Happy New Year! I hope everyone is surviving the myriad of weather that Mother Nature has thrown our way already this year. As we segue into the new political leadership, we as an organization need to be ready to face new challenges related to education, specifically our English language learners. MITESOL’s mission is to provide leadership and support for professionals involved in teaching ELLs. We need to work together now more than ever.

The MITESOL 2016 conference, “The Changing Faces of Diversity” was a proud accomplishment for me. The conference went as well as it did as a result of the MITESOL board, my colleagues at the University of Michigan – Flint, volunteers, and YOU, the membership who attended. I want to thank you all again for the successful execution of this event. Special recognition goes out to past presidents Andrew S. McCullough and Colleen Brice for their unwavering support throughout the process as well as to Joanna Schrecengost (Findlay University), who did an amazing job coordinating our exhibitors.

The TESOL 2017 convention is just over a month away. I’m excited to be representing MITESOL with Sara Okello and Katie Allen as Best of Affiliate in our presentation on Speech Acts. If you are going to present at the conference, please let us know (jjaquays@mitesol.org). We are compiling a list of presentations by MITESOLers to be posted on the MITESOL website so that our other members can attend your sessions. For those of you who are attending, I encourage you to submit an article for the next MITESOL Messages newsletter reflecting/sharing insightful revelations you garnered.

This year’s MITESOL reception at TESOL 2017 in Seattle, WA, will be held Wednesday evening from 5:30 PM to 8:00 PM at Elephant & Castle – an English pub. It is located just .2 miles from the WSCC. We’ll have a variety of delicious appetizers, wine, and a cash bar. An email invitation will be sent with a link to RSVP. I hope to see all of you there to socialize and catch up.

MITESOL has had several changes in our leadership team for the upcoming year. First is our President-Elect / Conference Chair for 2017, Suzanne Toohey (Oakland Schools). Suzanne brings a great history of experience with her as a frequent presenter and prior board member. The 2017 conference will be held at Suzanne’s very own Oakland Schools in Waterford, MI – a beautiful facility – and the theme will be Promoting Equity and Excellence. Save the dates of October 20 & 21, because you won’t want to miss it.

Other changes in our leadership include a special farewell and thank you to our Membership Coordinator Jane DeGroot. She was not easy to replace, but we are fortunate to have May Denha taking on this role for the next three years. Additionally, Austin Kaufmann took on the position of CALL SIG Leader mid-way through last year, and we have Brian Pickerd as our new Professional Development SIG Leader, as well. We also welcome our new Newsletter Co-Editors Melanie Rabine-Johnson, Clarissa Codrington, and Jennifer Musser as we bid farewell to Aiman Mueller and Ildi Porter-Szucs (EMU). Thank you for your services. Please check out these leadership updates on p. ???.

Remember that the MITESOL board is made up of members like you. I encourage you to get involved: volunteer, present, attend conferences, be active in your SIG, write articles for the newsletter, and/or communicate with us. I’m excited and honored to be your MITESOL President. Let’s have a great year.

Jolene Jaquays,
President, MITESOL
From the Editors…

Hello fellow MITESOLers,

Welcome to February and this month’s Messages edition, from three new editors! And of course, would it still be considered winter if we didn’t make mention of our Michigan weather? Let’s call that the mention and move right along.

Melanie, Jennifer, and I (Clarissa) are incredibly excited and honored to be a part of the MITESOL community in this capacity. It’s especially interesting because this whole thing came together through emails and the joys of Google Docs! I for one am excited to meet for the first time later this month at the February board meeting, but truly, the wonders of the Internet never cease to amaze.

In this edition of Messages, you will find our current cultural and political climate lending its flavor to many of the articles. There has never been a more appropriate time to reaffirm what we all strive for and believe in: diversity, inclusion, acceptance, friendship, and intercultural communication.

Regardless of which political aisle you walk, as MITESOLers, it is inevitable that this issue is filled with information regarding immigration concerns and political activism; how to discuss politics with students and English Language Learners; common ground among diverse groups; and other conversations reacting to the current political climate.

We have an amazing opportunity to work together as a team for the safety, livelihood, and liberties of many individuals, who may find those qualities of life at stake.

The editing team for this year’s newsletter would like to extend a huge “thank you” to all who submitted updates from the field & SIG updates with specific teaching resources and tools that are relevant to this cultural climate.

We hope you all enjoy reading this issue and that it may support you in your own professional corners beyond MITESOL.

We’re looking forward to continuing to work with you all! Happy February!

Best regards,
Clarissa Codrington, Melanie Rabine-Johnson, and Jennifer Musser, MITESOL Messages Co-Editors
clarissakcodrington@gmail.com, rabinem05@gmail.com, jmusser4@emich.edu
MITESOL News

OUTGOING BOARD MEMBERS

We extend our deepest gratitude to the following MITESOL members who have helped to make MITESOL the excellent organization that it is today!

Colleen Brice – Outgoing Past President (2014-2016)
Colleen was elected to MITESOL’s Executive Board in 2014. Colleen served as President-Elect and Conference Chair in 2014, organizing the MITESOL 2014 conference Expanding our Perspectives: From the Classroom to the Community. During her tenure, Colleen and the board expanded MITESOL’s support of conference goers to include ESL educators who work with adults in community-, church-, or government-sponsored programs, K-12 ESL professionals who work with ELLs in K-12 contexts in Michigan, and ESL professionals who work in the Upper Peninsula. Colleen worked tirelessly to be sure that our Advocacy and Policy representatives were able to attend the Policy Summit in Washington, D.C., the past several years. She also helped restructure the way MITESOL handles proposal submissions and conference registrations – tasks that have always been challenging to incoming MITESOL Board Members (and to those who have been around for a long time!). This is only a brief list of Colleen’s accomplishments during her three-year term. Thanks, Colleen, and we wish you continued success as Associate Professor of English at Grand Valley State University!

Jane DeGroot – Outgoing Membership Coordinator (2014-2016)
Typical assignments to the MITESOL Board are for two years. Serving as Membership Coordinator for three years means being one of the chief organizers of the MITESOL conferences each of those years, as well as dealing with member questions throughout the year. Our lovely, faithful and stalwart Jane DeGroot (the Past President’s job is to pour on the compliments!) has been wonderful at this. Moreover, she has helped each incoming president to adapt to the challenges of conference organization with aplomb and surety! Jane breathed a sigh of relief when we found someone to replace her very late into this past year. It was also last year that she retired from the Literacy Center of West Michigan, where she had worked for many years and served as manager for nine years. Jane writes, “Although I officially retired from the Literacy Center of West Michigan, I take great satisfaction in continuing to work with clients who would benefit from Accent Modification training. I am currently self-employed.” Congratulations, and thanks for all you’ve done for MITESOL, Jane!

Leadership Updates

Andrew S. McCullough, Past President

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MITESOL News

Leadership Updates  (cont. from previous page)

Aiman Wesley Mueller – Outgoing Newsletter Co-Editor (2012-2016)
Aiman Mueller began his stint as Newsletter Co-Editor working with Allison Piippo on the 2013 newsletters. Aiman contributed his talents, dedication, patience and insights to his editorship and to the board for four years. We thank him for those years of service and stability on the board, something our board members will tell you is a prized quality and quantity! In his kind generosity, Aiman helped select our new Lead Editor, Melanie Rabine-Johnson, whom Aiman has also offered to tutor during the transition months into producing this first newsletter of 2017. Aiman worked several years in ESL at Grand Valley State University before taking a new position this year with the Writing Department at GVSU. He now teaches first year writing, and we wish him the best!

Ildi Porter-Szucs – Outgoing Newsletter Co-Editor (2014-2016)
Ildi had served on the MITESOL Board in the past, and when Allie Piippo stepped down from her newsletter work with Aiman at the end of 2014, we were lucky to have Idli return and serve as Co-Editor until the end of 2016. Ildi resigned her position this past year as she had plans to spend a year in Eastern Europe, where she is now. But do not be dismayed! Ildi will be back in the US later this year to continue serving in her position as Assistant Professor in the World Languages Department at Eastern Michigan University, and she will also become the President-Elect and Conference Chair of MITESOL in 2018. It is this kind of dedication to our organization that keeps it strong and helps maintain continuity over the years! Happy break from the action, Ildi, and see you in a few months! (Ildi is never actually gone – she has consulted on part of this newsletter! She is unstoppable!)

Due to a variety of circumstances, Richard has had to resign his SIG Leader position. Richard is Director of the English Language Institute and Associate Professor of English Language & Literature at Central Michigan University, where he teaches courses in pedagogical grammar, discourse analysis, and language teaching methodology. Richard has also been active in the National Geographic Learning Michigan State University Learning Symposium, and we are certain he will continue to contribute to the field here in Michigan. Thanks for your service, Rich!

POSITION CHANGES ON THE BOARD

Andrew S. McCullough: President-Elect & Conference Chair, 2015 ▶ President, 2016 ▶ Past President, 2017
Andy is serving the third of a three-year term on MITESOL’s Executive Board. He is a senior faculty member in Michigan State University’s English Language Center, where he teaches courses in academic ESL.

