

President's Letter

Hello PTE members!

As I am completing my first year as president of PennTESOL-East, I have been reflecting on what our organization means to me. Two words immediately come to mind: advocacy and inclusion.

PennTESOL-East creates a support system for us to advocate for each other and to advocate for our students. There is power in numbers. Our "voice" can reach farther, can be louder, if we work together. I am humbled to interact



with individuals in all walks of the ESOL field, whether it is discussing curriculum with an adult educator at a conference or learning from the experiences of an associate professor in this very publication. One of the reasons these exchanges are so

important is because when I travel to the TESOL Advocacy and Policy Summit in June I can carry these ideas with me.

These interactions also bring me to the idea of inclusion. Our community is very welcoming, and we strive to create a similar atmosphere in our classrooms. At our fall conference during the student panel of English learners, I could feel the encouragement in the room while the students so bravely shared their stories. As educators, we realize that students and colleagues have layers of experience, which should be respected.

For our upcoming spring conference on April 14th, the theme is **Creating an Inclusive Community: Educating Language Learners of All Ages**. The "of all ages" component is key because of the vast range of educational opportunities that we represent. Our students are at many different points in their lives, sometimes they are kindergarteners and sometimes they are pre-service teachers. However, we all share the common goal of supporting students to develop their personal and professional identities.

Clearly, PennTESOL-East fosters collaboration across professions, and our parent organization, The TESOL International Association is restructuring their conventions to reflect this concept. No longer will TESOL be using Interest Sections to categorize

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NOTEWORTHY EVENTS

CamTESOL 2018: Asian conference draws thousands

By Linda R. Fellag

Over 1,700 teachers from 39 countries explored the topic of English Language Teaching in the Digital Era at the 14th Annual CamTESOL Conference on English Language Teaching, held at the Institute of Technology in Cambodia in Phnom Penh on February 10-11.

The conference featured over 450 presentations covering a variety of topic streams, many on technology and teaching in the digital era.



Stoller and Grabe at CamTESOL 2018

“Where is the D (digital) in EFL Reading-to-Learn Contexts,” Plenary Address, Dr. Frederica Stoller and Dr. William Grabe, Northern Arizona University

Plenary speakers Stoller and Grabe urged teachers to consider “the d (digital) in EFL reading.” “We need to bring digital literacy into our classrooms,” Grabe advised, and recognize that online reading is a “continuation of print reading.” Our students need the same reading skills and knowledge resources such as vocabulary, grammar

knowledge, purposeful reading goals, and discourse-structure awareness in online reading as in print reading, he said.

“We must train our students to be more efficient browsers on the Internet,” Stoller added. Teachers can begin by assigning a textbook reading, and then ask students to search the Internet for more information on the topic. Stoller demonstrated this activity by having the audience read a short passage, “Looking into the Eyes of a Robot,” and then illustrating the difficulty of browsing online for additional articles on the topic.

Using key search terms, Stoller produced 700,000 hits in her sample search. This overwhelming number of potential readings points up some challenges of digital reading-to-learn: overcoming distractions as students search the Net, a potential for non-linear reading, exposure to unfiltered information, and lack of transparency in terms of authorship, bias, and reliability, she explained.

Stoller urged teachers to train their students to identify accurate, reliable online readings while keeping their research goals in mind.

She first introduces her students to the main parts of a link to an online reading: the title, URL, and blurb. A next possible step would be to have students select one of two online articles to complete a research assignment, showing students how to manage browser searches, determine authorship and bias, use web link features to assess reliability, and maintain goals for reading.

