ORTESOL News

In this issue:

ORTESOL Grant Updates:

ORTESOL offers several funding opportunities for members. In 2015, we awarded a Tri-TESOL Travel Grant to five members (announced in the Fall 2015 Newsletter), and also a free TESOL International Association membership to the following four members:

♦ Carol Sunahara, Intensive English Program at Southern Oregon University
♦ April Duval, MA TESOL candidate at Portland State University
♦ Françoise Howard, Linn Benton Community College
♦ April Tracy, ELL teacher at Vose Elementary School

We are now accepting applications for the James Nattinger Travel Grant for 2016 TESOL convention attendance. See page 12 for more information.

ORTESOL will announce the Marge Terdal Action Research Grant in January 2016. Watch your inbox for further information!

Dear ORTESOL Members,

2015 is drawing to a close, and as we look back on a successful Tri-TESOL conference and an engaging local one-day Fall Conference at PCC Sylvania, I'd like to point out some upcoming events:

First, applications for the James Nattinger Travel Grant are due in just a few days, by 5 pm on December 4. The grant includes up to $2,000 for travel, accommodations, registration, and a per diem fee for attending the 2016 TESOL International Convention, April 5-8, in Baltimore, Maryland. See page 12 for more details.

Recently, you may have seen an email from ORTESOL asking for comment on draft rules regarding Oregon House Bill 3499, which will reshape assessment, funding, and reporting of K-12 EL programs in the state. ORTESOL, with the lead of former president Barbara Page, has formed a task force of board members to ensure that teachers' voices are heard in the capitol. If you are interested in learning more about the bill or what you can do, please contact info@ortesol.org.

ORTESOL will be electing new board members in December (applications closed on Nov. 20), and several current board members will be passing the torch. The board has a strong group of dedicated, professional, energetic leaders, and with the leadership of Catherine Kim as president and Jen Sacklin as vice-president next year, 2016 will be an amazing year. At this time, I'd like to thank those who are leaving the board for their service:

♦ Brittney Peake (Lewis and Clark), Co-Volunteer Coordinator
♦ Margi Felix-Lund (PCC), Co-Publisher Liaison
♦ Rebecca Torres Valdovinos (George Fox), TESOL Liaison
♦ Christine Nile (Chemeketa), Adult Ed SIG Chair
♦ Megan Kelly (formerly Catholic Charities), Refugee Concerns SIG Chair
♦ Erin Watters (Mecca Female College of Excellence), Technology Team member

Lastly, I'd like to thank Beth Sheppard (University of Oregon) for being an outstanding Publications Chair, managing some of the administrative side of the ORTESOL Journal in addition to producing densely-packed newsletters, such as this one.

It has been a pleasure working with the board, and I hope you will also pass on your thanks to the above volunteers, as well as new and continuing board members, as you see them in the halls of your institution, at conferences, or at other events. As ESOL educators in the state of Oregon, we have been lucky to have them serving our community.

Thank you!

Sincerely,
Eric Dodson
ORTESOL President

Many thanks to Eric for his hard work and dedication as ORTESOL Board President in 2015! Welcome to Catherine as president in 2016!

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<u>Welcome to the Fall 2015 edition of the ORTESOL Newsletter with a focus on Higher Ed ESOL</u>

My name is Alexis Terrell, and I am the Higher Ed Special Interest Group Chairperson for ORTESOL in 2015-2016. The Higher Ed SIG works to represent the interests of ESL professionals working in higher education environments in Oregon and those preparing students for higher education study. A few of our main goals include promoting the recognition of ESL as an established academic discipline and improving the employment conditions for ESL professionals in higher education. On the academic side, we aim to promote research pertinent to ESL in higher education.

As the Higher Ed SIG Chair, I am looking forward to connecting with other passionate ESL professionals across the state, from the smallest programs to the largest. Any time you have questions or concerns of your own, please contact me at higheredsig@ortesol.org.

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Student Experiences in Oregon Higher Education
By Alexis Terrell, ORTESOL Higher Ed SIG

Last spring, ORTESOL surveyed ESL teachers in higher education institutions around the state. This time, we wanted to hear from students. In lieu of a statewide survey, I interviewed four university students who previously studied at IEPs in Oregon and went on to full university degree programs. I asked them about their experiences while studying in Oregon. Here are their stories.

Salehah Albalawi
From: Saudi Arabia
Studied at: American English Institute at University of Oregon (spring 2013-summer 2014)
Currently: studying in the Master's of Education program at Western Oregon University

Q: Why did you choose to study in Oregon?
A: I think it's safe and people are more accepting in Oregon because I wear a scarf, so I can be comfortable. If I'm comfortable, I can gain more experience.

Q: What was your first impression of Oregon?
A: The nature! It's beautiful! I wasn't expecting big buildings. I wasn't expecting something like New York. So it's exactly what I wanted.

Q: What was most difficult when you first arrived?
A: At first, I was frustrated because I wanted to go to an advanced English level. I wanted to jump ahead. I didn't want to go step-by-step. Now, I think learning more slowly is the best way. I wish I had focused more on learning skills, not gaining advanced levels.

Q: What advice do you have for teachers?
A: I know class participation is important. Please give us time to organize our thoughts. Americans raise their hands immediately. But if the teacher gives us time, I will be able to participate. Also, call me by my name -- don't call me 'you'-- even if you don't pronounce it correctly -- don't say 'you.'

Q: What advice would you give to students?
A: Don't be afraid. My first year, I stayed in my own circle with Arabic speakers. But it will be hard to get to know people if you do that. Remember, you didn't come from far away to just be around your own background. Practice communicating with people from different backgrounds, different languages.

Q: Have you experienced any difficult situations while in America?
A: It's important to know not to touch Saudi students. Don't try to shake hands, especially with opposite gender. I always try to avoid these situations. If I can't, my face will be red! It makes me nervous. One time a man tried to shake my hand, but I couldn't. I was shocked, so I couldn't complete my sentence to explain why. So he went away and I went and found him and said to him, 'It's not personal, it's my faith.'

