



Vision:

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

Mission:

The mission of NMTESOL is to:

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

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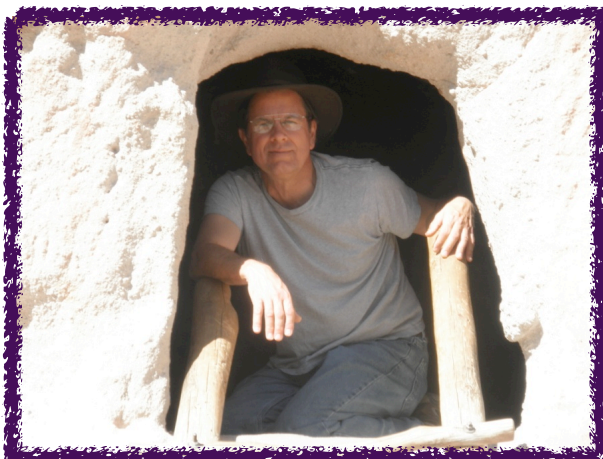
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Contributions Welcome

If you or somebody you know would like to contribute an article to the newsletter, you can contact the editor at the following address.

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What got you interested in teaching English to speakers of other languages?

I think it was the first time I met an English student on the street in Tuxtla Gutierrez. He invented a little pretext for walking up and talking to me by asking “Did you drop a book back there?” He was kind of shy and yet I managed to help him loosen up with his English; I guess I was part of an assignment he was working on. It was a very enlightening feeling. I remember a girlfriend was with me at the time and she asked me “Why are you smiling so much?” It was then that I realized that was what I wanted to do.

What is your background in TESOL?

Well, after I came back from the jaunt in Mexico, I got started on a teaching degree and substitute taught for APS as soon as I could. I was already close to finishing a double B.A. in Spanish and Music. I taught part-time at TVI back around 1989-90; they had an Amnesty program as well as ESL. Later I taught Spanish in a private school, taught engineering students in Venezuela to read in English, taught 5th grade in APS as a bilingual teacher for about 11 years, had my own remodeling

business for several years, then came back full circle to TVI, which is now CNM.

It seems like you’ve done a lot of teaching as well as other work outside of TESOL. Does any of it relate to TESOL?

Everything is linked to something else. Everything goes somewhere. I kind of see it as a law of physics: You can’t just go to school to learn how to do something. There’s no free lunch. (laughs)

Just like every country, every occupation has its own vocabulary. Additionally, every individual has their own set of experiences that they communicate from. How can I teach a soccer player, a mason or an engineer to communicate with the people he works with all day if I know nothing of his work? You can’t just sit up in your ivory tower and expect to be able to teach people to communicate.

If you’re going to teach the basic general knowledge of the language, you have to have some experiences with it - actually, a lot of experiences with it.

So I have worked in other fields: I’ve done a lot of building, plumbing and electrical home repair and improvement-I have a contractor’s license, I teach fiddle and guitar lessons and play in a working band; I’ve learned about other fields from friends and acquaintances, too. I’ve also taught the basics in most subjects in APS. It all relates to TESOL.

What would I see happening if I walked into your classroom?

Who knows? It would depend on the students, what they know about, what they

Photos from our 2012 Spring Conference at CNM



NMTESOL members participating in Amy Frankowski's "Reading as Interactivity" workshop. In pairs, participants were given the same readings, but with missing words on one designated by blank spaces. The person without the missing words read out loud as their partner listened and filled in the blank spaces according to what they heard. This activity utilizes reading, speaking, listening and writing in one fell swoop.



Our Web Coordinator Melanie Mullen and presenter Monique Stone converse animatedly after Monique's presentation on "End of Term Projects." With ESL teachers like this, how can speaking English not look incredibly fun for their students?

want to learn or talk about. There are some universals, of course. Everyone needs to eat. We might all look at menus from local restaurants or flyers from grocery stores and role play those situations- ordering and buying food. Music is also a universal, especially songs from internationally famous groups. Just make sure the songs you use make sense, or better yet, tell a story. I still use the guitar sometimes, but Youtube is fantastic for finding all kinds of material to sing along with and get lyrics from. Visits to the doctor with children is another common situation that we need to role play, too. And most people love games.

What are some of the best things about TESOL?

The best thing about TESOL is meeting people with a different perspective of the world. I learn a lot from my students. It keeps your own outlook fresh. Also the opportunity for travel is limitless.

If you could make your job better, how would you do it?

I would untie the ESL program's funding from a direction oriented reading test. On the other hand, I also believe students should have a vested interest in how they progress; right now the classes and books are free with the exception of a nominal fee paid once a year to register. If they have to put out a little capital, they are going to expect to learn something in return. That's just human nature. So they should pay a little tuition and own their learning.

Thank you so much to all our presenters and participants at the spring conference for helping NMTESOL develop into an effective organization for professional development and networking in the lovely Land of Enchantment. We hope to see you again at our upcoming **annual conference with NMAEA on October 25 & 26 in Santa Fe. Mark your calendars!**

The following piece was written by Reiko Sypteras, a Japanese ESL student at the Valencia County Literacy Council. It was passed on to us by their Executive Director Jill A. Oglesby. We are grateful to be able to feature such a voice in our Newsletter.

Reiko Sypteras

My first recollection of my life as a child was being outside and playing with my dog. Our house was in Nagoya, which is the second largest city in Japan. My father spent almost all his money in order to buy the house. Our house was nice outside, but we did not have enough money to live on. Girls in my neighborhood had some dolls and play houses. Boys had cages and nets to keep insects after they caught them. I did not have anything like what they had. I did not join any child's play. Gradually, I felt more comfortable being with my dog than talking to other children.

When I was five years old, I started school in Nagoya. I was so excited to have a new uniform, bag, and shoes. On the first day, I realized that my language and other students' language were different. My parents were born in a Northern area in Japan, so they have a strong accent. I could not interact with other classmates. I was afraid of saying something in public. I was always sitting at the corner of the classroom and reading a fairy story because I did not want others to talk to me. Two years later, I moved to elementary school, but the situation did not change. When I was a junior in high school, I got interested in sports. I dreamed that I would become a sprinter in the Olympics. I trained my muscles every day. And I got several gold medals in Nagoya. Before one big tournament in the high school days, everyone needed to hand in a health certificate to the sports association. A doctor diagnosed that my heart had a problem. He recommended that I quit running. I gave up sports and tried to find something I could be engrossed in. Finally, I decided to be a prosecutor, but my father did not allow me to go to college. He was a very old-fashioned type of person who said women get married after that, they take care of a husband, and raise children, which is a woman's job. However, I did not give up on it, so I took a college exam.



Fortunately, I passed it, and then I got an entrance application form. I showed it and explained how much I wanted to go the college to my father. My teacher in charge came over to my house to try to change his mind, but he never said ok.

After high school, I started working for an electrical company as an office clerk. About 10 years passed; I quit my job to change my life. I moved to Tokyo, which is the capital of Japan. I started working at an investment company with some foreigners. I decided to study English after work. As I could talk with foreigners, I felt good. The more I spoke to them, the more I had a desire to say what I wanted. Sometime later, I met a guy who is an American. Eventually, we got married in New Mexico. Now, I am thinking about going to college, which I could not achieve as a teenager.