

NMTESOL Newsletter

New Mexico Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages

Email: nmtesol@gmail.com / Website: www.nmtesol.blogspot.com

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Spotlight on Bill Ancker: New President of NMTESOL by Nora Nixon



This interview was conducted on May 12, 2008.

Nora: What's your background in TESOL?

Bill: My ESOL background began with an MA in TESOL from the University of Arizona in 1982 and a strong desire to travel. Some of my classmates were interested in Asia, others left for the high salaries in the Middle East, but I wanted to go to Latin America! Like a lot of young ESL teachers, I led an itinerant life early in my career. I taught at bina-tional centers in Mexico, Nicaragua, Paraguay, and Argentina and then received a Fulbright grant and did teacher training in Turkey for two years. I got interested in anthropology and was accepted at UNM so I moved to Albuquerque in 1991. At that time I began studying full-time in a Ph.D. program, but was still restless, so I joined the U.S. State Department and continued to travel. I spent four years in Central America and two years in Central Asia (in the former Soviet Union). My busiest and best job ever was in Washington D.C. working as the editor of *English Teaching Forum*, a quarterly journal for TESOL teachers dis-

tributed by U.S. embassies. Our print run was about 50,000 and I corresponded with authors and teachers from all over the world! Finally, I got tired of traveling and decided to move back home to New Mexico. You know, I'm an Army brat and I turned 50 this year. In my entire life I have never lived anywhere for more than four years. I've been in Albuquerque more than two years and I plan on setting a new personal record for staying in one place!

Nora: What's your current position?

Bill: UNM has an intensive English program called the Center for English Language and American Culture, which has about 60 students per semester. I'm the Academic Manager there. Most of the students want to earn degrees from U.S. universities, so the curriculum has a strong academic focus. Students study four hours a day in class and have homework every night. In addition to my job at UNM, I'm a graduate student there in intercultural communication.

Nora: Why NMTESOL?

Bill: For our small population, New Mexico has a relatively large percentage of

English language learners. The largest group of second language learners we serve is Spanish speakers but that isn't the entire picture. International students study at our universities; adult immigrants who often work two jobs take evening and weekend classes at community colleges, and their children attend public schools; other adult learners study with literacy volunteers and the school districts enroll hundreds of generation 1.5 learners. Throughout the state, professors, teachers, tutors, administrators, and others are dedicated to helping students achieve their personal and professional goals. By re-establishing a TESOL affiliate here, we can contribute to the professional development of all members and, by extension, help improve the teaching of English to speakers of other languages in New Mexico.

Nora: What is your vision for NMTESOL?

Bill: I hope to see a professional association of volunteers from all over the state who are committed to increasing resources for ESOL educators and opportunities for English language learners. I would like to see a group of individuals pooling

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"I would like to see a group of individuals pooling their talents and resources ... an elementary teacher in Raton, a high school teacher in Silver City, a community college instructor in Albuquerque, a tutor in T or C, a professor from NMSU . "

Spotlight on Bill Ancker

(Continued from page 1)

their talents and resources, and attracting others to join, who understand that there is strength in numbers and that we share the same goal. An elementary teacher in Raton, a high school teacher in Silver City, a community college instructor in Albuquerque, a tutor in T or C, a professor from NMSU in Las Cruces... In the broadest sense, that goal is improving our ability to communicate with others. For the members of NMTESOL, professional development could include face-to-face gatherings, such as annual conferences and local workshops; as well as online activities, such as our cyber newsletter, webcasts; and the publication of research. Although the members

of this new organization come from different backgrounds and face different challenges, I believe we all share that common goal of improving communication and increasing mutual understanding. Our vehicle is English language instruction.

Nora: What's next for NMTESOL?

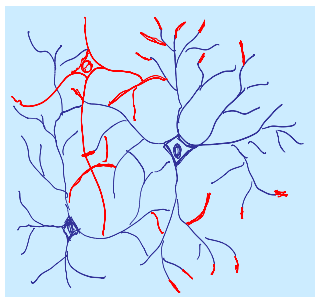
Bill: This summer the elected officers are working on building the association. The state has certain requirements to meet before NMTESOL can be legally registered. The bank has other requirements before we can open an account, and of course, TESOL headquarters in Virginia has requirements to meet before we can become an official affiliate of the international association. None of it is onerous, but Amy Christen-

sen, Kristina Sievers, Penny Mortier, and I are learning that one step must precede another. We cannot begin signing up members and collecting dues just yet. By midsummer we should have the bank account functioning, PayPal option available, and members can officially join NMTESOL. Next up, on July 25, is a webcast with Diane Larsen-Freeman on teaching grammar. I encourage everyone to check out <http://exchanges.state.gov/forum/vols/vol39/no4/index.htm> for an interview with Dr. Larsen-Freeman from the October 2001 issue of *English Teaching Forum*.