Q: What has helped you to integrate with the community?
A: Living with a host family is really helpful. They also offer to take me with them places. They even took me to an Easter egg hunt and I hid eggs with the mothers and fathers, and then later wrote out the children's names in Arabic and they liked it.

Q: Have you felt integrated on campus?
A: At the U of O, I never felt separate. I volunteered with a leadership group. We met once a week and there was only one other international student. The point is I gained confidence. The group members were so interested in us as international students, so I got to explain a lot about my culture to them.

Yaoguang Huang
From: China
Studied at: INTO-OSU, Undergraduate Pathway Program (spring 2014-fall 2014)
Currently: sophomore in accounting at OSU

Q: Why did you choose OSU?
A: Based on college ranking and entry requirements.

Q: What was your first impression of Oregon?
A: Rain. So much rain.

Q: What was your first impression of your classes?
Really good. I had a really good teacher. That first impression is so important. If you have an instructor that motivates you, it will be great. Many Chinese students feel their instructor is too strict or discriminates against them, so they give up. So the first term is really important.

Q: What made your first teacher so good?
A: She let the students be motivators to each other. We had to lead groups and take turns teaching the class. Make the students become the experts. Peer role models are important.

Q: What advice would you give English teachers?
A: We need someone to connect with. Someone who knows where you sit, who you are. If you feel the connection, that motivates you a lot.

Q: You've talked a lot about low motivation. Is this a big problem?
A: It's the biggest problem for Chinese students. It's not language level but motivation level. Too many students are spending thousands of dollars each month on having fun. They don't take study seriously. It's a waste of time and money.

Q: What keeps your motivation so high?
A: I goofed around a lot in China in college previously. This is like a fresh start. I felt like I failed the expectations of the people who loved me. I focused more on social groups than on academics.

Q: Knowing the high cost of studying in America, is it worth it?
A: If you are motivated, it's worth it. It's an investment for your future.

Q: What advice would you give to students?
A: Students know what to do. Students have access to advice. They just don't follow it.

Q: Many international students have difficulty working in groups -- especially with American students. Have you found that to be difficult?
A: Yes. Most of the Chinese students think, 'This is not my first language; I'm not good at this. You can do it better. So why don't you just do it?'

Q: How do you overcome that kind of thinking?
A: I decided to study a lot so I could become the leader, and the others would follow me. If I couldn't become the expert, then I tried to find the part that I was good at. For instance, if you're not good at the subject -- at least you could be the note-taker at group meetings, which will help you learn the subject. Find something you can do. Prove your worth.

Q: You mentioned you're taking an online class? How has that been?
A: I've taken online and hybrid class. I prefer hybrid. It's helpful. A good way is that I can always pause the video if the instructor's talking too fast. Or I can slow the speed, use subtitles. And then in class I can ask about what I didn't understand in the video. Talking face-to-face is much easier – much faster— than sending an email. And I love videos. They help a lot. But totally online is really bad for international students. They need an instructor there to push them to do the work.
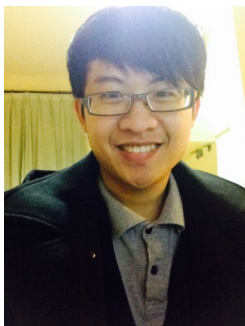
Ahad Althumayri
From: Saudi Arabia
Studied at: English Language and Culture Institute in Monmouth (spring 2012-fall 2012) and INTO Oregon State University, Academic English Program (winter 2013); Master's in Education from Western Oregon University (graduated spring 2015)
Currently: living in Albany; stay-at-home mother

Q: What was your first impression of Oregon?
A: I loved it! The weather here is nicer than Saudi Arabia. It's so hot and dry there. It's better for me to have rain every day.

Q: Why did you want to study in America?
A: Since I was a kid, I always admired people who spoke English. And I put that as my goal since I was in middle school. But at that time, it's rare to have English native speakers in Saudi Arabia. I studied English literature for 4 years at university in Saudi Arabia, but mostly it was writing and reading.

Q: Were you nervous when you first arrived?
A: I wasn't afraid to come to America because at least I have the language. At first, my time was fun because all the homework was easy for me. But when I went to university classes, it was not as fun. It was hard.

Q: What was your first university class like?
A: My first class was an online class about diversity and culture. I was so nervous. I thought: What will the teacher think about me? How will she grade my papers? How she will do this and that? But when I first got my first appointment with her to talk about my homework, she explained everything to me; she listened. And she let me apply my homework to situations in Saudi Arabia, even though I was studying about education in America. That was really beneficial to me because Saudi Arabia is where I will teach. Other Saudi students think she gave a lot of homework, but by the end, the comprehension exam wasn't that hard for me because I learned so much throughout the term. Now, I think she was my best teacher ever.

Q: What advice would you give ESL teachers?
A: Don't forbid us from speaking our own language, especially outside of class. It's not nice, for example, when my friend is Saudi and I speak with her in English. For me, it's like showing off my ability and embarrassing her to speak like me. So she wouldn't understand me or if she were better, I wouldn't understand her. So don't forbid us to speak our own language; just encourage us to speak English.

Q: What could ESL teachers do to motivate students more?
A: The best thing is about writing -- when I like the topic, I write a lot. When the teacher gives me options to be creative, I write more. Saudi students would love to speak about their own culture, friendships or loyalties – and travel.

ORTESOL Fall Conference

Nov 14, 2015

The ORTESOL Fall One-Day Conference kicked off with a great plenary session by Dr. Deborah Healey, who gave a teacher-centered talk starting with an overview of digital literacy skills needed by students and concluding with a plethora of digital tools that make teachers' lives easier.

The conference then had 13 stellar break-out sessions for the remainder of the day focusing on "Teaching Literacy in the Digital Age."

This small conference was designed to complement the the larger Tri-TESOL Conference, and we had approximately 130 attendees.

Photos by Alexis Terrell

Silvino Balderrama

From: Mexico
Studied at: INTO OSU, Undergraduate Pathway Program (fall 2013-spring 2014)
Currently: junior in nuclear engineering at Oregon State University

Q: When did you start learning English?
A: I studied in Mexico but studying during class time isn't enough -- you need to be surrounded by the language. That's why I went to Canada. I started learning English in Toronto. Then, I got a scholarship to study at INTO OSU.

