on the four strands of a well-balanced language course according to Nation and Newton (2009). Following the first strand, meaning-focused input, we wanted to create a unit where students were interested in the input but also where most of what the learners were listening to or reading was already familiar. According to Nation and Newton (2009), these important conditions must be met to create a good course (p. 3). Another condition is that only a small proportion of the language features are unknown to the learners and that the learners gain knowledge of the unknown language items through context clues and background knowledge along with large quantities of input. We established some interest with the topic and started with one most students who have lived in the country for a while should be somewhat familiar with: shopping. In each individual lesson, we incorporated listening activities where students listened to language features that were familiar to them, including gap-fill activities and listen-and-underline activities.
Speaking and Listening (Continued from previous page)

Students also learned through meaning-focused output, namely speaking and writing. Students had several opportunities to negotiate meaning and to participate in both group and pair discussions, as well as role-play activities, and giving advice. As Nation and Newton (2009) assert, many speaking and listening activities will combine meaning-focused input and meaning-focused output, as "one person’s output can be another person’s input" (p. 5).

We also balanced our course with language-focused learning to assist students in learning language items. According to Nation and Newton (2009), the ultimate aim of language-focused learning is to deal with messages, but its short-term aim is to learn language items (p. 133). We focused one lesson solely on intonation of yes/no questions and another on the modal should to aid students in learning these language items. We were able to accomplish these tasks by explicitly presenting the items taken from real-life contexts and allowing students to practice the sentences through listening and speech.

Finally, to balance our course we incorporated fluency into our final lesson. In doing so, we created an adapted version of a 4/3/2 activity. For our beginner learners we thought it would be best if students did a 90/60/45 second version of this activity. We wanted to create an activity for students that satisfied the three conditions that should be met for students to develop fluency mentioned in Nation & Newton (2009, p. 153), and for that reason we created an activity that was meaning-focused, where all the language items were within their previous experience and there was support and encouragement for the learner to perform at a higher than normal level. According to Nation and Newton (2009), where second language is not used outside the classroom, it is very important that a quarter of class time is given to fluency activities (p. 156). This is the case for many adult ESL learners that tend to speak their first languages at home and in their social circles, having very limited occasions to practice the new language.

Overall, we made several choices prior to teaching our course and many revisions after teaching the lessons. We also tried to implement more student-centered activities to increase the students’ speaking time and to stimulate negotiation of meaning. Another relevant aspect was putting efforts in creating a nice environment so the students could feel comfortable and willing to participate in all activities. The course evaluations revealed that most of the students felt that way and were able to benefit from the lessons. The evaluations also suggested students’ gain from visual stimulus, from technology use, and from teacher’s support. In the end we hope that students can utilize these newly acquired items and implement the proposed shopping strategies into their daily lives.

References


LESSON ORGANIZER

Lesson 1: Saving Money when Shopping for Groceries: Adjectives (positive: fantastic, excellent; negative: horrible, outrageous) and Vocabulary Related to Shopping (deal, sale, promotion, rewards card, coupon, BOGO sale)

Objectives
- Use positive and negative adjectives to classify shopping deals or promotions
- Correctly use the targeted adjectives and at least half of the following words and phrases in sentences to talk about shopping: deal, sale, promotion, rewards card, coupon, BOGO sale

Activities
- Listen and Choose
- Listen and Order
- Information Transfer (table completion)
Updates From the Field

Speaking and Listening (Continued from previous page)

Lesson 2: Freebies: Asking Yes/No Questions with Correct Intonation

Objectives
- Listen to yes/no questions to identify intonation
- Orally ask yes/no questions about birthday freebies using the appropriate intonation

Activities
- Ranking
- Listen and Locate the Stressed Word
- Oral Cloze
- Role-Play

Lesson 3: Giving Advice to Use Less and Save Money: Modal Verb SHOULD

Objectives
- Use modal should to give advice
- Use modal should when giving advice in authentic real world situations discussing how to use less and save money

Activities
- Listen and Underline
- Listen and Classify
- Ranking
- Corner Advice + Role-Play Practice

Lesson 4: Fluently Speaking about Saving Habits: Targeting Fluency

Objectives
- Use learned money-related vocabulary to fluently speak about their cultural routines/customs regarding money saving
- Reflect on personal experiences and prior knowledge to talk about saving habits

