

NMTESOL Newsletter

New Mexico Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages

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

Winter 2009

Volume 1, Issue 3

Inside this issue:

Spotlight: Kristina Sievers	1
Membership Information	2
Tips for ESL Literacy, Part II	2
Ask Rae	3
Error Correction Workshop	3
Clovis Community College	4
Thinking ESL	5

Officers & Coordinators

- Bill Ancker, President
bill_ancker@yahoo.com
- Amy Christensen,
Vice President
achristensen@cnm.edu
- Kristina Sievers, Treasurer
ksievers@cnm.edu
- Penny Mortier, Secretary
pmortier@cnm.edu
- Ann Savino, Newsletter Editor
ann.savino@gmail.com
- Jennifer Herrin,
Web Coordinator
jherrin@cnm.edu
- Debbie Golden &
Henry Shonerd,
Membership Coordinators
dgolden34@comcast.net
shonerd@newmexico.com
- Catherine N.H. Lewis,
Affiliate Liaison
cnhl@nets.com
- Ann Cortés,
Advocacy Coordinator
anncortes@aol.com
- Deb McCormick
Southern Area Coordinator
debbsmc@hotmail.com

Spotlight on Kristina Sievers: NMTESOL Treasurer

by Jennifer Herrin



Jennifer: As a native New Mexican, you must have an interesting story about how your family got here?

Kristina: My parents, both from the Midwest, felt the pull of the Southwest when they were in their 20s. My dad was a park ranger at El Morro Na-

tional Monument for a few years, and my mom was a teacher. They eventually decided to teach on the Navajo reservation. I think the open spaces, blue skies, and diverse cultures here really intrigued them. I'm grateful to have grown up in a state like this with so much natural beauty.

Jennifer: ESL teachers are often thought of as an eclectic bunch. What do you think you'd be doing if you weren't teaching ESL?

Kristina: Teaching ESL is the most exciting career I can imagine, but there are plenty of other things I enjoy doing. Getting a job as a travel writer/photographer, social worker, or even a piano teacher would be interesting. The idea of immigration law also appeals to me; there is such a need for lawyers who can communicate with their international clients and advocate for them. For now, I'm grateful to be working full-time as ESL Co-Chair at CNM (Central New Mexico Community College).

Jennifer: I understand that you have not only studied French and Spanish, but you are also learning Thai. How do you think learning other languages makes you a better teacher?

Kristina: When our students come into the classroom, they usually don't have a conscious awareness of their own language -- I know that I didn't have this until I started learning other languages. Sometimes it can be interesting to do some comparative grammar so that people can understand how English is similar to and distinct from their first language. In the past few years I've met people from Korea and Thailand who have opened up

a whole new way of looking at language. Learning just a few phrases has given me an appreciation of how much language shapes our worldview and reflects cultural values. For instance, there are 7 words that a woman can use to say "I" in Thai! Now I know that teaching students about counting, telling time, or using pronouns may not be as simple as you think. I do volunteer work in other countries during the summers, so I can really understand how students feel being in a culture in which they are learning the language!

Jennifer: If you were having the "perfect" lesson and we walked into your classroom, what would we see? hear? feel?

Kristina: The times when I feel the greatest satisfaction in my classroom are when I step away from the front of the room and listen to students doing work in groups who are negotiating, questioning, and challenging each other. I use a lot of interactive techniques that allow students time to process and be creative with information. When they are engaged in an activity, I know that they are learning something. In an ideal class, you'd feel and hear the enthusiasm of students working together. You'd hear lots of laughter and questions!

Jennifer: What is the greatest challenge you have faced as an ESL teacher? What is most rewarding?

Kristina: The biggest challenge that I have faced has been getting students to believe that they can improve their language skills enough to continue on to degree programs, better jobs, and more opportunities in general. I spend some time in my advanced ESL class having students consider "next steps," and just watching students' faces when they ponder their possibilities (versus limitations) for the future is rewarding in itself. But, it's *really* rewarding to see students who do go on to the academic world or get better jobs because of their improved language skills.

Jennifer is an ESL instructor at Central New Mexico Community College in Albuquerque.

"Recognize that ESL students need opportunities to use language and literacy for their own purposes . . . students may wonder what language is appropriate in certain situations, such as what kind of note to write if a teacher's mother has died. "

This is **Part II** of an article reprinted by permission from *Wrigley and Guth (2002), Bringing Literacy to Life, LiteracyWork International, Mesilla, New Mexico.*

Do you want to join NMTESOL?

We are incorporated in the state of New Mexico;
We are now accepting dues for 2009!

\$15.00 volunteer/student
\$20.00 regular

Please go to our website
www.nmtesol.wordpress.com
to download an application.

or Email us and we will send you an application
nmtesol@gmail.com

Thank you for your support!