Q: Was your English study very different here?
A: I had the basics already. But coming to OSU helped me with academic style -- citations, researching.

Q: What else have you learned?
A: Acronyms. You use acronyms for everything! Also a lot of slang.

Q: Why do you like learning slang?
A: It makes speaking more fun, more interesting.

Q: What was your first impression of Corvallis?
A: I was surprised by the city: I thought a city with a large university would be a big city. Coming from a big city, it's a huge change. I like it. Less distractions. A small town is comfortable -- and things / people are more familiar. You can run into friends everywhere.

Q: Did you feel included or separate when you first arrived?
A: Separate for sure. Even though you are taking classes with native speakers, it's hard to make connections with them.

Q: Why was it hard to make connections?
A: I felt I had more in common with international students. Sometimes I feel like college students don't talk with substance.

Q: Should international students be required to interact with Americans more?
A: It depends on your goal. If your goal is to learn English, you need to give yourself opportunities to speak English. If you're here to have study abroad experience, it's up to them.

Q: Should there be more opportunities to interact with Americans?
A: There are lots of opportunities. But students don't always take them. Maybe it's a lack of confidence.

Q: What advice would you give to teachers?
A: For some teachers, they don't enjoy their work. It's just a job. Students can tell. For English teachers, you need to have a passion for it. And the students need to feel comfortable and active. But it's not just like playing games; it's about a teacher who can connect with students. It needs to be interactive in a real way. But for college teachers, it's different. They just need to be good at explaining things. If they're interesting, that's great, but it's not as important as it is for ESL teachers.

Q: Do you feel confident in the skills you've learned to become a university student?
A: Yes, I've learned many wonderful things. But, I see some of my classmates always one-step ahead. I think it's because they've had a chance for internships. They have had a longer time to gain real-world knowledge. 🦅

Tri-TESOL — October 2 & 3, 2015

The regional conference, held in Washington, was a big success with 3 keynote addresses, 210 sessions, and 690 attendees from <u>ORTESOL</u>, <u>WAESOL</u>, *and* <u>BC TEAL</u>. *Below, three recipients of ORTESOL travel grants tell about some of their experiences at Tri-TESOL.*

My favorite session was titled **"Huh?" – The Pronunciation Diary.** Even the title of the presentation was intriguing. The "huh?" refers to the response language learners sometimes get from native speakers due, perhaps, to a problem with some aspect of pronunciation and resulting in a communication breakdown. Lawrence McAllister from Simon Fraser University in British Columbia shared a tool he has created for turning these communication breakdowns into learning opportunities.

McAllister asks his students to keep a Pronunciation Diary. In it, they reflect on and record a time during the week when communication failed. They note the setting: who? what? when? where? They write down how they know their interlocuter misunderstood them, what they did to try to communicate more clearly and why they think the person had trouble understanding them in the first place. His students are then asked to reflect on what they learned about their pronunciation from that experience, what they could have done differently, (and at this point, they might get input and suggestions from the teacher), and what they will do to make sure that this does not happen again. Students share their diary entries with one another, gaining even more insight and suggestions in the process. They are then encouraged to go out and try again! It's a very simple, but effective way to systematically reflect on and improve pronunciation and communication skills and, hopefully, decrease the number of *"huhs?"* students hear in a given week.

—Melinda Sayavedra

Many of the Tri-TESOL sessions that I attended revolved around reading, writing and grammar since that is what I primarily teach. These sessions were a source of a multitude of creative ideas and strategies in the classroom.

One session that particularly stood out for me yet not related to my teaching expertise was **Preparing for TESOL 2017: From Proposal to Presentation** given by Christine Nile and Melanie Jipping. As a newly hired senior faculty instructor for the American Studies Program, I want to expand my professional development and contribute to the field. However, the steps in writing and submitting a proposal and giving your first presentation can be daunting. Attendees at this session were guided through a step by step procedure for submitting a proposal successfully, as well as information on "what you should know" about presenting.

This well-attended session was very informative and made the process of submitting a proposal and giving a presentation doable. Attendees also shared their individual experiences with their own personal jitters, successes and failures. Furthermore, I learned about other presentation format opportunities at the TESOL Convention such as the Poster Session and Electronic Village. Presentations of this nature may be less intimidating for a first time presenter. This session has given me enough detail-oriented procedures, time-lines, and "how to," that I am able to submit my first TESOL proposal to present a web tool for the Electronic Village at the TESOL 2016 Convention. This session proved extremely valuable and appreciated, in particular, by a newcomer in the field such as myself. Many thanks to Christine Nile and Melanie Jipping.

Left: Rachel Fletcher, Lynne Jenne, Françoise Howard and Stephanie Rhodes at Tri-TESOL.

Right: attendees networking over lunch.

The conference was jam packed with very interesting and relevant topics. Since I teach a three-hour evening class to adult language learners at the beginning level, I am always looking for exciting activities to help my students overcome their fatigue. I was thus drawn to the session titled **Designing Highly Interactive Classroom Activities**, presented by Kara Van Der Pol Hansen and Kathleen Schirra Moon from Oregon State University.

The presenters did an excellent job describing the ways to design for constructive interactions among students, building each individual's self confidence in handling the English language as well as a sense of community as a whole. The "Don't Say No" warm up game was trickier than it sounded. Every participant was given three pieces of candy. We had to mingle and make small talk about any topic. The only rule was that we were not allowed to say "no" or else we would lose a piece of candy. The person with the most candy won. This activity is a great ice breaker and tool for the students to connect and bond as a group. We were then asked to participate in a variation of the Password game. This would be an excellent tool for reviewing already taught vocabulary. We then practiced the "Line Up" activity that elicited many brief conversations. The presenters then shared with us how we could use interviews and surveys in order to have our students interact with the native English speaker outside of the classroom. Finally, we were given some tips on how to make use of vocabulary board games in the classroom. The presenters gave us several ideas on how to modify these activities to fit a multi-level classroom.