Activities
- Picture Ordering
- Fluency Activity
- Group Discussion

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Overview of Cat Got Your Tongue? Recent research and classroom practices for teaching idioms to English learners around the world

Patrick T. Randolph

Introduction & Background
When my colleague and I had our book proposal on idioms accepted by TESOL Press’s call for submissions, we went through the whole gamut of emotions—from excitement to trepidation. We both loved to teach idioms in our respective intensive speech and writing courses, but would we be able to help others shed light on the cultural and linguistic complexities of English idioms? Would we be able to demystify idioms for teachers and students going into applied linguistics or TESOL methods? Would we be able to show how imperative idioms are for our students’ academic and integrative cultural success? After two years of intensive research, in-depth analysis, and writing, the answer to these questions is a confident and emphatic “yes.” We believe our book clearly examines the crucial elements required for good idiom pedagogy and successful idiom acquisition.

Our aim was to address the needs of three specific audiences: (1) applied linguistics / TESOL professors; (2) graduate students in language teaching disciplines; and (3) ELL classroom instructors. We, however, are confident—based on our own conviction and the praise from professionals in the field (Ediger, Giamei, Lo Bianco, Slick and Zwier)—that this unique book will also help the average native English speaker understand and appreciate more about the fascinating categories, uses, and importance of English idioms.

Belying Certain Idiom Myths & Defending the Need to Teach Idioms
One of the most important points that our book accomplishes is the demonstration of how necessary idioms are for our students to learn. While illustrating this, we simultaneously belie a number of idiom myths. My own colleagues—near and far—would ask me why I was spending so much time on a book about idioms. Many of these instructors claimed that idioms are usually only used in informal situations, that they are seldom used in lectures, and that they are very transient expressions—here today and gone tomorrow. Such statements left me tongue-tied. Unfortunately, a number of ELL educators believe the above as well, including the directors of Intensive English Programs.

In Cat Got Your Tongue? we point out that there are well over 10,000 idioms in the English language. According to Brenner (2011), of these 10,000 idioms, many, of course, are new. However, a great number have also been used for as long as 2,000 years. For example, the motivating idiom for the title of our book, cat got your tongue? dates back to 1881 and spill the beans may have been used as far back as the ancient Greeks. In terms of register, idioms like best of both worlds, first and foremost, in sum, and shed light on are frequently used in formal speeches and in academic textbooks (see Jensen’s Brain-based Learning). And professors use idioms in lectures all the time. For instance, last spring a colleague and I attended a presentation at Michigan State University. The professor used over 100 idioms during her hour-long lecture. In some lectures I’ve sat in on in the recent past, professors have used one idiom every 20 seconds of the class. As stated in the introduction of the Cambridge Idioms Dictionary, “Idioms are a colourful and fascinating aspect of English. They are commonly used in all types of language, informal and formal, spoken and written” (p. vi, 2013).

With respect to frequency, Lui (2008) has shown that English speakers, on average, use three to four idioms every minute. He also discovered that classroom teachers use a number of idioms, which supports our own on-going research on idiom use in lectures. One should keep in mind that idioms can be single- as well as multiple-word structures, so both dough (for memory) and fat chance are classified as idioms (McPherron & Randolph, 2014). From the above discussion, we can clearly see that idioms—both old and new, and informal and formal—are used with considerable frequency. If we are not teaching these to our students, we are doing them a serious injustice.
Overview of *Cat Got Your Tongue?* (Continued from previous page)

Teacher Uses—a Treasure of Resources

The most attractive feature of this ten chapter, five appendix book is the collection of activities and resources for teachers and teacher trainers. Chapters 4 and 5 focus on the best practices, methods, and materials for teaching idioms. In Chapter 4, we address questions like:

- How many idioms should be presented at one time? (p. 79)
- How should new idioms first be presented in a textbook: alone in a list, with their definitions, in a dialog/reading, or through example sentences? (p. 81)
- Should new idioms be translated into the learner’s native language? (p. 86)

Chapter 5 looks at a myriad of strategies and activities for effectively teaching idioms. We consider everything from conversation analysis activities to corpus-based and digital media activities. This chapter alone could easily provide a teacher with a semester’s worth of activities. It should be noted that although these activities are centered around idioms, instructors could also use them for vocabulary-based classes or seminars.