Nora is an instructor at Central New Mexico Community College.

Brain-based Learning Workshop: Standing Room Only!

by Kristina Sievers



"Find out what prior knowledge students have so that new dendrites can attach themselves securely to already-existing ones."

Contact cguilck@cnm.edu or ksievers@cnm.edu for more information about this presentation.

Connie Gulick and Kristina Sievers conducted a workshop at the New York TESOL Conference entitled "Applying Brain-Friendly Lessons to ESL Classes." The session had standing room only and there was a waiting line of people to get in the door!

The first part of the presentation focused on the stages in the human learning process: motivation, practice, refinement, and mastery. Teachers were asked to identify a skill they have and to determine what stages they went through in its acquisition.

Next, Connie showed pictures of dendrites and synapses in the brain. She outlined major points about learning meant to encourage students in their process of acquiring a second

language. The points she highlighted in the presentation included that we are born to learn, i.e. born with internal structures that support learning and growth; and that in order to keep neural connections strong, time on task and practice are essential.

In her classes at CNM, Connie provides students with visual ways to monitor the stages of learning a new concept. For instance, students use a simple chart to draw the number of neural connections they have grown during the learning process. Other visual ideas for monitoring student progress were shown as well, including charts in which students rate their skill level on specific concepts. Encouraging students to keep track of their own learning and reminding

them that there are stages to the learning process were reinforced in the presentation.

The workshop concluded with tips for teachers which included:

1- Find out what prior knowledge students have so that new dendrites can attach themselves securely to already existing ones

2- Provide multiple ways for students to practice material so that the neural connections can be reinforced

The more students practice and become aware of their own learning, the better learners they become.

Kristina is an instructor at Central New Mexico Community College.

Ask Rae! *What's the difference between See, Look, and Watch?* by Rae Nichols

Good day to you! This is the first in a series of contributions I am writing for the newsletter under the banner of "ASK RAE," so allow me to introduce myself.

My name is Rae and I am a retired teacher of EFL/ESL. I lived and taught in Santiago, Chile for 12 ½ years and was fortunate to have worked in various capacities as a teacher of English in a foreign country. I currently work as an Adult Literacy Tutor at ReadWest, Inc.

The purpose of this column "ASK RAE" is to provide a forum for asking questions about teaching English. Email me with your questions and I'll send a personal response if your question is not published in my column.

Send your questions to: rrnichols28@msn.com

SEE, LOOK AT, WATCH

Non-native speakers sometimes have difficulty knowing how to use, see, look at, and watch. This one is for you!

SEE: This is the ability to use our eyes.

I can see the pictures in the museum. I can see a sunset.

Can you see the jet plane high in the sky? Did you see that driver cut in front of me? I am not blind. I have the ability to see.

LOOK AT: To 'look at' something is to concentrate one's vision on that object.

I look at the pictures in the museum. I study them, and read about them.

I look at the sunset. I concentrate my vision on the sunset and see all the colors.

WATCH: This aspect of vision requires movement.

I watch the helicopter as it flies over my house.

First, I see it. Then I look at it. I focus my vision on it. Finally I watch it. I keep my vision focused on the helicopter as it moves across the sky.

I am capable of seeing the sunset. I look at it, and I watch it as the colors change from pink to purple.

I watch TV. There is movement as the actors move about. There is action which I watch.

I watch a movie, for the same reason.

I watch the fish swim about in the fish tank.



*WATCH for the next issue of our newsletter.
LOOK for "Ask Rae" and SEE if the next
problem solved will help you also!*



Speed-dating/Reviewing and SWOT Peer Reviews by Amy Christensen

ESL students are often reluctant to critique their peers' writing especially when they are reviewing native English speakers' papers. Instead of using open-ended questions on a peer review form, I have developed two different ways to complete peer reviews that are ESL friendly. You can adapt these forms and techniques to any writing assignment.

The first method is a technique I've termed "Speed Reviewing" and is when the reviewer spends just five minutes with an assignment, much like "Speed Dating" where you spend five minutes getting to know a potential date. "Speed Dating" started in the 1990's and is a type of a dating service. Several websites explain Speed Dating such as http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Speed_dating, <http://www.8minutedating.com/>, and <http://www.fastlife.com/how-speed-dating-works/index.html>.