Overall, I thoroughly enjoyed the different sessions I attended and I left the conference energized to go back into my classroom with bulging pockets full of tricks and activities that would enrich my students' learning experience.

—Franciose Howard

—Helen Johnson

Teaching Tips

Self-Disclosure and Finding Common Ground in the Second Language Classroom
By Erin Maloney, INTO–OSU

An ongoing project by Harvard social psychologist Hunter Gehlbach and his colleagues emphasizes the importance for teachers and students to establish common ground. They found that teachers who received feedback that they shared five similarities with their students perceived better relationships with those students, and the students themselves earned higher course grades overall. As the researchers explain, "The theory behind this approach is that interacting with similar others supports one's sense of self, one's values, and one's core identity" (Gelbach et al., in press; Meyers, 2015) and moreover, "likeness begets liking" (Meyers, 2015, p. 330). Developing relationships with students in the second language classroom through self-disclosure might be especially important in order to mitigate the stress and anxiety of a foreign learning environment.

The Harvard study manipulated the reception of information about shared similarities so that a teacher and student were certain to have some common ground—whereas in the real world, people only sometimes find that they share something in common. Even so, other research suggests that self-disclosure from teachers results in positive identification from students. According to Ehrman & Dornyei, self-disclosure lets the learner know that they are not alone, that the teacher is "in it" with them (1998, p. 187). Moreover, informal interactions between teachers and students can convey just as must as formal teaching in terms of communicative language and cultural principles. Such sharing can result in impromptu discussions of cultural phenomena that contribute to the development of students' cultural competency.

Self-disclosure in the second language classroom naturally arises, in theory, if teachers participate in group discussions as a member, or in mixer activities ("Find Somebody Who…) or in other ice breakers, rather than merely facilitating them. Incorporating social media into classroom projects (i.e., Instagram journals, selfie scavenger hunts) can also initiate greater amounts of self-disclosure. It may occur through striking up informal conversation before or after class, or even through scheduled out-of-class trips or events. Ehrman & Dornyei do caution against engaging in socializing unrelated to the curriculum involving only selected students—for it is important for teachers to avoid behavior that is only gratifying their own needs (1998, p. 226). However, intentional

Teaching Tip: Using "Fishbate" Group Discussions to Promote Critical Thinking
By Vanessa Armand, Tokyo International University, Salem

Several formats of class discussions are often employed to help improve interactive speaking and listening as well as critical thinking skills, including: 1. *fishbowls* (loosely structured discussions in which 3-4 students freely discuss a prompt while their audience takes notes on arguments or target language) and 2. *debates* (highly structured discussions in which 2 students present and analyze each other's arguments on a pro/con issue in front of an audience).

In my advanced-level speaking class in Japan, I discovered that neither method proved effective on its own. Fishbowls did not provide enough structure, causing students to be cognitively overloaded with processing new ideas, asserting their own, and managing interruptions, resulting in paralyzing stage fright and reducing the true exchange of ideas. In debates, students were given 2 minutes to talk without interruption while their partner took notes for later objections; as a result, students were more relaxed (and able to think more clearly) as half the class time was solely focused on an opponent. They also appreciated knowing they could not be interrupted and that they only had to focus on responding to one person's argument. However, the debate structure required several class periods and led to discussion burn-out. As a result, I developed a hybrid method, "*fishbate*", with the following process:

Step 1 (fishbowl): Students receive a debate prompt, for which they prepare one argument for each side. In a group of 4, they discuss each student's arguments (*10 min*). All groups discuss simultaneously; there is no audience.

Step 2 (debate): Students are assigned a side of the issue (pro or con) and a partner of same side. Each person chooses a separate argument and supporting ideas. Pairs are formed into groups (2 pro, 2 con), with each student across from an opponent. Groups debate simultaneously without audiences. Students take turns presenting their argument & support to their opponent (*1.5 min each);* the opponent takes notes on the argument. While the 2nd pair exchanges arguments, the 1st pair formulates objections to their each other's arguments (*3 min)*. Students take turns objecting to and countering objections with their opponent (*1-2 min)*.

Step 3 (fishbowl): The debate ends with open small-group discussion in which students can refute or support any argument presented by either side in the debate (*5 min)*.

This hybrid method proved highly effective because:

♦ Semi-structured pre-debate fishbowls allowed students to think critically through more arguments and thus to feel more prepared to give support and to counter potential opposition points.

♦ Structured debate provided uninterrupted talk-time and allowed for thinking time to formulate objections.

♦ Simultaneous group discussions allowed for less stage fright (no audience), more time for open discussion (no topic over-exhaustion), and more efficient use of class time (1 class period instead of several).

To reincorporate peer-feedback or have students self-assess (both of which can help raise students' awareness individual strengths and weaknesses and aid with goal-setting), audio/video recordings could be made during the fishbate process and analyzed as homework or part of further in-class discussion. My students enjoy this activity; I hope yours do, too. 🖎

Using Surprise for Better Schema-Building
By Sueanne Parker, University of Oregon

Teachers of ESL are no strangers the importance of activating students' prior knowledge before introducing new content. However, this strategy is not without its disadvantages. When students reflect on their own knowledge and experience, they can become inwardly focused, losing sight of the lesson. Additionally, reviewing old information can disengage students who assume they "already know this stuff." Most confounding of all is when students have no directly related knowledge and simply cannot connect with the lesson. For these reasons, teachers may want to consider a twist on schema-activation by building a surprise into the lesson introduction instead.

The goal of surprise is to engage students' attention through the excitement of something new and unexpected. This strategy is commonly employed by great presenters to grab audiences' attention, and also has a basis in cognitive studies. Noticing new and unique elements of the environment and paying attention to them is both survival strategy and learning mechanism. According to John J. Medina (2014), it's also why students are so easily distracted after about five or ten minutes of concentration on an activity, but teachers, he says, can hack this brain function.

Puzzles

Puzzles are active, surprising ways to engage students in questioning, negotiating and constructing meaning, and even better, they prompt reflective students to attend to external details. At the beginning of a lesson, introduce a mystery, riddle, or other story with a surprise ending, and conclude the lesson by revealing the answer.