Chapters 6 and 7 are extremely unique in that they discuss the results from two surveys: one on the teaching and the other on the learning of idioms. Chapter 6 focuses on teacher perspectives and Chapter 7 looks at student perspectives. These two chapters provide insightful information on how to best approach idiom pedagogy and acquisition from actual teachers and learners from various countries around the globe.

Chapter 8 includes a baker’s dozen (13) fun-filled and effective idiom lesson plans from around the world. In Chapter 3, we survey how the brain works and the best ways to teach based on what we currently know about the brain. All thirteen of the lesson plans incorporate many of these essential features; for example, they include the necessary use of physical activity/exercise, aspects of multi-sensory integration, and the all-important element of emotion.

Chapter 9 offers detailed reviews of ten idiom textbooks and 16 idiom websites. We also discuss ten recommended idiom dictionaries and other reference materials for teaching idioms. Essentially, teachers can go to this chapter and get a thorough understanding of what to use and also where to go online in order to plan a class or a semester on idioms.

The last major feature for teachers and students is Appendix B; this includes a variety of idioms complete with definitions, examples, and a note on the terms’ formal or informal use. Here we look at figurative idioms, transparent idioms, bi- and tri-part phrasal verbs, proverbs and sayings, idiomatic greetings, and a list (also with definitions, example, and register) of the “most difficult” idioms collected from the teacher and student surveys.

Concluding Remarks

Idioms are by no means easy creatures to teach. However, *Cat Got Your Tongue?* is a clear, reader-friendly, and insightful volume on how to best understand and teach idioms. It tames these wild creatures and makes them more manageable both in terms of pedagogy and acquisition. And, as mentioned above, even the average native speaker of English can learn a great deal about the categories and uses of idioms in both academic and nonacademic contexts.

I would like to conclude this overview with the words about our book from Joseph Lo Bianco, the Chair Professor of Language and Literacy Education at the University of Melbourne. He carefully reviewed our book and has the following to say:

“This insightful, brilliant, yet highly practical book is rare among the many that claim to assist teachers to teach and learners to learn not just communication, grammar, and the lexicon, but many aspects of the cultural residue of English, and specifically here, the approximately 10,000 idioms contained in English.”

(Continued next page)
Teaching Self-Advocacy through TV Sitcoms

Trisha Dowling & Clarissa Codrington

Rationale
This unit will focus on teaching adult students in a community education setting the necessary vocabulary, phrases, and pragmatic knowledge to advocate for themselves and others in difficult or uncomfortable situations. Examples of these situations will be presented through TV shows, and although this particular unit focuses on some pre-selected shows, with adaptation the lessons could be used with a variety of TV shows. There is a two-fold objective to using TV shows in the classroom: not only do students get to see the lesson played out through an enjoyable and entertaining format, but those interested can also choose to watch the shows on their own, become invested in the stories, and use them as a self-directed language learning tool outside of the classroom. This unit consists of six lessons and utilizes three television shows: The Cosby Show, Malcolm in the Middle, and Home Improvement. Through this medium, students will have the opportunity to become familiar with a variety of socioeconomic groups, family dynamics, and regions of the United States.

Sarah Benesch (1999) observes the importance of teaching strategies of negotiation with EAP students. She states, “Strategies of negotiation and resistance may be just as important to academic success as understanding and fulfilling teacher expectations” (p. 325). The power found within the ability to negotiate is crucial for students to be more participatory in an academic setting. The benefits of this individual empowerment can also be applied to adults in a community ESL setting. These students can immediately benefit from being taught self-advocacy skills and can likely apply them to their daily lives. As Benesch (1999) discusses, although EAP students had complaints about the university system from the first day of class, they had to be encouraged to voice the complaints in a way that could bring about change (p. 325). These lessons in language, culture and pragmatics aim to provide students with appropriate information to feel empowered and in control of difficult situations.

Note to teachers/educators
As of the writing of this unit, many seasons of The Cosby Show and Home Improvement were available on YouTube, and Malcolm in the Middle was available on Netflix, and the opening theme montages of both The Cosby Show and Home Improvement were available on YouTube. Most likely, other shows that you want to use with this unit will be available through these and other platforms, and, barring that, your local public library or even the university library often have several DVDs in their collection for your free use. Black Friday, the day after Christmas, and public library sales are just three great examples of ways to build your own DVD collection inexpensively for use in the classroom. Finally, it might help to write or identify the self-advocacy skills that you want to teach for the lesson alongside lesson objectives.