Jolene Jaquays: President-Elect & Conference Chair, 2016 ▶ President, 2017
Jolene Jaquays is serving her second year of a three-year term on MITESOL’s Executive Board. She has been a teacher in the English Language Program at University of Michigan-Flint since 2011. She completed both her M.A. in TESOL and her B.S. in Education at Central Michigan University. Her 30-year teaching repertoire includes teaching English, ESL, and Spanish to preschool through graduate-level students. Jolene shares her professional knowledge and keeps up with current trends in pedagogy at statewide, national, and international conferences. She enjoys sharing her enthusiasm for language and American culture by providing an engaging educational setting for her students. Jolene has boundless energy for her work and for her service to MITESOL! We look forward to two more years of her leadership!
Leadership Updates  (cont. from previous page)

CONTINUING BOARD MEMBERS

We are deeply grateful to the following individuals, who will continue to serve MITESOL on the MITESOL board for the next year:

- Jim Desler  
  Treasurer  
- Ellen Brengle  
  Secretary  
- Pamela Bogart  
  Listserv Manager  
- Trisha Dowling  
  Webmaster  
- Josie Pickens  
  Communications Coordinator  
- Joanna Schrecengost  
  Conference Exhibits Manager

MITESOL JOURNAL CO-EDITORS

MITESOL is going to continue publishing an online periodical, entitled, MITESOL Journal. We have the following accomplished women to thank for coediting this forum:

- Marian Woyciehowicz Gonsior  
- Kay M. Losey  
- Christen Pearson

SIG LEADERS

- Sharon Umlor  
  Advocacy and Policy SIG Leader  
- Stacy Tanner  
  K-12 SIG Leader  
- Cynthia Macknish  
  Post-Secondary SIG Leader  
- Casey Thelenwood  
  Adult Education SIG Leader

(continued on next page)
MITESOL News

Leadership Updates  (cont. from previous page)

WELCOME NEW BOARD MEMBERS

Suzanne Toohey – President-Elect & Conference Chair, 2017
Our President-Elect is the ESL/Title III Consultant for Curriculum and Assessment for Oakland County Schools. Suzanne served MITESOL as Public Relations Officer in 2007 and Communications Coordinator in 2008, under the alias Suzanne Haxer (her maiden name). She joined MITESOL in 2005 and has presented at every conference except one from 2006 to 2016. Welcome back to the board, Suzanne! May these three years be marvelous ones!

May Denha – Membership Coordinator
Thanks to Suzanne’s circle of professional friends, MITESOL was able to secure the services of May Denha as our new Membership Coordinator. May has experience teaching various grade levels and English as a Second language in the West Bloomfield School District, where one of her students wrote, “Mrs. Denha, you are the GREATEST teacher of all time.” (The kind of praise we all live for!) May is now the District ESL Coordinator for West Bloomfield School District and serves on the Oakland County ESL/Title III Professional Development Leadership Team. It is wonderful to have another ESL professional from the K-12 realm join our board; this bodes good things for our future. Welcome to the MITESOL Board, May, and thank you for joining!

Austin Kaufmann – CALL SIG Leader (2017-2019)
With an M.A. in TESOL from American University and seventeen years of ESL teaching experience, Austin joins the MITESOL Board as CALL SIG Leader. The position of CALL SIG Leader had stood empty following Akiko Ota’s departure. During the past year, the board recruited Austin as provisional CALL SIG Leader. He provided wonderful advice and assistance in organizing the MITESOL 2016 conference and was elected as CALL SIG Leader for a two-year term. By day, Austin is an English Instructor and Ed Tech Specialist at Michigan State University’s English Language Center, where he also organizes the annual NGL | MSU Learning Symposium. By night, he plays guitar, harmonica, and mandolin and sings with the acoustic trio The Dangling Participles. Thanks for joining us, Austin, and welcome to the board!

Brian Pickerd – Professional Development SIG Leader (2017-2019)
In his own words, Brian is “a husband, a dad, a teacher, and a part-time professor.” He has taught at East Rockford Middle School and is now on the TESOL Faculty at Cornerstone University. Brian has worked professionally as an instructor and language consultant with the German, French, and English languages. Additionally, he is the self-published author of the book Scattering Seed in Teaching. Welcome to the Board, Brian. We look forward to getting to know you.

Melanie Rabine-Johnson – Lead MITESOL Messages Editor
Thanks to Aiman Mueller, we have Melanie Rabine-Johnson to lead the MITESOL Messages (formerly Newsletter) editing team. After getting her M.Ed. in TESOL, Melanie transitioned from writing tutoring to becoming the Writing Center Coordinator at The Fred Meijer Center for Writing and Michigan Authors at Grand Valley State University in Allendale, Michigan. She is a new mother and is excited to be working with the MITESOL Board. Welcome to the MITESOL Board, Melanie!

Clarissa Codrington – MITESOL Messages Co-Editor
After getting her M.A. in TESOL from Eastern Michigan University in 2014, Clarissa has been teaching in various settings around southeast Michigan, including language centers and community colleges. She enjoys the opportunity for professional development, collaborating with others, and learning about new teaching techniques and methods. Clarissa says that she is really looking forward to becoming a more proactive part of the MITESOL community. Thanks for joining the board, Clarissa!

Jennifer Musser – MITESOL Messages Co-Editor
Currently enrolled in the graduate TESOL program at Eastern Michigan University, Jennifer also works as an assistant ESL lecturer, a tutor for international students, and an invigilator for the EMU IELTS Test Center. Before that, she received her B.S. in Journalism from Ohio University and then taught EFL in Japan for about seven years. On weekends, Jennifer enjoys spending time with her husband and volunteering with the Syrian American Refugee Network. Thanks for joining the MITESOL Board, Jennifer!

(continued on next page)
MITESOL News

Leadership Updates  
(cont. from previous page)

And finally, last but not least, in a brand new position....

Colleen Brice – MITESOL Historian

You read about Colleen as Past President. The board wanted not only continuity, but recorded continuity. We were able to persuade Colleen to come back and spend more time with us in a position created in 2016 that is to begin this year, MITESOL Historian! Colleen, it’s like you never left! Welcome to this new position, where we know your expertise and passion for the MITESOL organization will be greatly appreciated.

Board Notes

Ellen Brengle - Secretary

Outside my sunroom window, there is actually no sun at all, but rather an endless gray backdrop of January sky behind the leafless branches of my giant tulip tree. It’s a perfect, quiet day to turn inward, recalling what our busy board members were doing during the hustle and bustle of sunnier days after our August newsletter. Like every year, there was no dearth of activity in those brighter months, as our October conference grew nearer. In fact, tremendous behind-the-scenes mentoring and learning, meeting and planning, ordering, reserving, scheduling and coordinating was happening – especially among the then incoming (Jolene Jaquays), current (Andrew McCullough), and past (Colleen Brice) presidents of our organization – all in preparation for presenting an outstanding conference for our Michigan (and some Ohio) colleagues. However, the MITESOL 2016 conference itself was not the only newsworthy story keeping our organization busy. Below are some of the highlights from the past six months’ labor of love:

- K-12 SIG Leader Stacy Tanner worked on attracting Northern Michigan and Upper Penninsula K-12 attendees to the conference with free admission.
- Sharon Umlor (Socio-political Advocacy Leader) and Webmaster Trisha Dowling reported to the board on their advocacy trip to Washington, D.C., which was both a teaching and a learning experience.
- Treasurer Jim Desler continued to keep track of our funds and stay on top of the budget.
- The search for a replacement for our wonderful Membership Coordinator of several years, Jane DeGroot, continued.
- Joanna Schrecengost, Conference Exhibits Manager, worked to improve conference goers’ access to the exhibitors for our upcoming conference, ensuring continued sponsorship from publishers.
- Social Media Coordinator Josie Pickens contributed new ideas for all of us to better use a variety of social media and Google features in order to enhance both internal board communication as well as to foster better outgoing information to the membership.
- Conference Chair Jolene Jaquays reported that both highlighted speakers at MITESOL 2016, Diane Larsen-freeman and Heidi Vellinga, were very well received.
- Several board members’ sessions were highly regarded, including Cynthia Macknish’s (Post-secondary SIG Leader) and Austin Kaufmann’s (CALL SIG Leader).
- Outgoing Past President Colleen Brice was asked to consider continuing to serve on the board as MITESOL Historian.
- Incoming President Suzanne Toohey, ESL/Title III Consultant for Oakland Schools and our first K-12 president in many years, has outlined some new and exciting features for the MITESOL 2017 conference to be held at Oakland Schools. Outstanding keynote speakers are being considered, as well as a six-hour pre-conference session before our 4:00 PM conference start on Friday, October 20.

We hope to see many of you next October. Until then, why not join us in volunteering with this diverse and enthusiastic Michigan ESL group for our upcoming meetings on February 18 (Okemos Library), May 13 (Oakland Schools), and August 19 (Okemos Library)?
A special message by Sharon Umlor, Advocacy and Policy SIG Leader, on behalf of the MITESOL Board

One of TESOL’s core values is to respect diversity, multilingualism, multiculturalism, and individuals’ language rights. It is with that in mind that MITESOL wholeheartedly supports the recently issued “TESOL Statement on Immigration Executive Order.” The TESOL International statement is as follows:

"The President of the United States recently signed an executive order that implements a 90-day entry ban for individuals traveling from seven majority-Muslim nations, places a 120-day suspension on all refugee programs, and suspends the entry of all Syrian refugees indefinitely. This divisive order stands as the latest manifestation of the heated and xenophobic rhetoric that has undermined the fabric of the United States. This contentious act fails to satisfy its intentions to make the United States a safer nation. The exclusion of travelers, immigrants, and refugees from these Middle Eastern and North African countries only serves to make the United States more vulnerable, unfairly targets immigrants and refugees, and stands in stark contrast to the ideals that the United States was built on, and the values that TESOL International Association upholds.

