

NMTESOL NEWSLETTER

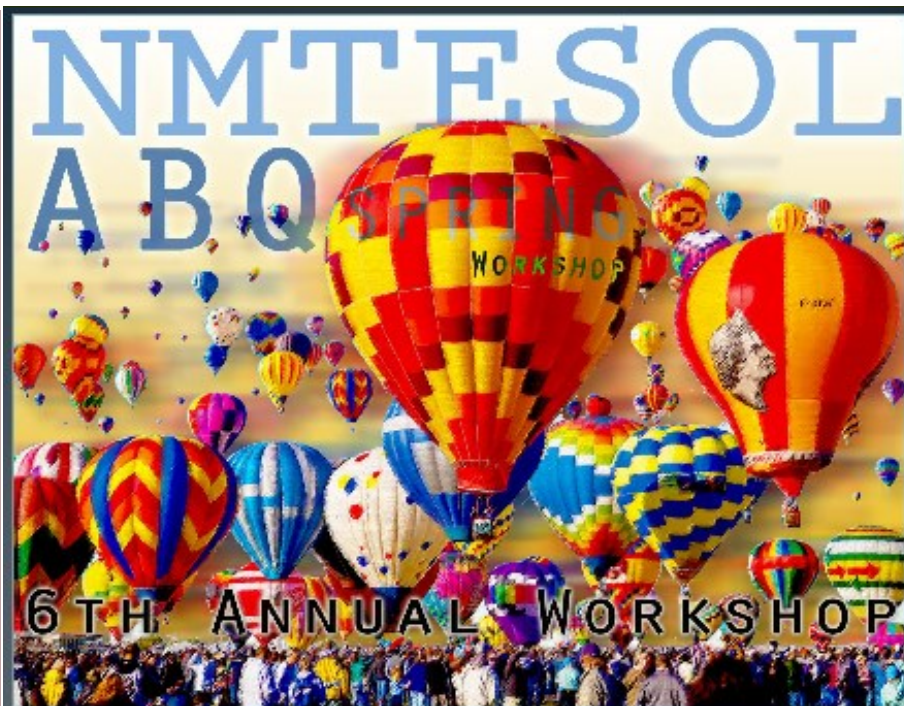
New Mexico Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages

August 2016



Special Edition: Spring '16 Workshop Recap

The 2016 Spring Workshop, hosted by CNM, went off without a hitch on April 16th. Please enjoy this pictorial review of our 6th annual event.



Mother
Nature is
always
speaking. She
speaks in a
language
understood
within the
peaceful
mind of the
sincere
observer.

- Radhanath Swami

Vision Statement

NMTESOL envisions bringing together and supporting English language educators throughout New Mexico, strengthening instruction for English language learners at all levels, and providing leadership and advocacy for both.

Mission Statement

- To promote networking and collaboration among NMTESOL members and colleagues.
- To provide professional development opportunities for English language teachers, tutors, and administrators.
- To represent our teaching and learning community to policy makers and the general public.

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An extra hour of sunlight, March 14, 2016 by Ruth Cisneros

@NMTESOL on Instagram

One of the easiest way to share your pictures of our events with us is to tag or hashtag NMTESOL on Instagram! Our Web Coordinator, Melanie, posts updates and snapshots in real time at our events. Posting pictures of slideshows, hand-outs, and schedules is also a good way to share what you're learning. Enjoy some of the latest pictures from our feed below, and check out more on [Instagram](#). Use #NMTESOL when you share!



Welcoming remarks have begun!



Networking Session. Good thing there's coffee at gam on a Saturday.



Board members staffing the registration table.



Getting started with opening remarks in 3 minutes!



Presentation by Jan Lujan

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Why a New Time Attitude May Be In Order When Serving Refugees

by Brandon Dowd

If you are like me, once an appointment is set, you expect to keep it. If someone fails to keep an appointment without some prior notification, we probably think there was a huge emergency or the person forgot about the appointment. However, when an appointment has not been kept more than once, we may begin to lose trust and feel like the reason for these indiscretions is that the other person does not care. We know that a whole host of reasons could be behind someone's chronic truancy, including reasons not under their control. But, to continue in such a relationship, whether personal or professional, feels less than ideal.

I would want to remedy this situation in several ways: find out why the person is missing appointments, help them resolve their issues with

time management, come to a new agreement so they can make it on time, or decide to drop this person from my agenda altogether. All four may be valid reactions, but when working with

refugees, I now think it is best to adopt a more flexible attitude so that these time indiscretions do not bother me.