Before students begin the "speed reviewing" process, I like to remind them of the research conducted by Malcolm Gladwell in his book *Blink*. He asserts that we often make *better* decisions with snap judgments than we do with volumes of analysis. I prepare for this activity by setting up the room with cloth covered tables/desks, a chocolate kiss at each desk, and a cup of flowers for the

students to take home after class. At each 'place' setting there is a student's paper and a Plus/Delta chart. The student reviewer writes his or her initial impressions of the writing assignment using the Plus/Delta chart. After five minutes, the reviewers switch desks to read a different paper until they have cycled through five papers. The students are amused by this type of reviewing process especially after I've explained the whole concept of Speed Dating.

The second way I have students do peer reviews is by using a SWOT analysis. This review is designed to assess the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) of each assignment. Students fill out a chart in which they are asked to find an example in their peers' writing for each of the four strategic planning areas (SWOT). Again, this type of peer review works well because students are enthused about using a form that is standard in the business world. For more information about SWOT, go to http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Swot_analysis. Both of these methods use a non-threatening environment coupled with precise directions and lead to better peer reviews.

Amy is an instructor at Central New Mexico Community College. Handouts at: http://planet.cnm.edu/achristensen/Conference%20Presentations/Speed_Reviewing_and_SWOT_Analysis_Handout.doc

**Join us July 25
for our Virtual
Seminar!**



Diane Larsen-Freeman

Events

“Grammaring” Virtual Seminar

by Jennifer Herrin

How do you feel about teaching grammar? Diane Larsen-Freeman, Ph.D., presenter and TESL/TEFL instructor from the University of Michigan (most recognized as co-author of **The Grammar Book: An ESL/EFL Teacher's Course** published by Heinle and Heinle), delivered a “webinar” called Grammaring: A TESOL Virtual Seminar on Wednesday, May 7, 2008. Having never participated in one of these “virtual” seminars before, I was curious and watched it “live” on my home computer.

At first, I was surprised that it wasn't a live *video* of her speaking at a podium or on a stage as I had imagined. It was, in fact, a live *slide show* supported by a small photo of

Dr. Larsen-Freeman and her voice. No bells and whistles here . . . but that probably makes it easier to broadcast to remote areas with not-so-sophisticated computer facilities.

I found myself able to concentrate on the presentation, and at some point felt myself drift into the feeling of being at a real seminar venue, keeping my eyes on the slides, processing what the presenter was saying, and wishing I had a colleague nearby to comment to.

Her talk is thought-provoking. She defines a term she has coined: grammaring. She explains that grammar not only encompasses “form” but grammar integrates “form”, “meaning”, and “appropriateness”. This integration is what makes up “grammaring”. She also talks about making classroom ac-

tivities “psychologically authentic” and how this can remedy the “inert knowledge problem” (a concept she explains during the webinar). She uses a few quotes that spoke to me. My favorites were, “I don't need to entertain my students; I do need to engage them” and a quote from one of her trainees, “I don't need grammar to be understood; I need grammar to be respected.”

If you are interested in viewing this virtual seminar, we will be showing the original webinar on July 25th at CNM.

Please join us:

Central New Mexico Community College MS 302, July 25, 2008, 4:00-5:30pm. Watch your email for more details!

Jennifer is an instructor at Central New Mexico Community College.

Upcoming Conferences and Meetings:

- www.nmcl.org –**NM Coalition for Literacy** now accepting registration for Annual Meeting in Socorro - June 20, 2008
- www.anupi.org.mx – **6th International Conference** Oct. 2-4, 2008 in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico
- www.az-tesol.org - **Arizona TESOL** now accepting proposals for conference Oct. 3-4, 2008 in Tucson
- www.colorado.edu/iec/cotesol - **Colorado TESOL** accepting proposals for Conference Oct. 24-25, 2008 in Denver
- www.tesol.org – **International TESOL Convention** in Denver March 25-29, 2009

International TESOL Educators Visit New Mexico

by Catherine N.H. Lewis and
Henry Shonerder

Teachers and administrators of English language programs from Ecuador, Hungary, India, Kosovo, Mexico, South Africa, Uruguay, Venezuela, Vietnam and the West Bank came to New Mexico for a few days in early April. Their visit was part of a tour sponsored by the U.S. State Department, which included attending the International TESOL Conference in New York and touring ESL programs in New Mexico



and Colorado. The ten participants in this International Visitor Leadership Program teach English to non-native speakers in their home countries and are involved in program administration, development, and support. The tour was designed to give the participants an opportunity to interact with those involved in

TESOL instruction and program development in the United States.