The immediate effects of this egregious executive action on the nearly 17,000 students studying in the United States who come from the seven targeted nations should not be understated. Students are being denied re-entry to the United States. Universities are asking students from the targeted countries not to apply for the next school year. Thousands of students and faculty members already in the United States are stuck in limbo, unfairly left to ponder their fate.

The United States has long been a global leader in international education and cultural exchange, providing a welcoming environment for students from around the world who come to learn about American culture and language and to build a sense of identity and cultural awareness. This executive order contradicts the very principles these students travel to explore, and instead acts to deny them a safe place to learn and grow, and puts the purpose and economic sustainability of international education programs in peril.

The United States is a nation of immigrants, built on the backs of past generations who desired to achieve the ultimate dream of a life free from fear, persecution, and tyranny. TESOL calls on our leaders in Congress, the White House, and communities across the country to uphold the very notions of liberty that our nation was founded upon, and to allow those who wish to pursue this dream to have the same opportunity as the generations of Americans who came before us.”

by David Cutler, TESOL International | 01/31/2017

Please see the TESOL web site for a wealth of Resources on Immigration and Refugee Concerns, and visit MITESOL’s Advocacy page for resources and strategies on how to contact your state legislators. To stay on top of advocacy and policy issues affecting language learners and educators here in Michigan, join the MITESOL Advocacy and Policy Facebook group.

Your voice and support matters!

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**ADVOCACY & POLICY SIG UPDATE**

*Sharon Umlor, Advocacy and Policy SIG Leader*

Our current climate demands that we as educators be resolute in our advocacy efforts for our students, our colleagues and ourselves. You can refer to the Advocacy resources page on MITESOL website for ideas to help inform and focus your efforts. Four items of advocacy interest below include: 1) TESOL’s submitted memo of priorities to the presidential transition team, 2) what ESSA implementation means for ELs, 3) the upcoming TESOL Advocacy and Policy Summit in June, and 4) the recently created MITESOL Advocacy and Policy Facebook group.

1) TESOL Submits Priorities to Presidential Transition Team 1/19/2017
This letter can be accessed on page 11 of this newsletter.
2) English Learners and ESSA: What Every Educator Needs to Know

Currently, a very important TESOL advocacy and policy issue is the implementation of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). TESOL recently published a resource guide for TESOL educators. This link provides a downloadable resource kit, a recording of a recent webinar explaining ESSA, a list of state Department of Education contacts curated by the NAACP, and the final ESSA regulations issued on November 28, 2016. Michigan’s Department of Education website offers an ESSA "Get Involved" page under which you can watch an informational video, then give your feedback in a survey regarding what Michigan has planned for ELs under ESSA.

The feedback forum video and survey designation for ELs are found under “Supports to Special Populations Presentation” and “Supports to Special Populations Feedback Survey.” The MDE expects to open the final draft plan for public comment in early 2017.

3) TESOL Advocacy and Policy Summit
Once a year, English language educators from across the United States meet at the TESOL Advocacy and Policy Summit to learn how Congress works, receive training on the fundamentals of advocacy, learn about current policies as they relate to TESOL’s priorities, and meet with members of Congress to share their thoughts. This year’s summit will be held June 18-20, 2017 in Alexandria, VA.

The following infographic (on the follow page) conveys the steps ANY constituent can use to meet with his or her representatives to advocate for ELL educators and students.

4) MITESOL’s Advocacy and Policy Facebook Group Page
What are you doing to advocate for your EL students, yourself, and colleagues? Participate in the discussion! Join now!
**MITESOL News**

#6 Step Guide to Scheduling District Meetings 2016

## Step 1: Call Your Representative’s and/or Senators’ District Office
- Find the contact information for your senator/representative and call their District Office by following this link and entering your school’s address.
- Identify yourself as a constituent and ask to speak with the office’s scheduler.
- Let the scheduler know that you would like to schedule a meeting with the senator/representative during their recess.
- Remember that the senator/representative might not be available to meet you personally, and meeting with a staff member can be just as meaningful.
- Mention that you are a TESOL professional interested in discussing issues pertaining to the TESOL field.
- Agree on a date, time and location for your meeting.

## Step 2: Ask Other TESOL Professionals to Join You or Help Plan the Meeting
- Ask your colleagues and other TESOL professionals in your congressional district or school to come with you to your meeting.
- Meet with your group of advocates before your meeting to discuss key talking points, strategy and assign speaking roles.

## Step 3: Gather Information
- Collect information to prepare for and reference during your meeting. Also gather information for a leave-behind folder, such as TESOL position statements, policy briefs, school fact sheets, etc.
- Visit TESOL’s Advocacy Resources page for information you can help to prepare and include in your leave-behind folders.

## Step 4: Meet Your Senator or Representative
- Thank the senator/representative/staff member(s) for their time.
- If meeting as a group, have each member introduce him/herself, and a brief description of their background in the TESOL field.
- Discuss issues in the TESOL field that are important to you, important facts about your school/program, current bills up for debate, and any "asks" you have for the representative/runner.
- Be sure to ask for and take pictures to share on social media, school newsletters and with us!

## Step 5: Follow-Up!
- Remember to send a thank-you letter or e-mail to your representative/runner/staffer.
- Follow-up with any information you promised to send.
- Maintain contact and keep in touch with the District Office!

## Step 6: Tell Us How it Went!
- Let us know how your meeting/visit went!
- Share your pictures and experiences with us by e-mail, Twitter, Facebook and Instagram!
- Contact us with any questions you might have.

**TESOL International Association**
- advocacy@tesol.org
- @TESOL_Assn
- @TESOLpolicyguy

**TESOL International Association**
- TESOL International Association
- TESOL International Association
- TESOL International Association
As you and your administration prepare to take office, one of the many areas of responsibility you will have is to support the U.S. education system, and making sure that the needs of all learners in U.S. schools are met. On behalf of the TESOL International Association, I am writing to urge your administration to continue the work of the federal government to ensure that English learners receive the educational opportunities they need so that they might work with us to address the most pressing issues affecting English learners in our country.

Serving as the nation’s largest association for English language teachers and professionals, TESOL advocates for the needs and interests of over 60,000 members across the United States and 12,000 educators internationally. Since its inception over 50 years ago, TESOL has proudly supported the tireless efforts of its members, who shape the minds of some of our nation’s most underserved and overlooked students. It is our hope that the Trump Administration holds many of the same values we have affirmed for so long, and will work with us to address the most pressing issues affecting English learners in our country.

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)
The passage of ESSA marked an instrumental shift in the way our nation’s 4.5 million English learners are assessed, how they obtain English proficiency and how federal programs support them and their teachers. TESOL members believe that the Secretary of Education is uniquely positioned to encourage state and local education agencies efforts to provide high quality professional development and ensure the academic success of English learners. We believe this can be supported with robust funding for ESSA’s Title II, Part A, as well as Title III formula grants. Moreover, investment in education has a strong benefit on the nation’s economy. As such, we urge you and your nominee for Secretary of Education to support adequate funding for these crucial funding streams in your FY 2018 budget.

Teacher Preparation
• The professional development of the nation’s teachers relies on Title II, Part A, of ESSA and we urge your administration to support strong funding for that program. The preservice programs that prepare the teachers of tomorrow, however, do not always provide the substantive, experiential elements of teaching that are crucial to preparing for today’s classrooms. We strongly urge your administration to thoughtfully consider how teachers are prepared to enter the classroom, and are able to meet the needs of this country’s diverse student population, especially the growing population of English learners.
• Leadership is needed to modernize and elevate the country’s most important profession. The reauthorization of the Higher Education Act must support improvements in teacher readiness standards, licensure standards, as well as investing in teacher compensation, to strengthen our schools, communities and economy.

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and Adult Education
With the passage of WIOA, over 670,000 adult English learners have benefited from publicly-funded educational programs that enhance their English proficiency and skills. However, the demand for these programs exceeds the supply, especially as the nation’s workforce grows more diverse. By providing English language instruction, civics education, and workforce training, the adult education system serves as the de facto immigrant integration system in the U.S. Investing in adult education programs is an investment in the country’s workforce. We urge you and your Secretary of Education to support increased funding for Title II under WIOA in order to continue to meet the demand for adult education and English language services.

Equal Access
TESOL members believe it is essential for the Administration to recognize that access to a free and equitable education is a right for every student, regardless of national origin or native language. The cost of not supporting our students, especially our English learners, with the proper funding and access to safe schools staffed with highly trained educators, puts the ideological foundations of a free and just society in jeopardy. In addition, it can

Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA)
• The DACA program is critical to PK-12 public education systems across the country. We believe students brought to the U.S. as children must be able to pursue an education without the threat of deportation, and have a pathway to fully participate in American society as citizens. These are young people in whom we already have invested. They belong to our communities, and as graduates they will contribute to our economy and society.
• Over 750,000 children and young adults have received protections under DACA. Students must be able to attend school, graduate and pursue a productive future in academics or the workforce. Further, teachers who were brought here as children must be allowed to continue to strengthen our schools, communities, and economy.