In her sample digital literacy assignment, Stoller ensures that students have some

[See “CamTESOL,” page 10](#)

BEST PRACTICES

Syllabus writing: How to connect ESL course competencies with a textbook

By Jennifer Bell

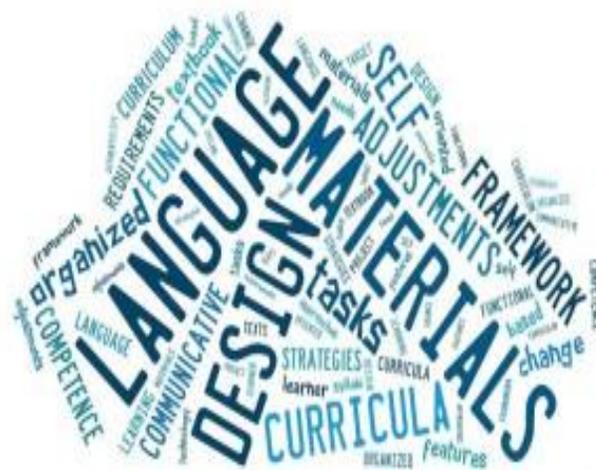
During syllabus creation, as ESL instructors, we must focus on the course competencies. By the course final, we require our students to meet specific goals and master key skills. What are our students able to do by the end of the course? Our professional knowledge plus practice materials help the students accomplish these objectives.

As the current ESL coordinator at my college, I have begun to read various syllabi created in a variety of styles as we have academic freedom to do. In an ESL program, we may have a pre-assigned textbook which doesn't match the competencies perfectly. Connecting ESL course competencies with a textbook can require extra thought.

As I create my syllabus, I examine the materials I have available and compare how closely they match the course competencies. For example, if a course competency is to "Write a Narrative Essay" and the chapter title is "Writing Narrative Essays," it is obvious how the competency will eventually be met. The textbook being used has been organized by skills, so it is easy to match the skills in the book with the learning objectives for the course.

However, a chapter title of "Olympic Sports" will describe nothing about the necessary lesson skills. A textbook like this will be organized by topic, so it requires extra effort to see which skills the students learn in each section. Some of these textbooks will display the skills in a table of contents. However, in many cases, I decide for myself what my skill focus for each lesson will be.

As I write my syllabus, when the textbook and the skill focus don't match, I have to follow a



few more steps. First, I designate the skill in the syllabus and indicate how the competency will be met. Then I create materials to help the students learn and practice the competency. Sometimes I can find pre-made worksheets online from teaching websites. More often, I create my own and relate them back to the topic or story in the textbook. For example, I may decide to focus on "Finding Main Ideas" in a text about "The Zipper" in a reading class. In a Listening/Speaking class, I may decide to focus on "Listening for Details" from an online video about "The Reading Terminal Market" as we are working on a unit on "Business." Knowing what I am going to eventually do with these should occur at a course planning level.

I also consider the number of times that I mention a certain competency as I am planning a syllabus. In ESL, the competencies are like a spiral staircase. The students often repeat some of the same skills over and over, just in more depth, until they reach the point they are ready to advance to the next level. In that case, I find it overwhelming to mention

[See "Syllabus writing," page 13](#)

BEST PRACTICES

The power of nominalization

By Kenneth Cranker

Nominalization, *the process of expressing a concept or a process with a single noun, usually involving the creation of a noun from a verb, adjective, or other form of the same word*, plays an important role in academic writing. Academic writing is supposed to be clear and concise, and expressing a complex process with a single word enables the fulfillment of both of these criteria. Recent research on final essays (Wherry & Cranker, 2017), argumentative compositions written in response to prompts under time pressure at the end of a pre-university course to determine the readiness of high-advanced students to matriculate to the university, revealed that passing essays utilized nominalization more than 40% more often than essays that were not deemed to have demonstrated university readiness.

“...nominalization leads to clearer and more focused writing...a more highly developed vocabulary...a more highly developed sense of grammar.”

Passive voice and complex clause structure were also more common among the essays that received passing grades, but what is remarkable about nominalization is that it occurred nowhere in the rubric that was used for rating those essays. Mastery of the passive voice and complex clause structure *were* specified in the rubric, so it would be natural for those to be utilized more by the students who passed, but nominalization was not, so why would it have featured so prominently yet so subliminally in effective student writing? At least three reasons may be provided:

nominalization leads to clearer and more focused writing, it reveals a more highly developed vocabulary, and it displays a more highly developed sense of grammar.