Tips for ESL Literacy Teachers (Part II)

by Heide Spruck Wrigley



How can teachers provide a rich literacy experience for their students?

The following suggestions are based on the educational principles that shape rich language and literacy development and may provide some ideas.

Don't let learners get "mired in words"

Instead, provide opportunities to get the "big picture." Ask learners to bring in literacy materials they find puzzling, have them explain the context, and enlist the group in guessing what the materials might say. Highlight key words and ask learners to fill in the rest using what they know about the real world. Watch an interesting video with the sound off and have learners create their own stories or predict what the actors might be saying. Turn on the sound and ask learners to repeat the phrases they catch. Talk about the way adults learn to listen and read in a second language by linking what they already know about the world with what they hear and see written.

Make literacy learning fun and focus on things that matter

Students learn best when they have something to say

and a reason for paying attention to others. Present a variety of options and then let learners choose what interests them, so they will enjoy their work. Give them opportunities to respond in a variety of ways in class, such as quiet listening, group recitations, non-verbal reactions, and written responses. Encourage and support your students, but challenge them as well.

Focus on meaning while helping learners see how language works

Recognize that ESL students need opportunities to use language and literacy for their own purposes. Sometimes, that purpose includes understanding unusual phrases, idiosyncratic pronunciation, or simple grammar rules. At other times, students may wonder what language is appropriate in certain situations, such as what kind of note to write if a teacher's mother has died. Make room for your students to write down the topics that concern them and the questions they want to have answered. Let them predict what the speaker might say. Help your students make connections between what they know, what they are curious about, and the information they expect to receive. Ask your students to respond to the session and evaluate the speaker i.e. what they liked and didn't like, understood and didn't understand, their favorite new words, etc.

Connect literacy to life

Ask students to tell their stories, share their pictures,

and recite their favorite poems or sayings. Give them the opportunity to observe literacy use in a variety of contexts and ask them to listen for interesting language wherever they go. Turn your students into researchers who ask family members, friends, and acquaintances about their experiences with schooling and learning. Ask them to find out about other people's views on language and culture and compare them to their own. Encourage learners to examine the role of literacy in their lives and in their communities and help them see how literacy can be used to shape and alter the world.

Assess success

As you observe your learners, ask yourself "what is really going on here?" Find ways of recording "literacy incidents," events that show you whether your students are fully engaged in a particular activity or are just "going through the motions." Share your notes. Collaborate with others in your program (coordinators, teachers, and learners) and decide "what really counts." Define what you mean by success in language, literacy, and learning for the program and develop strategies for capturing small successes along the way. Categorize, analyze, and summarize until a rich picture of your literacy class emerges. Congratulate your students on their achievements. Share your success.

Heide is Senior Researcher at LiteracyWork International, Inc. in Mesilla.

Ask Rae!

What are the pronunciations of the “ed” regular past tense? by Rae Nichols

Good day to you! The past tense of regular verbs in English can be created by adding the letters ‘ed’ or just the letter ‘d’ if the verb already has an ‘e’ at the end.

However, there are three possibilities for the ending sounds, not all of which sound like ‘ed’.

- Some words that end in ‘ed’ are actually pronounced as if they end in ‘id’, as in “*handed*” and “*started*”.
- Some words change the ending ‘d’ sound to a softly released ‘t’, as ‘*kissed*’ and ‘*parked*’.
- Some words do not add an extra syllable and are pronounced like a “d”.

However, there are rules that help you know which ending sound must be made.

Rule #1: When the last letter of the root word is ‘t’ or ‘d’ the past tense ending, sounds like ‘ed’ or ‘id’.

Examples: *wait/waited; need/needed; want/wanted*

Rule #2: When the root of the regular verb ends in a vowel sound, or in any voiced consonant other than ‘d’, such as: *b, g, m, n, r, v, w*, the past tense is pronounced with a ‘d’ sound,

Examples: *play/played; study/studied; plan/planned;*

Rule #3: When the root of a regular verb ends in any voiceless consonant: *s, ch, k, p, th, sh, f, h*.

The past tense is pronounced as a softly exploding ‘t’ (a voiceless ‘t’)

Examples: *work/worked; watch/watched; pick up/picked up*

Have a good day! Rae
Send your questions to:
rrnichols28@msn.com and put
NMTESOL in the subject line.



NMTESOL Workshop: Error Correction—Breaking Bad Habits Without Breaking Spirits

by Penny Mortier



“Soccer, she is my favorite sport.”

Mistake or error? Global or local? Correct the student and risk “shutdown” or let it pass and risk “fossilization?” These are critical issues that teachers of language learners must address when dealing with the inevitable student errors that go along with language learning. On October 3rd, CNM Faculty member and experienced ESL trainer Jennifer Herrin presented a workshop on error correction, allowing us to consider

how to tread the fine path of correcting ESOL students without breaking their desire to explore, take risks, and communicate using the new language.