Lastly, TESOL requests that a new Secretary of Education appoint passionate Assistant Deputy Secretaries of OELA and OCTAE respectively, with the goal of further supporting and understanding the needs of English learners.

This is a busy period for the President-elect’s Transition Team. I welcome the opportunity to meet in-person to discuss our organization’s work and ideas, with the shared goal of supporting the success of our nation’s English learners. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.
CALL SIG UPDATE: MY FACEBOOK EXPERIMENT

Austin Kaufmann, CALL SIG Leader

In May of 2016, I attended CALICO, the annual conference dedicated to the dissemination of information related to language learning technology. The 11:15 AM session I had planned to attend was canceled without notice, so I walked blindly (and a few minutes late) into the nearest room that still had its door open. The presentation, “Benefits and Challenges of Using Facebook for Language Learning,” led by Theresa Schenker of Yale University and Fiona Poorman of the University of Education in Karlsruhe, Germany, was not one I would have likely chosen, but it ended up changing and informing my teaching more than any other session at CALICO that year.

I am one of those university English instructors who has always said, “You wouldn’t catch me dead being ‘friends’ on Facebook with my students!” But by the time Schenker and Poorman’s compelling session and Q&A had wrapped up, I had been convinced to at least give Facebook a try with my students. Summer session was just beginning, and I knew one of my classes was small. It was the perfect opportunity to try something new.

Now before you say, “Forget that!” and flip to a different article, let me explain what soothed some of my worries. If you set up a Facebook Group, you have the convenience of Facebook without ever having to become Facebook “friends” with your students. No worrying about your students seeing your personal social media posts. No having to set up a separate Facebook account. The only thing your students see from you is (a) what you post exclusively to your Facebook Group and (b) what you post with the settings on “public” to Facebook (which anyone, your students included, could see already anyway).

With a few remaining apprehensions, I decided to give it a shot. It didn’t take long for me to recognize some of the immediate benefits: nearly all students already had Facebook accounts, and even those who didn’t, were familiar with how social media sites work, so there was no need to conduct “learner training.” Students were posting their self-introductions and “selfies” within minutes. Sharing course documents, internet resources, images, and video instantly became easier than with the Learning Management System that my university employs and more accessible and user friendly than the class blogs I had used in the past. Plus, students could access these materials as easily on their phones as on their desktops.

Which brings me to my next point: mobility. It almost goes without saying, but thanks to the Facebook app, Facebook Groups are very mobile friendly, which is not something that all ed tech applications can claim. Having a mobile-friendly way to connect with my students turned out to be huge. Current university students -- international and domestic alike -- are relying on email less and less, with a number of polls and surveys suggesting that many check email once per day, at best, and frequently ignore emails from official university offices or professors, believing them to be spam. However, if both students and instructor enable Messenger -- Facebook’s desktop and mobile online “chatting” app — messages appear right where students are already looking: their phones.

I was very pleasantly surprised at the increase in student-instructor communication flowing in both directions. Since it was extremely convenient to send reminders to my students via Messenger (usually from my office desktop computer), I found myself doing it more often. And the response from my students blew me away. I estimate a ten-fold increase in out-of-class communication, mostly in the form of questions about homework and study techniques, and since responding was easy, it never felt like an unwanted burden. (Note: the following semester when I continued using Facebook groups, the numbers were not quite so high but still approximately three to five times higher than when I was using email, phone, and office hours appointments.)

One of the other added perks of communicating with students via Messenger is that if you send a message, it’s easy for them to use a simple “thumbs up” (or other emojis, for better or for worse) to indicate their thanks or approval. Further, Messenger automatically indicates which recipients have seen the message, which I find helpful.

There are other features of Facebook and Messenger that I’ve used minimally but hope to explore further, notably the ability to switch to live video chatting. I used video on a few occasions with students, primarily when they were Messaging me with questions, and only with their prior consent. Admittedly, video chatting was an awkward hurdle for me to jump, initially, but most of my students regularly use this medium for communicating with their peers and with family and friends back home and thus found it comfortable and convenient.

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In end-of-semester surveys, some stated that video chatting offered them the benefits of an “office hours” visit but was far more convenient and less intimidating. Others admitted they would never have actually stopped by my office or scheduled an appointment and would have just not acted upon their question. For me, that was reason enough to continue using Facebook and Messenger.

My Facebook experiment was not without some challenges and problems, however. The issue of privacy is a deal-breaker for some, and, admittedly, there were times that I was not exactly thrilled to have notifications from students pop up on my phone. However, managing the hours to have notifications turned on or turned off is a matter of personal choice, and Messenger offers various options. I ended up keeping them on all the time, as I use the Messenger app occasionally for personal communication, as well. I did, however, spend some time in class clearly delineating when it was appropriate and inappropriate to communicate with me.

The informal nature of text chatting may be off-putting for some instructors, as well. Most of us have worked hard to teach our students appropriate email style and “netiquette” rules, but the nature of texting is not conducive for promoting language formality. I chose to approach it as a “teachable moment” to discuss the contextual, pragmatic, and linguistic differences between chatting, email, and formal writing.

Before I conclude, let me first acknowledge that my students are all fortunate enough to have smartphones, to have access to university computer labs, and to be enrolled in a relatively expensive university program, so technology and finances are not a major burden. I recognize that not every teacher or student has these luxuries, and having worked in the past with low-income, transient, and migrant populations in the US and in developing countries abroad, I know that my teaching environment and my students’ situation is a privileged one. Facebook certainly is not a tool that English instructors can use in every context.

By now you may have realized that my approach to using Facebook Groups and Messenger was different from the one hinted at in the title of Schenker and Poorman’s CALICO presentation, “Using Facebook for Language Learning.”

While my students did regularly post assigned reports and videos to our Facebook Group, my use of Facebook was not ultimately motivated by a desire to use Facebook for my students’ acquisition of English. For me, it was more about course management, building a class community, and instructor-student communication, and to the extent that Facebook Groups aided me in those ways, I would say my experiment last summer was a great success. That Facebook also presents my students with large quantities of written English input and an authentic forum for communication is an added bonus.

For me, for now at least, Facebook Groups are here to stay.

### Benefits and Challenges of Using Facebook for Language Learning - Theresa Schenker, Yale University & Fiona Poorman, University of Education, Karlsruhe Germany

Social networking sites offer many opportunities for collaborative language learning in a variety of communication formats (synchronous, asynchronous, one-on-one, group-to-group). This presentation summarizes a six-week telecollaborative project between learners of German in Germany and the USA using the social networking site Facebook. Students’ communication strategies and language accuracy in different CMC tasks will be presented, and the effects of the Facebook exchange on learners’ grammatical competence will be summarized. Advantages and disadvantages of the various CMC formats Facebook offers will be showcased. The presentation will include students’ evaluation of using Facebook for language learning.

### Links to two articles related to using Facebook for language learning:

- [https://www.actfl.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/TLEsamples/TLE_Nov11_Article.pdf](https://www.actfl.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/TLEsamples/TLE_Nov11_Article.pdf)
K-12 SIG Update

Stacy Tanner, K-12 SIG Leader

Hello K-12 Colleagues!

Well, it is that time of year again where we put aside our regular schedule and create a testing schedule. Once again, there is a lot going on from WIDA. Here are some updates:

- As a quick reference, the link below is a “What’s New” flyer with updates and changes to the WIDA ACCESS for ELLs:

- For the WIDA ACCESS 2017, you may notice a change in your students’ ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 proficiency level. In order to meet the language demands of college and career readiness standards, WIDA raised the scoring standards for each proficiency level. Students will need to showcase higher language skills in 2016–2017 to achieve the same proficiency level scores (1.0–6.0) achieved in past WIDA ACCESS tests. Additional information is given on the following website:

- To help prepare your students, make sure you review the Testing Demos:

- Following the WIDA practice of continuous improvement, and based on feedback from various educators, WIDA has updated the WIDA ELD Standards, Performance Definitions to include descriptors for Proficiency Level 6. WIDA revised the language to make it more consistent throughout the two documents Performance Definitions for Listening & Reading, and Performance Definitions for Speaking & Writing. Here are the direct links to the updated documents:
  - https://www.wida.us/get.aspx?id=542
  - https://www.wida.us/get.aspx?id=543

- Testing Tip: Before you start testing, fill your students’ minds with positive affirmations. Allow them to do ‘power moves’ that will create positivity within. I like to show my students some stretching moves they can do at any time during the test, and I also come around and offer mints now and then.

Happy Testing!
Cynthia Macknish, Post-secondary SIG Leader

It was wonderful seeing old friends and making new ones at the MITESOL 2016 conference in Flint in October. The keynote addresses were inspiring, and I found it difficult to choose from the many thought-provoking sessions on offer.

Thank you to those of you who participated in the Post-secondary SIG meeting. It was an opportunity to explore current issues affecting students and professionals in post-secondary institutions. In line with the conference theme, Changing Faces of Diversity, we explored issues of diversity together. Drawing on Moore (2016), some of us considered LGBT learners' needs in Michigan ESL classes, and Linville's (2016) article in TESOL Journal prompted a discussion of how to prepare teachers to be ESOL advocates. In the aftermath of Brexit and the then impending US election, some members discussed how enrollment was affected at our institutions. Additionally, the lack of support for 'safe spaces' and 'trigger warnings' at the University of Chicago has raised debate on academic freedom and free speech vs. emotional discomfort and microaggression. Ferguson (2016) explains views on both sides of the debate, and a related article in The Atlantic called 'The Coddling of the American Mind' by Lukianoff, G. and Haidt, J. (2015), recommended by one of my M.A. students, adds a further dimension. Members at the meeting shared what was happening at their institutions regarding this issue. We only scratched the surface on all of these issues, and there is always more to talk about and share.