To demonstrate how nominalization leads to clearer and more effective writing, it may be helpful to consider the following two paragraphs.

1. People drive cars every day to school, to work and to play. These cars give off gases that pollute the air and can make people sick. Because governments are responsible for protecting their citizens, they should pass stricter laws to reduce the gases that automobiles give off.

2. Air pollution is a serious issue facing governments today. A primary factor of this pollution is emissions from automobiles. Exhaust fumes from cars contain chemicals that lead to diseases such as lung cancer and emphysema. Thus, strict government regulation of emissions is warranted to ensure the reduction of harmful pollutants and the protection of the health of citizens.

These two paragraphs are both grammatically correct, and both express roughly the same ideas about pollution, but the second seems considerably more academic. One reason why it does so is that its focus is much clearer.

If the subjects of the clauses of the two paragraphs are identified, it is obvious that the former uses “people,” “cars,” “governments,” and “they.” It would be difficult, just looking at these subjects, to realize that the paragraph was about pollution at all. Meanwhile, in the latter, the specified subjects are “pollution,” “factor of this

[See “Power of nominalization,” page 14](#)

BEST PRACTICES

Using *The Little Prince* to improve ESL students' literacy and critical thinking skills

By Joanna Labov

The Little Prince written by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry is a wonderful book to use to introduce your students to philosophy and improve their literacy skills. I am currently using *The Little Prince* to improve my Community College of Philadelphia ESL students' reading, writing and critical thinking skills. It is an excellent text to use to teach students how to comprehend its main points, the subtleties, and understand its philosophical questioning. This internationally beloved book has become beloved by my students.

I created a seven-week thematic unit about *The Little Prince* in order for my students to understand the profundity of the book and all of its layered meanings. The thematic unit that I created helps my students to learn to comprehend the text, write clearly about it and think critically about the messages in the book. In the Fall 2016 semester I used the thematic unit to teach two sections of a class designed to teach reading and writing skills to lower-intermediate English speakers. In the Spring 2017 semester I taught one section of the same class to the lower intermediate ESL students. In the Fall 2017 semester I will use the thematic unit to teach an ESL class designed for advanced reading and writing students.

An Abbreviated Summary of *The Little Prince*

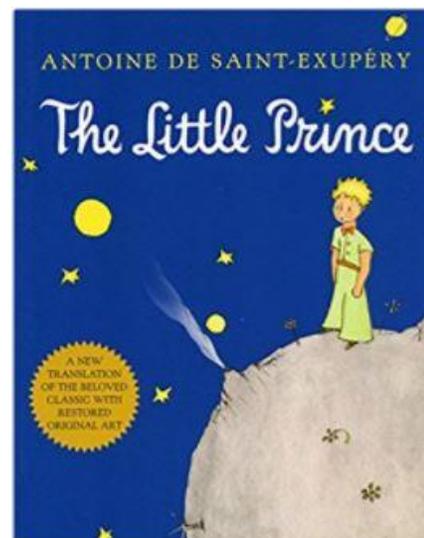
This story is about a child who leaves his planet (Asteroid B-612) because he did not know how to get along with a rose who is his friend. He meets people on other planets who have different philosophies about what is important in life. The child ends his traveling by coming to Earth and meeting a pilot who

has been stranded in the Sahara Desert. The child learns about the importance of friendship and the value of spending time with his rose from a fox. He decides to return to his planet with the assistance of a snake that bit him.

Comprehension and Critical Thinking Activities

Reading Activities:

The thematic unit contains activities designed to improve the students' comprehension of the plot of *The Little Prince*, the characters, their relationship to each other and the symbols in the text. It contains the following material for each chapter discussed in class: a list of the events that occurred, a summary of the chapter, comprehension questions and definitions of selected vocabulary. It also contains content analysis tables with information about the characters in the chapter (Who? What? Why? Where? and When?) We focused on the little prince's meeting of the pilot, the fox, the snake in the desert and the little prince's return home.