For instance, teachers might describe in a short passage a person the students are familiar with—a classmate, a celebrity, or an important figure in their texts. The passage might read, "The mystery person is a student who wears glasses…" Read the riddle together and identify several details about the person. As the students identify the details, point out the patterns of the descriptions and relative pronouns, "The mystery person is a student *who wears glasses*." After examining the riddle, students guess the mystery person's identity. They also guess at ways of constructing a new sentence, given a frame such as "____ is the person ____ this mystery describes." The students have learned how to read and understand adjective clauses, and are on their way to constructing them as well.

Pre-lesson Quizzles

Diagnostic testing is often done to help teachers determine student needs. However, teachers can leverage this task into a learning activity to excite students with "been there, done that" attitudes. Use periodic small, probing "quizzles" targeting a few specific points where students are likely to have misconceptions. Quizzles can be formulated in fun ways to reveal gaps in knowledge to the students themselves. Students can self-correct inappropriate schema developed in past language learning experiences. Because being wrong is so displeasing to the brain, students may engage simply to reduce this "discomfort" and ask questions when they find out they don't really know what they think they know. Self-correction also allows for active participation with a goal toward discovery.

For example, students might respond to short surveys about multi-tasking with true-false items such as "I get more work done when I multi-task." Score questionnaires together, making a big deal out of every "wrong" answer and encouraging student to be shocked as well. Throughout the following reading on multi-tasking, students search for and note information supporting or denying their responses. Now students, by seeking confirmation or correction of their beliefs in the text, are moving toward supporting ideas with sources and actively reading texts.

Anticipatory Sets

Anticipatory sets are tools from the K-12 sphere that harness the fun of surprise. Jennifer Gonzalez (2014) gives a great description of this strategy, the basics of which are to introduce the core objective of the lesson content with a playful experience, such as a game or song or character. This experience gets resurrected later in the lesson, in close proximity to the language target, to focus students' attention on the objective.

Teachers might introduce vocabulary units with simple songs using target vocabulary. After enjoying the song and pointing out the new vocabulary, instruct students to watch out for those words in upcoming activities, like a story read aloud. When students notice the words, provide positive feedback, such as singing back the portion of the song using the target. In this case, though both the song and vocabulary may be new to students, the joyful experience of the song at the beginning provides a memorable experience and framework for learning throughout the remainder of the lesson. The set builds the schema, rather than activating it, and is a powerful technique for supporting the learning of new ELLs without prior experience.

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(Continued from "Disclosure," page 6)

incorporation of activities in which teachers can engage in appropriate self disclosure increases common ground, makes for an overall relaxed and positive learning environment, and may even increa se performance on student learning outcomes.

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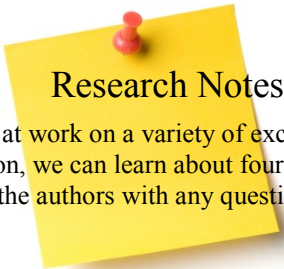
Research Notes

ORTESOL members are hard at work on a variety of exciting projects throughout our state, including research. In this section, we can learn about four ongoing projects. Please feel free to contact the authors with any questions or ideas!

What's Really Happening in Undergraduate Classes?
Jennifer Rice, Tom Delaney, and Korey Rice, UO

What academic language skills are expected of non-native English speaking students in order to fully participate in all aspects of their undergraduate content area courses? That is the question that a team of ESL instructors is currently investigating at the University of Oregon.

Focusing on the 100 and 200-level courses that are most popular with international students, the team is collecting data by surveying professors and students, observing classes, and examining course documents and learning management sites. The results are being used to update the curriculum for both the IEP and credit-bearing ESL courses.

For example, our research has revealed that students need to post in online discussion boards quite often, but our current ESL curriculum does not cover that skill at all. Furthermore, textbook reading is by far the main genre of reading that students have to do, but our current ESL classes focus mostly on reading news articles. These and several other key findings are helping the team to recommend updates to the current ESL curriculum.

Another goal of this project is to compile a digital library of sample materials from these content area courses. The intent of this library is to provide ESL instructors with a plethora of relevant, authentic readings, listening excerpts, writing prompts, and speaking tasks from various disciplines. ESL instructors can then use these materials and scaffold language instruction that holds a high face-validity with their learners. A lot has changed since the last time most of us ESL instructors were undergraduate students. This project is all about staying in touch with the reality of what our university non-native English speaking students face so that we can better prepare them for success outside of the ESL classroom.

You can contact Jennifer Rice at jar@uoregon.edu 🐾

Teacher as Learner: A Case for Learning Students' L1
Vanessa Armand, Tokyo International University

In the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) setting, many schools require that job applicants be native English speakers, but not that they have knowledge of the local language of the students they will be teaching. In some cases, lack of knowledge of the students' native language (L1) is even considered beneficial, as it creates a full-immersion environment in a non-immersion context. It is, therefore, not uncommon to find EFL instructors who do not speak the language of the students they are teaching and have different cultural beliefs about how language should be taught. As a result, there can be a disconnect between the instructor's conceptualization of the learning process and how students in these EFL settings feel they learn best.

This study is using an instructor survey to gather information about teachers' interest/motivation/process/ progress in learning the local language of their respective EFL context, their feelings about L1 use in the classroom, their use of the L1 in the classroom, and their reflections on teaching and learning. The goal of this research is to discover trends in EFL teachers' pre- and in-service learning of student L1s and their beliefs about benefits and drawbacks of this knowledge and learning process. Ultimately, results will be analyzed in light of suggestions for EFL school administrators for how to better support their EFL teachers who are not literate in the L1 of the student body and thus better support the EFL learning process of the students.

This survey is open and needs more respondents. If you have worked in an EFL context, or if you have friends and colleagues teaching EFL, please participate in the survey or pass along this link to other potential participants: "SURVEY--TESOL: Experience with EFL students' native languages" at http://goo.gl/forms/sdlKqyIcFo . 🐾

### K-12 Teachers' Familiarity with Collocations
Carmen Caceda, Western Oregon University

It is crucial for English learners to be taught explicitly about collocations in their early learning trajectory, so they can notice and produce appropriate language chunks. One of our tasks as language instructors is to facilitate this process, but how familiar are teachers with collocations?