Recently I read a report on results from a study at Stanford University showing that students at middle school, high school, AND college all fail to evaluate the credibility of information on the Internet. Specifically, researchers concluded that university students need more instruction on how to navigate social media content. I wonder if we TESOL professionals are doing enough to help our students in this area. If you have ideas or information that you could share on this issue, do get in touch.

To read more, check out the following:


Mark your calendars for the following events:

National Geographic Learning, MSU: April 8
AAAL 2017, Portland: March 18-21
TESOL 2017, Seattle: March 21-24
AILA 2017, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil: July 23-28

(I hope everyone submits a proposal!)

2017 should be an interesting year. Please let me know if you have any publications or events that you would like me to share with our SIG members.

Wishing everyone a happy and productive Year of the Rooster!
Hello Everyone and Happy New Year! I hope that 2017 is off to a joyful start for each of you. As we face a year of change at the national level, I would like to share these upcoming events and resources on supporting immigrant and refugee students both inside and outside of the classroom as well as some relevant articles I found.

Upcoming Events

1) Michigan Association of Community and Adult Education (MACAE) – Family Speak
   Wednesday, February 15th, 8:00 AM – 1:30 PM, Capitol Building, Lansing, MI
   http://macae.org/?event-list-cal=familyspeak

2) Michigan Association of Community and Adult Education (MACAE) – Legislative Day
   Wednesday, March 8, 2017, Capitol Building, State Capitol, Lansing, MI
   http://macae.org/?event-list-cal=legislative-day

3) Michigan ESL Professional Advisory Committee – Transformative Teaching: Innovate, Integrate, Initiate Spring 2017 ESL Conference
   Friday, March 17, 2017, A+ English Language School, 1120 S. Harrison Rd., East Lansing, MI
   Cost: $25 ($20 Early Bird Registration before February 17, 2017)

Resources

1) Teaching Tolerance – Perspectives for a Diverse America Curriculum
   http://perspectives.tolerance.org/
   A cost-free literacy-based curriculum that joins anti-bias social justice content with the Common Core State Standards.

2) Teaching for Change
   http://www.tfcbooks.org/teaching-change-recommended-gifts
   A list of multicultural and social justice books for all ages.

3) American Federation of Teachers – Immigrant and Refugee Children: A Guide for Educators and School Support Staff
   Resources for protecting and preparing youth and families in case of an Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) raid.

4) Michigan Immigrant Rights Center – Preparing Your Family for Immigration Enforcement Guide
   English: http://michiganimmigrant.org/sites/default/files/Preparing%20Your%20Family%20for%20Immigration%20Enforcement-%20English%201.27.16.pdf
   Spanish: http://www.michiganimmigrant.org/sites/default/files/Preparing%20Your%20Family%20for%20Immigration%20Enforcement-%20Spanish%201.27.16.pdf
   Information on family preparedness, rights, and responsibilities.

5) Welcoming Michigan
   https://docs.google.com/document/d/1GLka0BorwjomDLklDNKuXklBQ7mQAIc2OOpU5ctSWPbQ/edit
   Some post-election resources and a list of actions we can all take to build more welcoming and inclusive communities.

6) Refugee Education Center – Cultural Backgrounders
   https://refugeeeducationcenter.org/services/converging-paths/
   Community background information for refugees in Afghan, Bhutanese, Bosnian, Burmese, Cuban, Democratic Republic of Congo, Eritrean, Haitian, Iraqi, Somali, and Sudanese communities.

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MITESOL News

Adult Education SIG Update  (cont. from previous page)

News and Articles

1) Hate Crimes Lower in Michigan in 2015, but Trend May Be In Jeopardy
By John Counts for MLive. “The number of hate crimes in Michigan trended downward in 2015... but that trend may be in jeopardy in 2016 after the Michigan Department of Civil Rights and other groups say they have seen an increase in reports of hate-related incidents.”

2) Grant Will Help Southeast Michigan Communities Welcome Immigrants
By Sarah Cwiek for Michigan Radio. “A $50,000 grant will boost an effort to welcome immigrants in some Michigan communities.”

3) The Challenges of Adult Education ESOL
http://exclusive.multibriefs.com/content/the-challenges-of-adult-education-esol/education
By Douglas Magrath, published in TESOL’s English Language Bulletin. “Adult education English language courses (ESOL) offer a unique set of challenges that are different from those presented by the typical intensive programs at state universities and private language schools.”

4) Undocumented Immigrants and Their Kids Anxious About Trump Presidency
By Niraj Warikoo for the Detroit Free Press. “The uncertainty of what may happen is weighing heavily on the minds of many undocumented immigrants in Michigan, who experts say are an integral part of the economy and life of many communities across the state.”

5) With Eyes on Reform & Empathy, GR Educators Call for Change to Standardized Tests for ELL Students
By Anna Gustafson for Rapid Growth Media. “There are a myriad reasons as to why educators frequently feel the state’s student performance test... is punitive, but it stems in part from the fact that students learning English are often facing an overwhelmingly

If you have any suggestions or information to include in the next Adult Education SIG Update, I would love to hear from you! Please contact me at thelecas@gvsu.edu. Thank you for all that you do to support and advocate for emergent bilingual learners across Michigan!

Call for Manuscripts for the MITESOL Journal

Kay M. Losey and Christen M. Pearson, Co-Editors of the MITESOL Journal

The MITESOL Journal: An Online Publication of MITESOL is a refereed academic journal that will soon be published online twice a year. Its mission is to promote excellence in TESOL education and teacher development. Articles in the MITESOL Journal focus on research studies, issues in the field of TESOL, and theoretically grounded discussions of teaching methods and pedagogy. Articles may consider any educational level or context, from kindergarten to university and from adult school and community literacy programs to workplace literacy settings.

If you’ve never published before or wish to add a double blind, peer-reviewed journal publication to your CV, the MITESOL Journal is the perfect venue for your work. We regard all members of our readership as potential authors: preschool teachers to college professors, those new to scholarly publication as well as those who have experience publishing their work. While the MITESOL Journal is a refereed journal, it is also a mentoring journal. Editors will work with authors of accepted manuscripts until they are ready for publication. Submission is open to all; authors do not need to be members of the MITESOL organization to submit a manuscript.

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Call for Manuscripts for the MITESOL Journal (cont. from previous page)

We are currently seeking manuscripts for the following categories of submissions:

- Research papers,
- Issues in TESOL articles,
- Research-based teaching techniques, and
- Book or material reviews.

Note that manuscripts based on presentations at the MITESOL 2016 conference are strongly encouraged.

The review process is ongoing; that is, there are no deadlines. That said, however, we would like to receive your submission as soon as possible! Time of first submission to publication is often six months, including the review process and one or more revisions. So please do consider spending some of these wintry days writing for our profession, sharing your ideas, and sending in your manuscript soon for consideration.

For detailed descriptions and examples of the differing types of articles we publish, see the MITESOL Journal information on the MITESOL website. Information on how and where to submit your manuscript is also at this location. If you have further questions regarding the submission process itself, please contact Dawn Evans, Submissions Editor of the MITESOL Journal, at evansda@gvsu.edu. We hope to hear from you soon!

Additionally, if you are interested in serving on the Editorial Review Board for MITESOL Journal, we would like to hear from you. Volunteering to review potential articles for this new MITESOL publication will allow you to make a valuable contribution to the field while furthuring your knowledge and appreciation for the current scholarship produced by our contributors. This position is a great opportunity for those looking to get started in TESOL publishing as well as for those already armed with plenty of publishing experience. Either way, we assure you that your time commitment will be manageable, as only papers in your areas of expertise will be assigned to you. Send an email outlining your experience and expertise in TESOL to Kay M. Losey, co-editor of MITESOL Journal, at loseyk@gvsu.edu.

MITESOL 2017 — Call for Proposals

“Promoting Equity and Excellence”

October 20 – 21, 2017
Oakland Schools
2111 Pontiac Lake Rd.
Waterford, Michigan

Michigan Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages invites professionals involved with English learners to submit proposals for our annual conference, to be held October 20 and 21 at Oakland Schools in Waterford, MI.

The theme of this year’s conference is Promoting Equity and Excellence.

- The MITESOL mission is to provide leadership and support for professionals involved in teaching English to speakers of other languages by:
  - Fostering improvement of programs for the education of pre- and in-service teachers of ESL;
  - Providing opportunities and resources for the professional development of educators of ESL;
  - Collaborating with educational institutions, agencies, and professional associations to identify and resolve issues in ESL instruction;
  - Encouraging development, participation, and leadership in the field of ESL/TESOL; and
  - Advocating for quality standards in instructional programs of ESL.

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MITESOL News

MITESOL 2017 — Call for Proposals  *(cont. from previous page)*

Join with the MITESOL community in Waterford, MI, and experience what makes this organization unique. The conference will include over 60 learning opportunities including keynote, featured, and concurrent sessions. Promote equity for English learners by advocating for and providing access to curriculum, community resources, and expanded opportunities. Pursue excellence through research-based pedagogy and best practice instruction. Get involved and become an active participant, share your knowledge, and join the conversation. Promote equity and excellence in English language teaching.