I first began working with refugees as a tutor for Lutheran Family Services in January of 2016. It did not take long before I experienced discomfort from being stood up for tutoring lessons. This made me feel like I might be doing something wrong in my communication and like my students did not value my services. It galled me because I had taken the work as an essential supplement to my income, and I could not afford to see that income dwindle from no-shows. Several weeks in, I came up with a three-strikes-you-are-out plan. I decided I would tell my students that if they were to miss twice without prior notice, the third time would be the end of tutoring service from me. I was going to nip the problem in the bud. I figured that if I was providing an excellent service, I should be treated with respect and be rewarded with wages.

It did not work out that way though! Something in my gut told me to be patient and to learn more before I acted, and I'm glad that I did. In the



Picture by Melanie Mullen

following weeks, I realized that quite often my refugee students do not have as much control over time as I think they do. For example, one of my students was under pressure from his soccer coach not to miss practice. The coach threatened expulsion from the team if players missed. It took several weeks before my student told me that our tutoring lesson was threatening his status on the team. He and I easily reorganized our schedule together, and he was able to stay on the team and get tutoring. The lesson for me was that the student wanted to make everyone happy. He was not sure how he should communicate his situation to the coach or to me. When he finally opened up about it, he confided that his coach didn't really believe him, or care, when he said he had a tutoring lesson to attend.



Picture by Melanie Mullen

As I moved through the weeks as a tutor for refugees and began to see my students' lives more clearly, I realized that most of the times that they missed, there was actually a good reason. And if not, it was pretty easy to find a way to work things out. I found a rhythm to each family, a way that each family communicates. I learned that when a family member was not apologetic for their sibling's absence, it did not mean that they do not care. It meant that in a life of such complexity and perseverance, not making the tutoring lesson is not a tragic event. If I had used my three strikes plan, I wouldn't have learned that all my students have the best intentions. They are doing their best to survive in a new country.

One night on the way home from my community college job, a song came on the radio that got me in a very empathic state of mind, and I thought about my refugee students. I also happened to be thinking of the GRE,

[Continued on next page...](#)

Upcoming Events

Save the date
and prepare your
submission!

Our membership is the reason our workshops and conferences are successful. We hope you will submit in the following areas:

Teaching/tutoring English | Teacher Training
Testing | Technology

...and any other topic relevant to teaching or learning English!

NMTESOL October 29th, 2016 FALL CONFERENCE Santa Fe, NM

Santa Fe Community College

Save the Date

[Click here](https://nmtesol.org/2016/07/13/call-for-presenters-2/) for submissions info. (<https://nmtesol.org/2016/07/13/call-for-presenters-2/>)

Cont'd from [page 4](#), *Why a New Time Attitude May Be In Order When Serving Refugees*

a test which I've had a lot of experience with lately. Somehow, those two trains of thought came together to form the following insight: living life away from home, away from the language and culture that you know and define your existence, and especially sitting through classes every day that are impossible to understand because the language and culture are different from yours, might be like getting up to take the GRE every day, twice a day, and not knowing when the testing will ever end. If you've never been in an environment where the language is new and the culture is foreign, you should know that, while it can be exhilarating, it can also be confusing and discouraging. When experienced day after day, it can be like taking a dreaded test over and over.

Sometimes my refugee students find it very challenging and taxing to keep on top of it all. However, the story gets better, especially if students apply themselves diligently. There will be successes and victory. As an outsider entering their lives to provide tutoring, I needed to understand that the complexity of their lives cannot be seen in the short term.

So when your student has been truant and has not bothered to tell you not to come for a lesson, wish them well. If you are patient and give it time, you will start to see that there are ways to work out timing for both of you, and that you just need patience and trust, and maybe a little humor.

Brandon began working with Lutheran Family Services to serve the refugee population of Albuquerque in 2016. He quickly found that he enjoyed the work. At the time, he was also serving as an adjunct instructor for Central New Mexico Community College as an ESL and Developmental English instructor. Brandon has been selected by the State Dept. to serve as an English Language Fellow for 2016-2017 in the Hunan province of China. He will be offering courses in English and providing teacher training workshops. Brandon is currently located in Hollywood, CA where he has been teaching intensive English courses for Kings Education.



News from TESOL International

Congratulations, and welcome, to the most recently incorporated chapters of TESOL International, Dominican Republic TESOL and Libya TESOL. Both chapters were established in 2014.

[Check out more](#) about these and the rest of the chapters of TESOL International, which all together represent more than 50,000 professionals.

Curious about TESOL International? Learn more:

<http://www.tesol.org>

Contact Us

We want to hear from you. We welcome your comments, questions, suggestions, and most of all, submissions!

For newsletter-related items, please email:

Editor@nmtesol.org

For memberships and organization-related enquiries, please email:

Info@nmtesol.org

Have you received our newsletter from one of our members and would like to join NMTESOL? [Click here for info.](#)

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