See “Using *The Little Prince*,” page 16

BEST PRACTICES

From scramble to scribble: Helping ESL students improve notetaking skills

By Robbie Bushong, Nonie Bell, and Wakako Pennington

A Chinese proverb states, “The palest ink is better than the best memory;” this sentiment can be seen in university classrooms in the U.S., where students dutifully write or type the more salient points of lectures. With notes, lessons can be recalled later, leading to increased retention (Ladas, 1980) and deeper processing (Lennox, 2017). Without notes, a classroom lesson can become a casualty of the ephemerality of short-term memory. Indeed, the importance of notetaking at universities is accepted by both faculty and students (Caplan et al., 2013). Consequently, many intensive English programs (IEPs), tasked with preparing their students for academia, incorporate notetaking skills into their listening curricula.

Notetaking skills, however, may provide unique challenges for students from backgrounds where literacy is deemphasized in favor of oral traditions. For some students, IEPs provide their first experience taking notes on a lecture—in any language, ever. Challenges arising from cultural expectations are compounded by the number of complex skills required in notetaking. To listen is not enough. The notetaker must also sift through a barrage of foreign vocabulary words to identify, organize, and record the key information.

So, what do students need for effective notetaking, and how can teachers help students improve their notetaking? The purpose of this article, which is based on a presentation given at the 2017 PTE Fall Conference, is to address these two questions.

What do students need for effective notetaking?

Regarding the difficulty of the task, notetaking requires a synergy of complex cognitive skills



and abilities. “In the process of note-taking, the listener needs not only to decode the oral input but also synthesize, summarize, and convert the input into condensed and meaningful form within a very tight limit of time” (Kuo, 1993, p. 72). This demand for simultaneously processing information top-down and bottom-up while quickly producing the results in writing requires proficiency in a number of different areas. A lack of proficiency in any one skill may have a disproportionately large negative impact on the final notes. Therefore, it is helpful to recognize the variety of skills involved in notetaking, as a weakness in any one area may require specific attention in isolation.

A review of literature uncovered the importance of four key requirements: transcription fluency, working memory, summarizing and synthesizing skills, and prior subject knowledge (Chiang & Dunkel, 1992; Peverly et al., 2007). Transcription fluency refers to writing speed and is sometimes measured by letters written per minute. Working memory is the temporary retention of information used for processing and is exemplified by the simultaneous acts of listening and writing. Summarizing and synthesizing require students to identify key

[See “From scramble to scribble,” page 19](#)

BEST PRACTICES

Mr. Tanimoto's hadj

By Jerry Thompson

hadj [also hajj, Arabic] "a pilgrimage...the ultimate act of worship"

www.thefreedictionary.com

On August 7th, 2016, Ichiro Suzuki's three-thousandth hit rocketed off the right field wall of Denver's Coors Field, and the 43-year old slugger rounded the bases to third, to be mobbed there by his fellow Miami Marlins. He'd just become the thirtieth player, and the only Asian, to notch 3,000 Major League hits.

Promptly at one the next day, Tadashi Tanimoto showed up for tutoring at the ELI on South College Avenue in Newark. I'd brought him the morning's News-Journal sports section to read. A short article on the second page heralded Ichiro's 3,000-hit tie with Roberto Clemente.

Unique among my students at the English Language Institute—most of them Chinese or Saudi and in their twenties—“Tadash” was a middle-aged, well-heeled Japanese businessman. He dressed in natty leisure wear—polo shirts, shorts, and sandals—topped with the baseball hat of the latest team Miami had played.

Ichiro's status in Japan is huge. For one thing, he was 43 when he hit his 3,000th, and in 2017 he played at 44. His American teammates are in awe of his training regimen. And he's not just a bat; Ichiro has a rocket arm. Tadash showed me a video of Ichiro nailing a runner with a no-hop throw from Center Field to home plate. About 300 feet. He steals bases, too.