References
Teaching Self-Advocacy through TV Sitcoms (continued from previous page)

These lesson examples form the backbone of this unit plan, and can be easily adapted to the individual instructor’s taste. They are meant as foundations from which to jump off of and make the idea your own.

Lesson example 1:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Speaking and Listening lesson: Using prediction and inference through introducing TV characters-The Cosby Show</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Activity</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation/Pre-watching:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watching:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post Watching</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Lesson example 2:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Speaking and Listening lesson: Dealing with work situations-Malcolm in the Middle: “Reese’s Job”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Activity</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-watching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post Watching</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Lesson example 3:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Speaking and Listening lesson: Renting apartments/living arrangements-Home Improvement: “Tim ‘The Landlord’ Taylor”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Activity</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-watching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-watching</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Updates From the Field

Teaching Self-Advocacy through TV Sitcoms (continued from previous page)

We hope you have fun adapting these lesson plan ideas for your classroom! We eagerly welcome your comments and suggestions.

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References


Strategies to Boost Students’ Interest in Learning

Ohud Alderaan

Every teacher undoubtedly seeks outcomes that fit their expectations as a teacher, and this does not happen unless the people absorbing the taught knowledge are interested in what is being sprinkled on them. Not all learners have intrinsic motivation to grasp the language; however, there are several ways for teachers to create a sense of interest for learners. According to Dickinson (1993), intrinsically motivated learners are more capable of setting their goals and learning from peers, which helps them to take this motivation outside of the classroom and apply it to other life aspects.

One key is flexibility. We all feel comfortable working if our boss/manager is flexible enough to hear from us, always welcomes our thoughts, and builds a stress-free environment. This is exactly what learners need. Successful teachers are democratic enough to adjust their teaching and assessment plans to their learners’ preferences. It is true that not all teaching institutions allow this, yet there must be some room for change, even within a certain lesson. It is effective to work on the topics that we understand our students like to know about, through an informal or formal needs assessment, quick questions, or a teacher’s individual investigation of her students’ profiles. We should not feel upset if we discover that our long-time work on a syllabus does not work very nicely after we know what our students like to learn, because defining their interests is the very first step to create useful knowledge.

Appreciating racial, religious, and personal differences is another huge key. Learners of any subject are curious to learn when there is a noticeable sense of respect generated and practiced with their diverse identities, even the ones we do not know about. Hidden identities (Vandrick, 1993), including learners with invisible disabilities (e.g. illnesses), religious minorities, or sexual issues, are sometimes offended when topics related to their issues are discussed in class, especially the topics degrading these identities. Expecting these identities to be present in every classroom, we need to be careful with what is discussed in our classrooms to ensure maximum respect to every learner. This is not to say that we as teachers need to hide our beliefs on political, religious and cultural matters, but this should be lined up with respect and appreciation of our students who may be opposed to our views.

(Continued next page)
With reference back to the stress-free environment, the teacher’s tolerance with learners’ mistakes contributes to their interest in the taught material. From beginner to proficient ESL/EFL learners, every learner’s motivation is boosted when there is acceptance of their output, even if it lacks accuracy. It is necessary to be lenient enough to accept learners’ errors and to view them as a natural consequence of learning. A thank-you combined with a smile are enough to implant comfort to the learner, and consequently encourage them to participate again in the class discussion.

Always have a good start of your lesson. This does not mean that there have to be time- or money-consuming materials to introduce a lesson. Rather, it is all about feelings. Greeting learners and having short informal conversations with them prior to the lesson enhance their enthusiasm for learning. A teacher can tell students the activities for the day in a friendly way so that they feel close to her, which diminishes any barriers of communication between the learners and the teacher.

Ohud Alderaan is a TESOL graduate student at Eastern Michigan University. In 2006, she received her undergraduate degree in English Language & Literature with honors at the University of Dammam, Saudi Arabia. Ohud has taught English as a second language to EFL students at the same university for five years before she earned a scholarship to do her higher studies. Ohud has attended several conferences, workshops, and seminars since her graduation and has been keen to satisfy her thirst for language teaching.

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References