I recently had the opportunity to run a professional development session for 24 K-12 teachers, 17 (71%) elementary teachers and 7 (29%) middle and high school teachers. After a session including collocation activities and rationales for teaching collocations, teachers were asked to choose from the following: "before this session" (a) "I was familiar with collocations;" (b) "I was somewhat familiar with collocations;" or (c) "I was not familiar with collocations." The results show that out of 24 K-12 teachers, 14 (58%) stated being previously familiar with collocations and 10 (42%) were not. Although it is encouraging that more than half of the population is familiar with this concept, and it is hoped that they emphasize it in their classes, this result also suggests that some work needs to be done when preparing K-12 teachers, especially with those who may have not taken coursework in the language area. In general, all of us will benefit from revisiting and sharing this and other elements of ESOL/EFL theory so that it trickles down to classroom practitioners who then can better support English language learners. cacedac@wou.edu 🐾

Happening ESOLer

Rachel Merrick is an instructor in the ELI program at Pacific University in Forest Grove (near Portland), where she is involved with developing the program's online presence through web editing and social media outreach. We spoke via email.
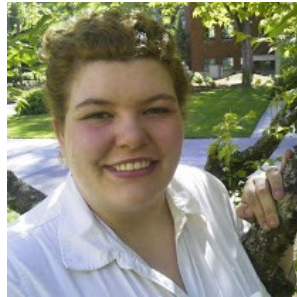
BES: What are you teaching these days?

RM: This term I am teaching all of our levels at Pacific. I have High-Beginning Writing and Grammar, Intermediate Listening and Speaking, and Advanced Reading and Vocabulary. I usually teach the Advanced Grammar class in our Spring Semester, so I am looking forward to that. I love the challenge of getting students to admit that grammar can actually be fun.

BES: What's special about your students and program?

RM: Class size is definitely one of the most wonderful things about the ELI. My classes are usually around ten students, and in the three years that I have been here, I have never had more than fifteen. Because of the size of the program, we get to build really strong relationships with all of the students. It is really great to get to know them and see their progress as they move through the levels. I have a student in my advanced class this term who started our program in my beginning class, and I can hardly believe he is the same person.

BES: I hear you're creating a free literacy textbook. Could you tell me about it?

RM: I am really excited about this project. I started building it as a project for a web design class. Before coming to Pacific, I was a literacy instructor for several years. I developed tons of literacy materials because there was so little available for adult literacy students. So, I started adapting those materials into a website: freeliteracy.org. The website is published under a Creative Commons license that allows anyone to use, download, and modify the materials for any purpose. I presented the current content at the ORTESOL conference and got a lot of awesome feedback for future development. I also made a development wiki for users to make suggestions about the site, share literacy materials, and discuss literacy instruction: freeliteracy.pbworks.com. I hope to find collaborators who have materials to share or ideas to continue developing the site.

BES: What drew you to work in ESOL, originally?

RM: I have always loved language and learning about other cultures. I got a B.A. in Linguistics from the University of Oregon with no real plan for what kind of job I would have in the future. I was so focused on finishing my degree that I didn't do a lot of career planning. During my junior year, I decided to do a Second Language Acquisition and Teaching Certificate in case "doing research or something" didn't work out. When I graduated, I headed to Korea and taught at an after school English program. I loved it! The students rocked, and I felt like "Duh. Of course, I am going to teach English!" When I came back to the U.S., I decided to get my M.Ed and teach at a college or university.

BES: What keeps you inspired in your ESOL work?

RM: My co-workers still tease me about my interview for the position I have now. When asked "How are your technology skills with Word or Excel?" I answered "I'm pretty much a wizard with Word." You have to really sell yourself in an interview, you know! It was a good answer because I am now the resident "tech" person. I love finding ways to integrate new technology resources into my classroom. One of my teaching mantras is "They've got those darn phones, so let's use them for something productive!"

Research Note
ELSTEM Project: Preliminary Findings
Catherine Kim, Pacific University

The ELSTEM (ESOL for Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math Educators) project is a collaboration between Pacific University's College of Education and eight Oregon school districts. With funding from a federal National Professional Development grant (OELA, U.S. Department of Education Grant No. T365Z120107), this project designs and implements new pre- and in-service curricula that integrate teacher training in STEM and an ESOL endorsement.

Currently in the fourth year of its implementation, this project has served a total of 17 pre-service STEM teachers and 62 in-service STEM teachers thus far. The project evaluation is being conducted by Education Northwest in the areas of curriculum, surveys of cohort participants, and classroom teaching effectiveness as observed by the ELSTEM project staff. In the most recent project evaluation conducted in 2015, the project participants demonstrated their improved teaching practice for English learners (ELs) as follows:

<u>In-service</u> participants reported and/or were observed to have increased their proficiency in classroom practices that support ELs. These included:

♦ Incorporation of the Oregon English Language Proficiency (ELP) standards when lesson planning, which enabled teachers to plan appropriate supports for the English learners in their classroom

♦ Self-reported proficiency in Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP)

♦ Familiarity with, and use of, explicit instruction in academic English

♦ Familiarity with, and use of, testing accommodations for ELs

♦ Incorporation of various ESOL classroom practices into their lessons

<u>Pre-service</u> participants also reported and/or demonstrated increased proficiency in classroom practices that support ELs. These included:

♦ Knowledge of second language acquisition

♦ Use of SIOP model

♦ Explicit instruction in academic English

♦ Use of scaffolding to make lesson content comprehensible to ELs

♦ Activation and use of students' background knowledge about a topic

♦ Use of realia and manipulatives to help convey meaning to ELs in non-linguistic ways

♦ Incorporation of small group work to encourage ELLs to practice oral language and actively participate in lessons

♦ Instruction on intended vocabulary words and language forms to increase ELs' exposure to applicable subject language

The ELSTEM programs have substantially renovated the curricula to meet the needs of STEM pre- and in-service teachers in teaching their ELs more effectively. The curriculum is undergoing continuous changes and adaptations to make this specialized ESOL professional development program more relevant to STEM teaching practice in secondary schools. For questions and inquiries about this project, please contact the ELSTEM project director, catherinekim@pacificu.edu

Chinese

In a recent ORTESOL newsletter survey, several respondents requested information about our students' languages and cultures. This is our second Language Spotlight, featuring three articles about challenges faced by our Chinese-speaking students of English.