Like his hero Ichiro, Mr. Tanimoto was trim and muscular. He practiced judo every day. I admired them both. A perk of tutoring ESL: I shared vicariously in Tanimoto's pilgrimage as he followed Ichiro last summer.

When the Marlins played the Phillies, Mr. T. went to the game, and showed up the next day in a Phillies hat. He flew down to Miami and got a Marlins lid. He ate Italian in New York, and wore his Yankees hat Monday, Mets on Wednesday. He'd finish the summer with a visit to the sacred site of Ichiro's arrival in American baseball, Seattle, where he'd made Rookie of the Year with the Mariners.

Great fun. Interesting. But TEACHING Mr. Tanimoto was tough. His major purpose here was to have a good time following Ichiro. He'd gone to half the Marlins' games. In Baltimore, crabs and an Orioles hat.

"...teaching Mr. Tanimoto was tough. His major purpose here was to have a good time...He was only here for eight weeks."

But how to teach him something? He was only here for eight weeks.

I asked his primary learning objective.

“Conversation; to speak better English.”

Fine: “What was your favorite thing in Philly?”

His answer was a rapid-fire bark. Very confident, he spoke way too fast. I didn't understand a word. What to do?

So, I bring in the sports page. He pulls out his camera to take its picture.

“No, no, Tadash, it's for you to take! A souvenir for Japan!” He thanks me sincerely,

See “Mr. Tanimoto's hadj,” page 21

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

How to deal with difficult students

By Donna Carmen McVey

I have been teaching English to international students at Drexel University for over twenty years now. During this time, I have encountered students with learning disabilities and emotional problems, including dyslexia, ADHD, depression, and anxiety to name a few. Over the years, I have learned to successfully deal with these students by adapting and responding to their needs. The following are some of the strategies I have used and recommend.

Establish rapport with the student

As one of my professors in graduate school remarked, “First, you reach, and then you teach.” Getting to know the student and forming a trusting relationship opens the door to successful communication. Through open communication, the teacher can work with the student to solve problems as they arise.

Be patient

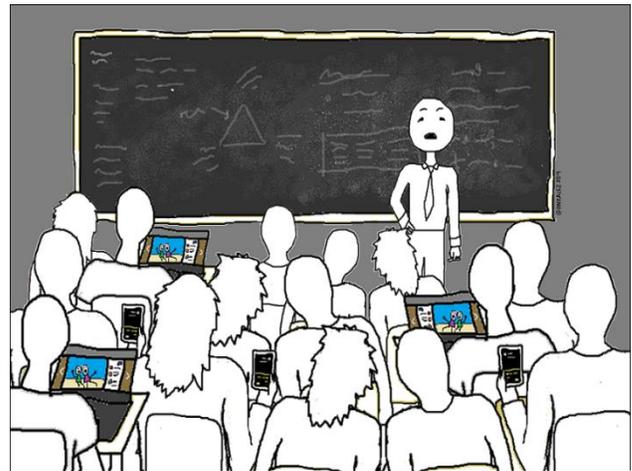
Difficult students require extra attention. Therefore, the teacher often needs to spend extra time with them during and after class. Also, it might be necessary to repeat instructions or explain material in a different way to help these students understand.

Be flexible

It is often hard for students with learning disabilities to keep up with their work or meet deadlines. Therefore, they might need extra time to complete an assignment or a test. By being flexible, the instructor can create a less stressful environment, thereby enhancing these students’ performance.

Don't take it personally

It is easy to get frustrated with a student who interrupts, doesn't pay attention, or acts out during class. While disruptive behavior needs



to be addressed, it is a reflection on the student, and is usually not meant to annoy the teacher.

Sometimes inappropriate behavior can be prevented by having the teacher give extra attention to the student.