MITESOL 2017 invites proposals related to all aspects of ESL/ELL/EAL in diverse contexts, including recent research, best practices, standards-based instruction, assessment, language policy and advocacy, CALL, program administration, and professional development. In keeping with this year’s theme, we are seeking proposals which focus on ensuring equity for English learners and promoting excellence within the field of English language learning.

Proposals will be accepted for the following four formats:

- **Standard Session** (45 minutes) – Presentations of all types and foci, including:
  - **Papers** (a summary of research, pedagogy, curriculum, sociopolitical concerns, etc.),
  - **Teaching Demonstrations** (that show & explain instructional technique/s),
  - **Panel Discussions** (structured, facilitated discussions of current topics in TESOL), and
  - **SIG meetings**.
- **Computer Lab Session** (45 minutes) – Session where all attendees require access to computer.
- **Workshop** (90 minutes) – Structured, focused session that actively engages participants in hands-on professional development.
- **Panel Discussion** (90 minutes) – Structured discussions on particular topics, including panels of 3-5 experts, a facilitator, and the audience. The facilitator may ask each panel member to be prepared to speak about his or her experiences with the topic, followed by questions from the facilitator and then questions from the audience. Panel Discussions are designed to be a great exchange of information on a particular emerging topic in the profession.

Proposals must be submitted through MITESOL’s online conference proposal system, which will become available in June. The deadline for submissions will be July 15, 2017.

If you have any questions about the 2017 conference or would like to volunteer to help out with the preparations for the conference, contact Suzanne Toohey, President-Elect/Conference Chair, at suzanne.toohey@oakland.k12.mi.us and Joanna Bentley Schrecengost, Exhibits Manager, at schrecengost@findlay.edu. (Include MITESOL 2017 in the subject line of your message.)

NGL / MSU Learning Symposium

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NGL / MSU Learning Symposium — (cont. from previous page)

Now in its fifth year, the annual National Geographic Learning | Michigan State University Learning Symposium will be held from 9:30 AM to 5:00 PM on Saturday, April 8, 2017, in East Lansing at MSU.

This year’s theme is “Real-World Writing in ESL Classrooms.” How can we help our students enter the real discourse communities of academic and professional writers? Progressive ESL writing instruction is challenging conventions and formulas like the five-paragraph essay. Teachers are exploring ways to help each student find his or her unique voice as a competent, communicative writer. Innovations like genre-based approaches highlight new literacies, extending the writ of the writer into diverse communities of expression, while new technologies are transforming instruction and writing processes. The symposium this year will take a hard look at new principles and practices. Speakers present solutions, approaches, and best practices based on research and experience.

The Learning Symposium Planning Committee is pleased to announce that our keynote author presenter is University of Michigan lecturer and author Dr. Christine Feak, whose presentation “Writing for Academic Purposes: Knowing When, Where, to Whom and How to Write” will address the types of writing instruction that can best help students enter the academic discourse community. In her presentation, she will focus on instructional strategies that can help students and instructors unpack the writing knowledge and skills that are necessary for students to not only participate but also succeed in their academic communities. These strategies require that students and instructors act as researchers of texts of all different types, especially texts that they may be expected to write in contexts other than a writing or language classroom. Feak will also explore the potential of such strategies to facilitate the transfer of newly acquired discourse knowledge to these other contexts.

As always, National Geographic Learning has invited an Explorer to present, although this year’s explorer may be more familiar than most. Aziz Abu Sarah was a one of the featured speakers at the TESOL 2016 International Convention in Baltimore, MD, and he will revisit and expand upon his convention presentation “Revolutionizing Education: Building Peace in a Divided World.” His presentation shows how education played a major role in his transformation from a radical to a peace builder, and how his educational work in Syria, Afghanistan, Israel, Palestine, and the United States has helped bridge the gap between hostile communities. Abu Sarah, who in addition to being a National Geographic Explorer is also a renowned cultural educator and a TED Fellow, explores how education has the power to heal conflicts, from the geopolitical stage to the classroom.

Between the keynote opening and closing sessions, there will be two rounds of concurrent break-out presentations led by TESOL professionals from around the Great Lakes region. Currently, presentation proposals are being reviewed by the Learning Symposium Presentation Proposal Review Committee. Speakers and abstracts will be available on the Learning Symposium website as soon as the selection process has been completed.

This year’s symposium will also feature poster session presentations and expert-led table discussions. Similar to the sessions at the annual TESOL International Conventions, our Learning Symposium poster sessions will provide a forum for short, informal discussions with other participants while the exhibit is on display. Posters can display research, teaching tips, curriculum development ideas, and many other areas of interest. Semi-formal table discussions on various topics will also take place during one of the rounds of concurrent presentations, for those who wish to engage more personally with colleagues and presenters. A list of general topics and discussion leaders will be available on the Learning Symposium website in the weeks before the event.

As they have done for the past four years, our generous co-host, National Geographic Learning, will cover all of the day’s expenses for participants – registration, parking, breakfast, and lunch – so there is no excuse for missing out on this high-quality professional development conference for Great Lakes-area post-secondary ESL professionals.

For details or to register, please visit the Learning Symposium website.
Keep up to date and follow us on Facebook.

See you in April!

If you have questions, please contact Learning Symposium organizer Austin Kaufmann at akauf@msu.edu or 517-884-4325.
MITESOL Reception

2017

at “Big” TESOL in Seattle, Washington

Elephant & Castle

1415 Fifth Avenue
Seattle

MITESOL Members,
Please join us at the MITESOL reception in Seattle! Socialize and reconnect with Michigan colleagues and friends. Appetizers, wine, and a cash bar will be available.

If you plan on attending, please RSVP at:
As part of Eastern Michigan University’s M.A. TESOL program and my TESOL Research Seminar coursework, I recently developed an action research project based upon middle school aged ESL students and their coping strategies in dealing with academic and social stressors. The research hoped to gain a better understanding into the how and why adolescent ESL students from an urban area deal with their stress. The students were provided with coping strategy recommendations and methods, in the hopes that they would then employ them to better manage their environments and personal challenges. While no students successfully utilized the strategies, it reiterated and provided great insight into yet another deeply rooted set of problems and challenges facing ESL learners, specifically those in our K-12 school systems.

In addition to this project, I also worked with two other EMU M.A. TESOL students on a research project for a linguistics course. Drawing upon the principles of Interlanguage Pragmatics and Second Language Acquisition, we conducted pilot research on the connection between these two principles and their relation to ESL learners. The ESL students who participated were advanced proficiency users of English who were both domestically and internationally based. These participants answered short questionnaires about the usage of connotation vs. denotation in both their L1 and English. The questions were designed to elicit responses that would allow the participants to identify the differences between literal and culturally influenced concepts (‘that girl is such a dog’ – what is the meaning of dog in this sentence, etc.). Results were interesting in that, despite being of advanced proficiency and having spent extensive periods of time in English speaking countries and/or around native English speakers, many of the responses did not coincide with those experiences. During the investigation in existing literature for this pilot study, we came across a fairly new term (at least to us) from the field – ‘languaculture’ (Agar, 1994) – used to described the inseparable tie between language and culture, and the recommendation for teachers to refrain from attempting to teach these two entities separate from each other.

These courses and research projects have allowed me to better understand and work with the immigrants, refugees, and adult ESL learners here in the Ypsilanti/Ann Arbor areas.

Jenna Bollinger is a dual master’s candidate (TESOL, Spanish) at Eastern Michigan University. She also works for Wayne RESA as an English Language Learner Facilitator for schools in Wayne County, MI, and as an academic English and Spanish language tutor. She can be reached at jbollin3@emich.edu or 419-569-5752.
Book Review: Planning Lessons and Courses

by Jennifer Brooke

Normally book reviews cover a hot-off-the-press title, giving potential readers a summary and critique before they decide whether or not to buy it. However, there is nothing wrong with reading an “oldie but a goodie,” as they say. Trends in ESL teaching affects all of us; as the pendulum swings this way and that, we’re constantly re-evaluating our teaching techniques and beliefs about language learning. However, one thing in a teacher’s life always remains constant: the need to lesson plan.

Besides containing a variety of pick-up-and-go classroom activities that are not necessarily skills-bound, Woodward’s (2001) Planning Lessons and Courses is one of the most practical books I have encountered in terms of deciding what goes into a lesson and where. Lesson-planning is a time-consuming, somewhat nebulous process by which we decide what material will be covered in the next class, how we will cover it, and in what order. It can involve copious amounts of time staring at the blue light of a word processing program, poring over textbooks (your own and others’), emailing back and forth with other teachers, and delving into the black hole of the Internet to see what other teachers have done. Despite this, failing to plan for a lesson can result in an uncomfortable and unproductive class the next day. If you’re anything like me, it takes at least as long to plan a lesson for the class as it does to teach the class itself—sometimes, longer. Not to mention that often your beautiful plan is derailed by unexpected absences, technical difficulties, lack of student motivation, or a faster or slower pace than you anticipated. Is there a solution to this inefficiency?

I read this book as my professional development project in the break between semesters. On page 28, I started using small colored flags to denote classroom activities I wanted to try, concepts I wanted to consider, and variations of activities I already used in my classes. Halfway through the book, I ran out of flags. For me, this was the type of book to take notes on my computer for. I even printed off some of my notes and had them laminated for quick reference; let me tell you why.