On Monday, April 7th following a meeting with Gladys Herrera Gurule, Director of State Public School Bilingual Programs, TESOL hosted a potluck luncheon at the Col-

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lege of Santa Fe at Albuquerque. James Saya, Director of the campus, greeted the group. The visitors were then welcomed by Henry Shoner, Professor of Education and Coordinator of Bilingual and TESOL Programs at the College. Following the lunch, a panel of American ESL/EFL educators discussed issues of teacher training and certification, materials and curriculum, language policy, and English as a world language.

The panel consisted of officers of the newly reorganized New Mexico TESOL organization: Ann Cortés, Debbie Golden, Connie Gulick, Jennifer Herrin, and Henry Shoner. A follow-up question and answer session gave the TESOL visitors a chance to share their own perspectives and experiences in the teaching of English. Everyone then exchanged business cards, warm goodbyes, and a group photo was taken before the group departed.

Next, the visitors traveled to the Santa Fe Community College (SFCC) to participate in a workshop presented by John Kongsvik, Director, TESOL Trainers of the SFCC Teacher Education Department. John demonstrated best practices of ESL instruction and had the visitors quickly involved in a variety of structured, sequenced language development activities in pairs, and small and large groups.

Following the workshop, the group visited Catherine Lewis's ESL classroom at SFCC to see the materials, activities, and lesson plans she uses with her Level 1 adult students. The attendees worked with the materials

and seemed genuinely pleased to be in a "real" classroom. They were very interested in where to buy specific games and posters, how to create many of the instructional materials they saw, and the organization and methodology of the class. The day ended with a reception and dinner hosted by the Council on International Relations.

Tuesday began with a panel discussion led by Lorraine Goldman, a former ESL teacher and current community volunteer. Lorraine discussed the International Humanitarian Matching Grants offered by Rotary International. These funds have supported a partnership between the Rotary Club of Santa Fe and the Club Rotario de Chihuahua Majalca to help American teachers better meet the needs of their Mexican immigrant students. Lorraine also described *Up with English*, a program focused on teaching standard English as a second dialect to speakers of non-standard English—primarily government clerical workers in Washington, D.C. This topic generated a lively discussion among the group about applying ESL techniques to first language instruction when working with students who speak a non-standard version of their native language.

The next stop for the visitors was a tour of the Palace of the Governors led by Erica Garcia, the museum's lead educator, who presented an overview of the languages and history of New Mexico. After a break for lunch, the group then participated in a panel discussion on various aspects of classroom instruction with Andrea Gaytan, ESL Program Coordinator at SFCC,

Dawn Wink, Assistant Professor, SFCC Teacher Education and John Kongsvik. Dawn described her strategies for classroom instruction and how she incorporates direct instruction, pair work, small and large group work, and student presentations in her three hour classes. Andrea focused on the administrative perspective of operating an adult ESL program, with descriptions of effective organizational techniques and teacher support systems. John concluded the session with several interactive demonstrations of language instruction techniques. The visitors then headed to the Albuquerque airport to fly to Denver for the last segment of their tour.

During their two-day visit it was interesting to see how focused the participants were on the practical aspects of our ESL instruction. "*How do you do that? Where do you get that? How do you use that?*" were recurring questions from the participants. You could also often hear them say, "*I could use that. Maybe I'll try that, or We're doing something like that.*" It was clear that, regardless of home country, we all share similar experiences and concerns coupled with an excitement and passion for teaching English as a second language.

Members of NMTESOL look forward to continued contact with the visitors and hope their recent tour will jump start an international connection between NMTESOL and the worldwide TESOL community.

Catherine is an ESL instructor at Santa Fe Community College. Henry is a TEFL professor at the College of Santa Fe, Albuquerque.

Call for Submissions!

Please submit the following for consideration for our next issue of the NMTESOL Newsletter:

- Practical tips or lessons for the classroom
- A description of your ESOL program
- Games or puzzles for use in the classroom
- A reader-friendly academic article
- Events taking place in your area
- Anything else you want to tell us about!

Send to:

nmtesol@gmail.com

Subject: Newsletter

Do you want to join NMTESOL?

Very soon we will begin accepting dues for yearly membership:

\$15.00 tutor/student

\$20.00 regular

We cannot accept payments at this time.

We are still in the process of registering the organization to secure an account.

☺ ***We appreciate your patience!***

Ownership of any article written for this newsletter is retained by the author.

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