Teach using multiple modalities

Some students are visual learners, some are auditory learners, while others learn by doing or acting. Teachers who employ a combination of visual, auditory, and kinesthetic modalities in the classroom help all students learn and stay engaged.

Use the student's strengths

Every student has unique talents and abilities. Recognizing and utilizing the students' strengths during class increases their self-esteem and makes them feel validated. Also, students can learn to use their strengths to compensate for their weaknesses.

Use the student's strengths

Every student has unique talents and abilities. Recognizing and utilizing the students' strengths during class increases their self-esteem and makes them feel validated.

[See “Difficult students,” page 22](#)

BEST PRACTICES

Credit where credit is due: Thinking critically about plagiarism

By Amy Ballard

“This? It came from my head,” he said as he tapped on his temple with a confident smile. I had asked this 17-year-old Central-American student where he had learned some information in his research paper regarding the etymology of a word. I questioned this remark with raised eyebrows. “Alright,” he sighed, “I got it from Wikipedia. I know that’s not a reliable source, so I didn’t cite it!”

Though this was the first time I encountered a research dilemma that made my head spin, it was not the last. Bringing ESL students into the mindset of research—a complex and weighty process—is a perpetual learning experience for everyone involved. At the beginning of my time teaching the research writing process, I meticulously drilled the structure and the formatting. I have all-but-patented a formula for teaching the various pieces of this process, each with its time frame carefully ordained in advance. At the end of the quarter, my students turned in a beautifully packaged paper, each line with its proper spacing and each subtopic with its subtitle in bold.

“Bringing ESL students into the mindset of research—a complex and weighty process—is a perpetual learning experience for everyone involved.”

Beyond the naked eye, however, the product I received lacked true understanding of the content and the motivation for writing research. Out of this revelation came a new, critical-thinking-focused portion that fit alongside learning the mechanics of this

process. These activities and processes aim to help students connect to the (often foreign) concepts of plagiarism, citations, and research.

Developing Empathy

Ask students to write about a time when they worked hard, but someone else got the credit for it. The teacher may give a personal example first. After students have had the opportunity to write, form discussion groups to share. When students tell these stories, the emotions they share from the experience (often frustration and disappointment) help them to empathize and better understand the importance of giving credit to the author of any writings they may use for research.

Examining Article Reliability

Create a list of topics that some of the students in the class know well. For example, with a Chinese student pursuing an MBA and a French student studying hospitality, the topics may be “popular marketing strategies in China” and “the impact of tourism has on the economy in France”. Write down enough topics for each student to have one, and then give each student a topic that is NOT his or her area of expertise.

Ask the students to write a paragraph on their given topic in 5-10 minutes. Students will struggle to write because of their lack of information. Once the time is up, collect their writing and ask the students to write again; this time let them pick the most familiar topic from the list.

Have students place their writing at stations around the classroom, side-by-side with the others who wrote about the same topic. Students travel around the room to examine the writing and determine which writings they

[See “Credit where credit,” page 10](#)

“Credit where credit,” from page 9

find to be more trustworthy and why. Through this process, they begin to recognize the meaning and importance of reliable authors and quality sources when learning about a topic.

What’s in a Name?

Give students famous quotes with no author, such as, “Whether you think that you can, or you think that you can’t-- you’re right”. They must search to find the author, and then determine why that author might say that quote. For this quote by Henry Ford, students may recognize his great success as an inventor and explain how this method of thinking led him to accomplish great things. This activity helps students to recognize the impact an author might have on the validity of their information. Students will learn to ask questions about the author’s qualifications, accomplishments, expertise, and experience as a tool for making their research claims even stronger.

Starting Small

Whatever the students are reading in class from week to week can be a great introduction to the critical thinking processes required for research paper writing. Each week, draw out the argument of an article the students read in class. For example, an argument may be that “medicine enhances people’s lives”. Students take this argument and find quotes from the text that help support it with information and detail. From this experience, students can learn to use introductory phrases for the quotes (“According to...”) and explain the meaning and significance of their quotes in writing or class discussion.