Language Spotlight
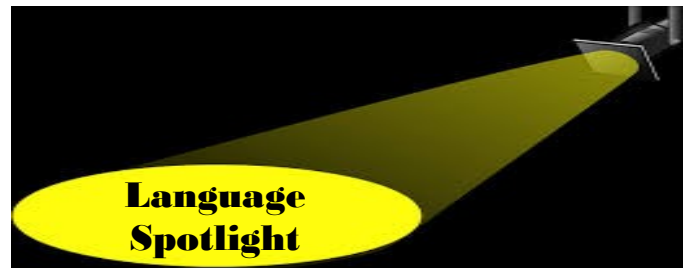
The Effect of Mandarin Grammar on Chinese Student Production of English
By Stephen M. Kraemer, University of Oregon

As ESL teachers, we often encounter a number of mistakes or errors in English that seem to be common for native Chinese speakers. These include mistakes in verb tense, subject-verb agreement, the pronouns "he" and "she, and adverbial time words.

Many of the errors or mistakes that native Chinese speakers make when writing English can be best understood by looking at the structure of Modern Standard Mandarin. For example, it is easy to see why Chinese students might have difficulty with English verb tense, since Modern Mandarin does not have separate forms of the verb to indicate verb tense. Instead, Mandarin uses context or other words to indicate the time or tense of verbs.

The following sentences are a good example of how verb tense may be expressed in Mandarin:

Wo meitian qu.	(I every day go.)	I go every day.
Wo mingtian qu.	(I tomorrow go.)	I am going tomorrow.

In the two Mandarin sentences, the word for the verb "go" is "qu." The verb "qu" has the meaning of "go," but the form of the verb does not change in Mandarin to express the difference in verb tense or time. Instead, the difference in time is expressed through context, either through the words "meitian" (every day) or "mingtian" (tomorrow). Since these two words clearly indicate the time domain of the sentences, i.e., "every day" or "tomorrow," it is not necessary in Mandarin to change the form of the verb to indicate a change in time or tense.

Not only does the verb not change its form to indicate time or tense in Mandarin, there is also no subject – verb agreement in Mandarin. If we change the two example sentences above to indicate the pronoun "he/she" instead of "I," we will have the following two example sentences in Mandarin:

Ta meitian qu.	(He/She every day go.)	He/She goes every day.
Ta mingtian qu.	(He/She tomorrow go.)	He/She is going tomorrow

As can be seen from these example sentences, there is no change whatsoever in the form of the verb "qu" (go) when we change the subject of the sentences from "wo" (I) to "ta" (he/she). This is unlike the English examples, where the verb in English "go" needs to change its form to "goes" or "is going" to agree with the subject "he/she."

As can also be seen from these examples, the spoken word "ta" in Mandarin means both "he" and "she" in English. As a result, many Chinese speakers may have problems distinguishing between the pronouns "he" and "she" in English.

It is also important to note the difference in the position of the adverbial time words in the above sentences in Mandarin versus English. In the Mandarin sentences above, the time words "meitian" (every day) and "mingtian" (tomorrow), occur before the verb "qu" (go), where as in English sentences above, the time words "every day" and "tomorrow" usually occur after the verb. This difference in sentence structure regarding time words may help to illustrate why Chinese students may encounter difficulties in learning adverb and time word placement in English.

The four example sentences above in Mandarin, though short and simple, illustrate several features of modern Mandarin sentence structure that may interfere with students' acquisition of certain grammatical features in English. The many differences between Mandarin and English grammar, as exemplified in the sentences above, can help teachers understand some of the difficulties that Chinese students experience as they learn English as a second language. 🐾

Classroom Culture Differences between China and America
By Wei Xiaoshuang

Studying in America made me realize there is a huge difference in classroom culture betweeen America and China. I was expected to listen quietly and do exactly what the teachers say for the last 17 years, until a year ago when I started my graduate program here in the U.S. Ever since then, I have been put into endless discussions and group works and I had little ideas what the "rules" are for these activities. As one can imagine, it's hard to do your best when you don't know the rules and when you are out of your comfort zone.

Here in the USA, I remember being the "world's best listener" in countless discussions, leaving my teammates believing that I had nothing interesting to say. However, in most occasions I was merely being polite and waiting for my turn. All my American teammates seemed to pick up the topic from each other rather quickly and naturally. I never felt comfortable enough to cut into a discussion so I always waited for someone to pass the conversation to me by saying "What do you think, Xiao?"

In Chinese classrooms, students are used to being called on. Teachers are of higher status and hold power in the classroom environment. They have the final say over what is right and what is wrong. For students, disagreeing

with a teacher or even a classmate is seen as causing conflicts. Voicing one's opinion in front of the class is a privilege and also a face-threatening act. Making a mistake in public is simply too scary to imagine. On the other hand, showing too much enthusiasm in expressing oneself is considered arrogant. These are some of the reasons why many Chinese students don't like to speak up in the classroom even though they have great ideas.

In China, study revolves around specific goals. For elementary students, their goal is to get into a top high school. For most high schoolers, they study to get good scores on the college entrance exam. When students go off to college, their motivation changes into getting a job or gaining a certificate. At all these levels we find a utilitarian point of view on study, especially school education. I've talked with many Chinese students who are studying in English Intensive programs in American universities. They sometimes express frustration about not seeing the benefit of taking those courses. The mainstream teaching philosophy that emphasizes "having autonomy and enjoying your study" can be hard to transform into motivation to some Chinese students.

Concluding all these differences in classroom culture between China and America, I have a few suggestions for English teachers.

♦ Give your Chinese students more private thinking time and peer/group discussion time before asking them to speak in front of the class.

♦ Make directions for group activities specific, and provide enough language support to keep students engaged.