This workshop gave us a chance to re-acquaint ourselves with linguistic acquisition terminology and theory. We examined typical language-learner mistakes and errors, and reflected on how we would like to be corrected. Some participants shared negative experiences from over-correction, which discouraged them from speaking out in class and trying to use the new language. On the other hand, we also discussed students who had made the same errors so many times without feedback that the errors had become a habitual part of their speech output, and therefore difficult to change.

Jennifer provided us with numerous, practical classroom strategies to correct various types of errors in a positive way. She also gave guidelines for making the decision on when not to correct and which errors/mistakes to overlook.

This free professional development workshop was a huge success and left us with many ideas for our classrooms. It reminded us of the advantages of having a professional organization like NMTESOL to provide opportunities for training....And we didn’t have to cross state lines to participate! A copy of Jennifer’s handout can be accessed at www.nmtesol.wordpress.com

Penny is an ESL/Reading instructor at Central New Mexico Community College in Albuquerque.

ESL at Clovis Community College by Nancy Meadows

"Our vision is that ESL students studying for and receiving their GED can, as a learning community, continue to college classes. Advanced ESL students and GED students also have the opportunity to attend a GED Bridges to College class in which they are encouraged to participate before entering college."

Websites and Upcoming Conferences:

- www.tesol.org—
International TESOL
Convention in Denver
March 25-29, 2009—
Now accepting early
registration!
- www.az-tesol.org -
Arizona TESOL
- www.colorado.edu/iec/cotesol - **Colorado TESOL**

Material submitted to the newsletter is primarily edited for space considerations. Ownership of any article published in this newsletter is retained by the author.



ESL classes are very exciting at Clovis Community College's Center for Student Success in Clovis, New Mexico!

At the Center for Student Success in Clovis, New Mexico, we have an engaging and welcoming environment for our teaching/learning community that continues to grow. We serve a wide variety of students and strive to meet their unique needs.

At the Center, we serve approximately 450 adult ESL students each year. On campus, we offer morning and evening sessions and provide additional classes off-campus in town and in various communities. For example, in Clovis we have an off-campus site at the Lincoln Jackson Family Center (LJFC). The Center provides childcare for our students and is closer than the main college campus for many students. Additional ESL classes are offered in the communities of Texico, Bovina, Ft. Sumner, and Portales. Instructors always comment that their classes are very dynamic!

Students who are unable to attend class in person or want additional instruction can take advantage of our distance learning option or the computer lab. We use Rosetta Stone software as a

supplemental tool and have found that students like engaging in computer assisted instruction. Students who have time before or after class work in the computer lab regularly.

Students are also given the opportunity to have a one-on-one tutor through the Curry County Literacy Council. If students indicate a specific goal for which they would like assistance, such as studying for a driver's license exam or learning specific vocabulary for shopping or citizenship, the Literacy Council will provide a tutor once a week to provide the extra assistance.

Recently, we started a new class called ESL to GED. Advanced ESL students who expressed a goal of getting their GED in English, found that plunging into English GED classes was overwhelming. Many of them gave up. Hence, we created a class for students at this level who needed more support. We assist these students with developing core vocabulary in the content area before entering a formal GED class. Through attending this transition class, we now have

several students with renewed hope.

Another new program is an added ESL component in Developmental Education. Title V funding provides resources to develop ESL curricula to correspond to the College's Developmental Reading, English, and Freshman Seminar classes. These new courses will be implemented in Fall 2009. Our vision is that ESL students studying for and receiving their GED can, as a learning community, continue on to college classes. Additionally, advanced ESL students and GED students will have an opportunity to attend a GED Bridges to College class prior to entering the college.

With the many educational opportunities we provide and students' positive responses to services, we feel honored and privileged to work among this diverse population of English language learners. Students continue to improve their skills and we are all enriched as they share their culture and experiences within our learning community.

Nancy is an ESL Instructor at Clovis Community College in Clovis.



Beginning ESL Students at Clovis Community College

Thinking Like an ESL Teacher by Damon Hill

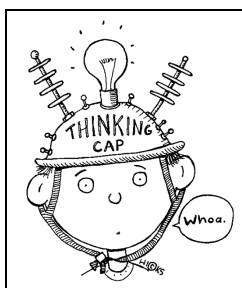
From time to time, some of us find our non-ESL colleagues asking us for advice on how to best support ESL student successes in their classes. What advice can we give?

After all, we are not necessarily experts in the content areas our colleagues teach. Yet, we have a wealth of insights from our own classrooms. How might these insights benefit students and teachers in other classrooms?

I mulled over these questions this summer as a participant in a Tools for Teaching seminar conducted through Organizational Learning at Central New Mexico Community College. The seminar brought together instructors, tutors, and instructional technicians from various disciplines across the community college. Over the course of our discussions, seminar participants mentioned the challenges they faced in communicating with non-native speakers.