Although not a complete solution to inefficiency, Planning Lessons and Courses provides a strategic approach to cutting down on lesson-planning time while improving instructional quality. The underpinning of Woodward’s book is this: experienced teachers plan their lessons in “chunks,” that is, in units that actually are made up of many components. For example, in our home lives, “setting the table” is a chunk that is composed of the smaller units of wiping the table down, putting out the plates, folding the napkins, etc. Building our repertoire of these chunks in lesson-planning helps us more quickly piece together coherent classes and courses.

One such chunk could be what Woodward calls a “thread.” She gives the example of “an animal a day” thread, which entails choosing an animal and building vocabulary and expressions in English around it. Each day for a set amount of time the animal (e.g. a dog) is revisited. Initially, this thread would consist of basic vocabulary such as paw and tail, building up to metaphors around dogs such as It’s a dog-eat-dog world, and perhaps finally using critical thinking skills to compare the connotations of animal metaphors.

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Book Review: Planning Lessons and Courses — (cont. from previous page)

Threads can also be built around concepts—grammatical concepts, such as parts of speech, or thematic concepts, such as “presidential elections in the United States.” These threads represent an efficient way to achieve varied class objectives without extensive time spent planning for each one. They also create a sense of cohesion from class to class.

Her book is composed of chunks like these for achieving various goals: getting to know students & their abilities; utilizing beginnings, middles, and ends of classes; and using physical materials in various ways. Having a list of these on hand simplifies the process of brainstorming a new way of achieving these goals for each class.

One of the most useful set of chunks included in the book is what Woodward calls “Generalizable Procedures,” which are treatments of any stimulus (a text, a listening passage, a photograph, a physical object, etc.) that can be done in extensive variations.

Meeting a stimulus. Woodward describes a teacher wrapping an apple in brown paper and passing it around the class. What does it look like? Feel like? Smell like? And, after unwrapping it, what does it taste like?

- Analyzing a stimulus. Students can describe it, take it apart and put it back together, identify its components.
- Personalizing a stimulus. Students compare themselves with the stimulus. How are they similar or different? What does it remind them of? What would they do in a given scenario?
- Altering/transferring a stimulus. Annotation, note-taking, reducing or expanding, and alternate endings all help students interact with the stimulus.
- Creating from the stimulus. This step includes role-plays, letter-writing, a journal prompt, a presentation, a debate, or anything else that requires students to produce something.

For the busy teacher (aren’t we all!), or the teacher struggling to come up with yet another creative idea for students’ interaction with a text, these chunks are a godsend. Decide on your stimulus, and use these generalizable procedures as a framework for your lesson plan(s) for their time with it.

Woodward also discusses various strategies of sequencing instruction, including “Test, teach, test,” “Pre-, in-, post-,” Present-Practice-Produce (PPP), and Task-based Learning (TBL). This discussion illuminates what practices a teacher might be utilizing subconsciously, and what other approaches might breathe new life into their instruction or make their lesson-planning time more efficient. In sum, having a framework for the lesson makes it easier to fit together the pieces of what students need to learn (not to mention what administrative tasks you need to accomplish).

Other gems from this book include practical variations in activities and sequencing to account for student learning style, as well as how to vary administrative tasks like checking homework.

(continued on next page)
Updates From the Field

**Book Review: Planning Lessons and Courses — (cont. from previous page)**

Every chapter is aimed at a teacher who is ready to go to class the next day, who must work with desks and a board and students who are straggling in 10 minutes late without their textbooks. In other words, this book represents somewhat of a departure from the typical pedagogical book focused on theory. This is not to say that second language acquisition theory is not assumed in Woodward’s book; you can sense while reading that the author, while acknowledging the role research-focused books have to play in our pedagogy, is simply taking a different approach. She leaves plenty of room for various theoretical backgrounds (e.g. PPP and TBL are both cited as valid approaches to sequencing a lesson) and focuses instead on the face-to-face interaction teachers have with their students.

As teachers, we make decisions about content and sequencing for every single class hour we teach. I highly recommend this book as a practical and refreshing look at these decisions. It is perfect for the experienced teacher who wants to change up their routine as well as the novice teacher whose lesson-planning is inefficient to the point of spending their weekends with their textbooks. Either way, any teacher could benefit from a quick skim or a more in-depth read of Planning Lessons and Courses.


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**Bringing Politics to the Classroom**

*by Trisha Dowling*

On November 17, 2016, Barbara McCallahan, the Director of Community Affairs of U.S. Senator Debbie Stabenow, visited my High Beginning ESL Reading and Writing course at Washtenaw Community College. This visit came as a result of my attendance of TESOL’s Advocacy and Policy Summit in Washington, D.C., in June 2016. I attended the three day summit along with Sharon Umlor, MITESOL Advocacy and Policy SIG Leader. With the encouragement of TESOL leaders and fellow educators at the summit, I reached out to Senator Stabenow’s office and invited them to come to my classroom to observe what daily life in an ESL classroom is like. After multiple emails, I was pleasantly surprised to receive a response from the office.

In order to prepare my students for the visit, we read about Congress and Senator Debbie Stabenow herself. This was a great opportunity to teach students about the United States’ government and also a wonderful reminder that the government works for us. My classroom of 23 students comes from 15 different countries. Because of these diverse backgrounds, this was a wonderful occasion to discuss the role of citizens in the United States and the power that we have as individuals.
Updates From the Field

**Bringing Politics to the Classroom — (cont. from previous page)**

We talked about being able to agree or disagree with the government’s actions and also to question what it does without fear. We talked about their hopes and fears in the community, and what they would like to see change. Every student wrote a letter to Senator Stabenow in which they shared a little about themselves, what they enjoy about our community, and what they would like to see change. Student concerns included road repair, college tuition decreases, and cultural acceptance.

Barbara McCallahan came to the classroom and observed quietly. The last 30 minutes of class were open for questions from the students. As the presidential election took place the previous week, she was clearly and admittedly distraught. She had just finished answering phone calls from concerned and fearful citizens who were (and still are) unsure of what the future would bring for them. The questions from my class ranged from statewide issues to personal immigration questions. Barbara McCallahan answered questions from my students and provided them with contact information of people who could more clearly answer questions they had. When class ended, we presented her with a binder full of letters from each of the ESL students.

Though the visit was short, the time leading up to her classroom visit was incredibly valuable for myself and for the students. For me, the politics-dominated 2016 brought with it a lot of uncertainty and feelings of weakness as a citizen. Attending the TESOL Advocacy and Policy Summit was a reminder that in this country, we do have the power to change things that we do not agree with. It may be difficult, it may feel impossible, but it is the job of our elected officials to listen to what we have to say. Teaching my ESL students about local and state government was not just about informing them of a system, but also a cultural lesson about our rights as residents or as citizens.

I invite those interested to contact not only the offices of Senator Stabenow or Senator Peters, but also the offices of your local members of Congress. Invite them to your classroom to experience the day-to-day of ESL teaching and learning environment. Show them the reality of what we do: the beauty of diversity, and of students who show up to learn, day after day. Show them the challenges that students and educators face. The first step in making a change in the field is to bring awareness to what we do.

Trisha Dowling teaches ESL to adults in southeast Michigan. She can be reached at trisha.dowling@gmail.com or 517-582-5276. For resources on TESOL Advocacy and the TESOL Advocacy and Policy Summit, visit the MITESOL website → Resources → Advocacy. To search for your local representatives by zip code, visit: http://www.house.gov/representatives/
Similarly With Difference: ESL Students in the Composition Classroom

by Vivian Kao

I am an Assistant Professor of Composition at Lawrence Technological University, where I teach the freshman English Composition course as well as the developmental writing course. English literature and composition studies form the entirety of my teaching and educational background, and though I have taught in diverse classrooms around the country, ESL students have always represented a small minority of students in each of my classes. At the beginning of this semester, however, I glanced down at the roll sheet for my afternoon section of English Composition and saw Arabic-sounding surnames populating the entire front half of the sheet. On the first day of class, I found that, indeed, the roll sheet had not lied: eleven out of my twenty students in that section were ESL students from Saudi Arabia who had come to my university to study engineering. Many had taken all or part of the ESL sequence, as well as the developmental writing course, and had landed, at long last, in English Composition, the last “gatekeeper” course designed to prepare them for the rigors of reading, writing, and critical thinking in the core curriculum and in their major fields of study.

I blundered my way painfully through roll call, mispronouncing and apologizing left and right. All of the Saudi Arabian students sat on one side of the classroom, clustered in the center-back. They spoke Arabic to one another before and after class, and sometimes during class when we transitioned from one activity to another. They seemed amiable, attentive for the most part, and, while not exactly happy about being put through another English class, respectfully interested. I felt guilty about making them pronounce their names and repeat their comments, twice, three times, more. I felt apprehensive and tense throughout that first class, and when I arrived home, my mind swam with questions and doubts. Did I offend anyone with an off-hand comment? Did I speak too fast and prevent them from understanding me? Did I speak too slowly and cause them to feel patronized? Should I have gone into anything in further detail on the syllabus that might have seemed foreign or unfamiliar to them? Not only had the Saudi students clustered together on one side of the room; they had segregated themselves by gender as well. The three young women sat together in the back; the eight young men sat together in the front. I had considered asking the whole class to “spread yourselves out” in an attempt to get the domestic and international populations, as well as the men and the women, to mix. But then I backed away from that idea, thinking it might offend the young women to ask them to sit alongside young, American, unmarried men; or, that it might make everyone feel uncomfortable to know that I saw them as representatives of a certain nationality. Did I make the right decision? I nearly overruled cultural sensitivity in favor of creating a more ideal discussion environment—did I have the right to do that? How was I to handle teaching these two very different populations—American native speakers and Saudi ESL students—in the same classroom with the same curriculum?