♦ Try to assign a role to all participants in a group discussion, to assure everyone is involved in the process.

♦ Let the students know how the grammar points they learning or exercises they are doing relate to their academic or life goal. There are many more ways to motivate Chinese students besides saying "this will appear on the test". Making connections between the learning tasks at hand and their future study is always effective. 🖎

Some Pronunciation Issues of Mandarin Chinese Speakers Speaking English   By Jeff Maxwell

Chinese language speakers can face some challenges with pronunciation when learning to speak English. Some of the difficulties stem from differing sound systems, while other problems are associated with differences in intonation and stress.

With many different dialects and minority languages spoken China, L1 influence on spoken English may vary. For example, Dongbei Hua speakers from Northeastern China have trouble discerning /s/ from /ʃ/, even though they are distinct in Mandarin Chinese. Likewise /l/, /r/, and /n/ are all distinct sounds in Mandarin, but speakers of Cantonese may have trouble producing these sounds. Since Mandarin Chinese is the official language of government and education in Mainland China and Taiwan, the rest of this article will focus on pronunciation issues speakers of Mandarin Chinese may have when learning to speak English.

Mandarin Chinese has fewer vowel sounds than English, resulting in difficulties with distinguishing English vowels, especially short (lax) vowels. For example, /ɛ/ and /ɪ/ do not exist as individual sounds in Chinese, and many Chinese speakers of English will confuse these vowel sounds with other vowels, turning "bed" into "bad"or "bid" into "bead". This type of vowel substitution is also frequent with /ʌ/ and /ʊ/ sounds, changing "putt" to "pot" and "put" to "poot." Though diphthongs are present in Chinese, they are often shorter. English diphthongs will often become short with little distinction between the vowel sounds.

The Mandarin Chinese sound system also has fewer consonant sounds than English. The English consonant sounds /v/, /z/, /θ/, and /ð/ are often replaced with the Chinese /w/, /dʒ/, and /d/ respectively. Most of the consonant sounds that exist in Chinese are also found in English, though. This does not mean they are used in the same ways. In Chinese, a consonant sound is followed by vowel sound to make up syllables and words. This means that consonant clusters do not exist as they do in English. Speakers of Chinese often struggle to produce consonant clusters without adding in a vowel sound between the consonant sounds.

The Chinese syllable structure creates another difference in the use of consonant sounds. Only three consonant sounds, /n/, /ŋ/, and sometimes /r/, may be found at the end of a word in Mandarin. Chinese speakers may drop the consonant sounds from the end of words because the particular English consonant sound cannot exist at the end of a Chinese word. This is especially evident in the dropping of word-final -s in verbs and plurals.

Chinese is a tonal language. Four different rising and falling pitches at the syllable level change the meaning of words. To illustrate this, four words all pronounced *ma*, but with a flat tone, a rising tone, falling then rising tone, and a falling tone have completely different meanings: mā (mom), má (hemp), mǎ (horse), and mà (to swear). This means each vowel is fully stressed in Mandarin Chinese, and speakers of Chinese may also fully stress all syllables when speaking English. This leads to differences in pronunciation, and can also cause communication breakdowns with native speakers on American English, who depend on patterns of stress and reduction for word recognition.

In order to help Chinese speakers of English wanting to improve their spoken English, I suggest the following:

♦ Teach the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA).
♦ Do minimal pair exercises in class.
♦ Practice reading aloud in class.
♦ Draw rising and falling tone over stressed words in English sentences or use hand gestures to denote stress and intonation when speaking to students. 🖎

Letter from the Editor

Dear ORTESOL Members,

I hope you'll enjoy this issue of the ORTESOL Newsletter. Many thanks to all of the authors for their contributions!

I have appreciated the opportunity to edit this newsletter over the past two years. I've had fun and learned a lot. A new board member will step into the Publications Chair / Newsletter Editor role in 2016, but the contact information will remain the same: newsletter@ortesol.org. Watch for a call for submissions in the new year.

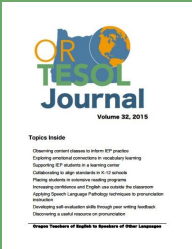All my best wishes for a wonderful winter break, and a good start to 2016.

Thanks again!

beth s

(Beth Sheppard, ORTESOL Newsletter Editor)

Contribute to our community:

Submit to The *ORTESOL Journal!*

Visit http://www.ortesol.org/guidelines.html to read all the details about submissions.
Click on the "Submission Guidelines" link.

December 20, 2015 is the deadline for submissions to the 2016 edition, but extensions can be made for works in progress. You can contact journal@ortesol.org with any questions.

You can see past issues of the Journal at
http://ortesol.org/publications.html

See you at TESOL!

TESOL will host its 50th anniversary convention in Baltimore MD, April 5-8 2016. If you've never attended the convention before, you will be impressed by the sheer number of keynotes, sessions, and other opportunities for networking with colleagues from around the world.

As a regional affiliate of TESOL, ORTESOL offers a grant to cover travel, accommodations, registration, and a per diem fee for attending the TESOL International Convention, up to a total of $2,000. This grant is named for professor James Nattinger (https://www.pdx.edu/linguistics/professor-james-r-nattinger).

We are now accepting applications for the James Nattinger Travel Grant for 2016 TESOL convention attendance. Application requirements for this grant can be found on our web site, www.ortesol.org.

Applications should be sent electronically to info@ortesol.org by Friday, December 4th, 2015. The recipient(s) will be announced in early January, 2016.

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ORTESOL is an association of professionals concerned with the education of students for whom English is a non-native language. Newsletter submissions may be e-mailed to newsletter@ortesol.org. Those accepted for publication may be edited. The newsletter is not responsible for the opinions expressed by its contributors. Send all inquiries concerning the organization to ORTESOL, c/o Dept. of Applied Linguistics, Portland State University, PO Box 751, Portland, OR 97207 or info@ortesol.org.

Beginning in 2014, the ORTESOL Newsletter is available in electronic format only. However, if you would like a printed copy mailed to you, you can request one by emailing newsletter@ortesol.org. The cost will be $7.50 for a color copy, or $3.50 for black and white.