During the final weeks of the seminar, each of us gave a short presentation. My presentation aimed to help non-ESL instructors think for a brief moment like an ESL teacher and, by extension, spark in them a few ideas on how they might help ESL students succeed in their classrooms.

As a warm up, I gave participants a short true/false quiz with statements concerning second-language learners. What they did not initially know was that I had replaced certain key words in the statements with French words. It took a minute or two before one of the participants caught on and commented. Others then shared their reactions, which ranged from curiosity to bewilderment, reactions not unlike those that ESL students might have in content area classes. A few participants had used their knowledge of other European languages to attempt to decode the statements. One person commented that the experience was a visceral reminder of the challenges she faced in learning Spanish, a struggle that



gave her greater empathy for ESL students in her classes. I then provided the participants with translations of the key words so they could evaluate and respond to the quiz statements. We then discussed each of the statements, which prompted several participants to share anecdotes from their classrooms.

To wrap up the presentation, I provided the participants with a list of suggestions for how they might “lighten the linguistic load” for ESL students in their classrooms. For example:

- prepare a list of key words or essential vocabulary to give students before a lesson or lecture
- provide students with a written outline of the lesson or lecture
- provide brief summaries of the lesson or lecture written in clear, simple language
- limit sentences to one concept
- write in simple subject + verb + object word order as much as possible
- write in active voice rather than passive voice
- speak clearly and at a reasonable pace when emphasizing important information
- define important terms that may be unfamiliar and/or write them down
- check for comprehension by asking students to restate important information
- repeat key information
- paraphrase student questions and comments for the whole class
- avoid excessive use of slang or idioms
- use gestures and other visuals

This list served as a springboard for participants to share some techniques that have worked in their teaching. It also led to an engaging discussion of a concrete problem. A focus of our seminar had been on understanding and applying learning style theory to our classrooms. How might we help our students benefit

ESL students often struggle with language at the same time they struggle with content. Simply being mindful of this reality can go a long way in supporting the success of these often highly motivated students.

from an increased awareness of their own learning styles while keeping such concepts and language accessible to ESL students? After all, second language learners may not immediately connect to terms such as kinesthetic, auditory, and visual.

After some brainstorming, the participants came up with an interesting suggestion: use pictures along with simple, clear, concrete language. They suggested rephrasing learning-style questionnaires along the lines of “Do you learn new words best by seeing them, hearing them, saying them, or writing them?” The participants were adjusting how they thought about language and approaching it from the perspective of an ESL learner. They were thinking like ESL teachers!

References and resources:

Haynes, Judy. “Tips on Communicating.” 2004. (<http://www.everythingsl.net/in-services/tipsoncommunicating.php>, 08 July 2008). [This source has a wealth of excellent information!]

Nutta, Joyce, and Ellen Pappamihel. “When Something is Lost in the Translation”: The Top Five Things Mainstream Content Area Teachers Should Know about English Language Learners.” (<http://tsl4324-02.su01.fsu.edu/article.html>, 08 July 2008)

Margaret, Proctor. “Ways to Help Your Students Who Use English as a Second Language – and Everyone in the Process.” 11 September 2003. University of Toronto. (<http://www.utoronto.ca/writing/facesl.html>, 08 July 2008)

“Strategies for Teaching ELL Students in the Content Areas.” (<http://www.celt.sunysb.edu/ell/tips.php>, 08 July 2008). [Thanks to the authors of this site for the memorable phrase “lighten the linguistic load.”]

Clip art licensed from the Clip Art Gallery on www.discoveryschool.com

Email Damon, an ESL/Writing Instructor at Central New Mexico Community College in Albuquerque, for copies of his handouts: dhill23@cnm.edu

English Language Fellow Program

Enhance your TESOL career — Become an English Language Fellow! The Number One Fellowship for TESOL Professionals

- ★ Exciting variety of responsibilities in addition to teaching EFL, including ESP, teacher training and materials/curriculum development.
- ★ Prestigious placements include universities, ministries of education, teacher training institutions, binational centers, and NGOs.
- ★ Ten-month fellowships funded by the U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs.
- ★ Fellowships available worldwide.

Now accepting applications!

For more information please contact:
English Language Fellow Program

Tel: (202) 687-2608

Fax: (202) 687-2555

Email: elf@georgetown.edu

Website: <http://elf.georgetown.edu>



Winter 2009

Inside this issue:

Spotlight: Kristina Sievers	1
Membership Information	2
Tips for ESL Literacy, part 2	2
Ask Rae	3
Error Correction Workshop	3
Clovis Community College	4
Thinking ESL	5

NMTESOL Newsletter

New Mexico Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages

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

address label here