That weekend, I went out for an evening coffee with a friend, an anthropologist. I described my dilemma to her and asked her how one teaches with cultural sensitivity in a classroom so evenly divided. Should I tailor my lessons and activities to the ESL students, since they made up the majority of the class? Or should I proceed as if they were all native-speaking domestic students?
Similarly With Difference: ESL Students in the Composition Classroom
— (cont. from previous page)

Although I have taught this class before, I now noticed for the first time that my course readings were overwhelmingly concerned with American current events, and explored questions of gender, race, food, and college from overwhelmingly American perspectives. I asked her if I should change the readings to reflect more international perspectives. As for the readings, she suggested I do consider changing them for the benefit of all the students, not just the Saudi students. It is just as important for domestic students to understand global concerns from global points of view as it is for international students to see their backgrounds reflected in our reading lists. But as for my question about how to teach these two very different student populations in the same class, she wondered why I asked this question to begin with. “What makes you think they’re such different populations?” she asked. They may come from different backgrounds and cultural environments, but does that necessarily mean that they expect different things out of the class? Did their different backgrounds determine that they would act differently in class, or that they would necessarily think differently about the readings? Being a culturally sensitive teacher was about being a good listener, a good observer of student engagement and reactions, and a good taker of the “temperature” of the classroom. It did not mean catering to your own assumptions about how students of a particular culture would receive your instruction.

The next class day, I asked everyone to write a paragraph about when, how, and why they write. I like this activity and assign it regularly. Its purpose is trifold: to get a first-day writing sample to track each student’s progress throughout the term, to get a sense of their writing lives (and their lives in general), and to see how they structure a paragraph. When I sat down to look at what the students turned in, the differences between the ESL students and the native speakers jumped out at me. The native speakers had an intuitive command of vocabulary, word usage, and sentence structure that the ESL students lacked. But to my surprise, the ESL students had a better command of “unity” and “coherence”—two prized attributes of the composition instructor’s ideal paragraph. The paragraphs written by my ESL students developed a single idea throughout and did not wander off topic, and their sentences were logically ordered and linked with transition words. Despite these differences, all the students wrote about how they used writing in their private lives, to express their feelings, to work through their feelings, and how it offered them respite from their more “active” endeavors.

After I collected their paragraphs, we talked about plagiarism. I had assigned the students Trip Gabriel’s article, “Plagiarism Lines Blur for Students in Digital Age,” which appeared in The New York Times in 2010. Most of the students agreed with Gabriel’s position, that our current digital age in which information is shared, spliced, reformulated, and co-created called into serious question traditional notions of originality and individuality, but that this questioning did not sanction lazy note-taking and “night-before-the-paper-is-due” searching through online paper mills for essays to pass off as one’s own. Because of my Saudi students, I felt the need to stress that these traditional Enlightenment notions of originality and individuality were western and Eurocentric, and that other cultures may not place the same emphasis on such notions. I asked the Saudi students if their teachers back home had discussed plagiarism with them, and if they had defined it differently than
Similarly With Difference: ESL Students in the Composition Classroom
— (cont. from previous page)

Gabriel did. Several of the students answered that they had been taught to avoid plagiarism by their Saudi teachers, and that these teachers had defined it very much in accordance with the way American university professors understood it.

My friend was right. Despite their differences, the similarities between my Saudi and domestic students confronted me precisely when I tried to emphasize those differences. My classroom experiences thus far have challenged my assumption that I had to tailor my course to two different populations. I still feel ill-equipped to create a genuinely cross-cultural and intercultural classroom space, and wish I had received the training my friends who teach ESL received in creating such classroom environments. Nevertheless, I’ve realized that cultivating receptivity to similarity within difference makes for better teaching and learning than the expectation of divergence.

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Teaching Cultural Tolerance

by Tamara L. Osgood

Having an understanding of different cultures is something that is vital as a teacher, and it is even more important in our current society. The world is truly getting smaller and the cultural overlap is astounding, so the need for understanding and tolerance is greater than ever. There is a sense of responsibility to protect our own beliefs, but at the same time, we need to be vigilant to prevent discrimination against other belief systems. There are many things that we – teachers, parents, and caregivers – can do to show the value of other cultures. We need to demonstrate that while one culture may do things differently than another culture does, it does not mean that it is wrong. As educators, we need to sprinkle cultural intelligence around every chance we get because racism and discrimination is evident around the world. With positive cross cultural experiences, we can be part of the change.

Cultural Intelligence is a fairly new idea, but is becoming more important. Earley and Ang (2003) define cultural intelligence as “a person’s capability to adapt effectively to new cultural contexts.” In order to increase this type of intelligence, we must first define culture. Culture usually refers to dress, diet, religion, and language but also includes things like thoughts, feelings, beliefs, reactions and assumptions. The latter are the elements that most people find hard to explain,
but when you enter a new culture, these features become very evident. Teachers need to be aware of these differences in order to prevent misunderstandings. For example, if a teacher from the U.S. has a student from a polychronic culture, they should anticipate a few occasions where punctuality is seen differently. The U.S. is a monochronic culture and places a great deal of value on time, whereas a polychronic culture sees time a bit more loosely. As a culturally intelligent teacher, you could easily discuss how time is important in this culture and how being on time is a sign of respect. This way the student learns to value others’ time while in the U.S. On the other hand, if a teacher from the U.S. is teaching abroad, it is best to be aware of their value of time. Students and teachers could feel frustrated as a result of large differences in cultural behavior (Eberly Center, n.d.). Awareness, respect, and communication are the best ways to learn and teach diversity.

Even within cultures, one can see many differences. There are many sub-cultures in the U.S. based on social class, economic status, and many other factors. You can conduct extensive research on cultures and subcultures to learn about them, but experiencing them is the best way to learn more. Too often, we as teachers expect our students to behave like us. When teaching ESL, or any subject, we must let go of those expectations. Thomas and Inkson (2009) stated, “You can’t judge people by projecting your own norms for behavior onto them.” They also mentioned making sure we take the context of the situation into our reactions. For instance, a six grade student, Sarah, comes to you saying that she couldn’t complete her homework. Your reaction at first may be negative because you feel like the assignment was easy enough, and you gave reasonable time for it to be completed. A culturally intelligent teacher would instead hesitate and ask “Why?” When you learn that she has to care for four siblings all evening because her single mother is working, you realize that the assignment you thought was easy actually would be impossible to complete under those conditions. It is vital that we are mindful of the context of situations and how culture and subculture play into our behavior and reactions.

Some ways in which you can increase your own cultural intelligence is by surrounding yourself with people from a different culture. Crowne (2008) found that people who have traveled abroad tend to have a higher cultural intelligence. She also found that the more exposure one had to other cultures, the higher their cultural intelligence was, as well. One suggestion, then, is that to be an ESL teacher you must have been abroad as a prerequisite or taken a CQ (Cultural Intelligence Quotient) test. This would encourage cultural sensitivity and acceptance.

There are also many ways in which you can educate students to accept and learn from other cultures. One way is to invite others who are of a different culture to your classroom for a discussion panel. You could contact a local language school or international students at a university to find volunteers. Non-native speakers love opportunities to share their cultures and also practice their English.
Teaching Cultural Tolerance — (cont. from previous page)

Another great way to educate is to incorporate cultural knowledge into as many lessons as you can. You can include stories from other cultures and then compare similarities. Encourage students to look at another character’s world view while reading. When students think about a situation from a different perspective, they learn to become more aware and more positive about differences. One exercise to show different perspectives is to create a debate and divide the class based on the side they want to be on. After all students have chosen a side, switch them to the opposite side so they must debate against what they believe. This activity is an amazing way for them to see something from another person’s perspective, which is a great first step for becoming a culturally intelligent member of society.

All in all, we need to teach the next generation tolerance and understanding. This is done by parents, teachers, caregivers, and the community encouraging and accepting diverse friendships. Cultural intelligence can be improved, but you must have the desire to learn. Cultural intolerance is often due to a lack of exposure, but with proper education, we can make a huge difference. Without the desire to become more culturally intelligent, one cannot successfully interact with people outside their own culture successfully. Learning from research is one way, but the best way is to invite a person out to a cup of coffee and just embrace the differences. There is a catch, though: you must be willing to answer tough questions about your own culture, as well! Let us make a difference for the future by creating open-minded adults!

teaching-across-cultures/cultural-intelligence


Announcement

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Announcement


MITESOL 2016
Friday Keynote:
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UM-Flint
Registration
Diane Larsen-Freeman,
Andrew McCullough,
Barb Avery,
Daniel Adams

Saturday
Keynote: Heidi Vellenga

Invited speaker:
Fatima Salimassi

TEFL students

Presidential
dancing team
Attendees
Photo booth
participants
Family Feud fun
Passing of the
gavel
Diane & Jolene

Attendees
networking
Exhibitors area

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