As a whole, I have found that these activities offer students a relatable point of reference throughout the difficult parts of the research process. They serve to connect personal and relatable experiences with the processes of finding sources, making citations and taking notes. When students understand the meaning of plagiarism, the reasons for avoiding it, and the tools they need to do so, they are able to better apply this to their writing. Raising

excellent writers for our colleges and universities begins with creating strong critical thinkers.

Amy Ballard teaches for the Kings Education Graduate/Undergraduate Program at Rider University in Lawrenceville, NJ.

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knowledge about the topic by first having them read a text in the course book. Next, she provides a “controlled” set of Web links that include a variety of source types and requires her students to infer which source(s) would best meet the research goals.

Stoller and Grabe stressed that teachers should recognize the importance of digital reading-to-learn and take advantage of the opportunities to expand classroom reading.

“Teaching Reading Sub-Skills and Strategies,” Brian Christopher Cook, The Australian Centre for Education, Siem Reap, Cambodia

Emphasizing the need to guide students to develop reading skills, strategies, and systems, Cook described activities to help students read more effectively.

1. Skimming practice
 - a. Timed reading: Have students read an online text with the screen scrolling to promote reading speed.
 - b. Then have competitions among student groups to identify the best title for the article, purpose and gist questions.
2. Scanning practice
 - a. Board races/reading relays: Students in groups run up to the board, one by one, to answer questions about a reading text.

See “CamTESOL,” page 11

“CamTESOL,” from page 10

3. Understanding meaning from context practice
 - a. Cloze activity: Have students work in groups to identify what kind of word would best fit in the blank.
 - b. Hangman: Use the hangman game to review target vocabulary.

“Teaching Grammar in Context,” Featured Speaker Dr. Beverly Derewianka, University of Wollongong, Australia

Derewianka urged teachers to focus on meaning and context, not just form, when teaching grammatical structures.

Following the theories of M.A.K. Halliday, author of *An Introduction to Functional Grammar*, Derewianka argued that the context and purpose for the structure will determine language choices, and therefore, teachers should first approach grammar at the discourse level.



Derewianka

Using a sample text about Captain Cook’s early voyages, she illustrated how leading students to recognize the functions of clauses is an effective way to teach grammar. Derewianka starts with a visual to explain the grammar, e.g. a painting of a scene with English sailors.

Students generate what’s going on in the scene, and she uses color to differentiate action words (“words that tell what’s happening”) from noun clauses (“who/what are taking part in the action?”), and adverbials (“words that answer questions like: when? where? how? why?”).

Derewianka made a strong case for starting grammar instruction with an exploration of function, and then moving into form.

However, she urged the audience to use functional terms to explain the form. For example, “participants” take the form of a noun group. The “circumstances” can take the form of an adverbial.

Teachers should focus on relevant forms such as tense, negation, or phrasal verbs in the verb group *after* focusing on meaning, she advised. In the end, this approach will “bring the grammar to life,” she said.

“A Case Study of Interdisciplinary Cooperation in ESP Teaching at a University in Vietnam,” Thi Minh Khanh Tran, Nha Trang University, Vietnam

Tran advocates a high level of cooperation between EFL teachers and subject specialists, basing her recommendation on a qualitative study of her own experiences team-teaching with a Tourism professor in ESP classes at her university.

She prefaced her talk by describing three levels of cooperation between an English language professional and a subject specialist. *Cooperation* involves low-level advice and guidance between the participants. *Collaboration* requires that the participants work together to design syllabi and course activities. *Team-teaching* involves the participants working in the same ESP classroom.

See “CamTESOL,” page 12

“CamTESOL,” from page 11

Aspects of team-teaching often challenge team teachers, however, such as *professional* aspects (teaching philosophies, pedagogical issues), *interpersonal* elements (communication, personality issues), *logistical* issues (lack of time to plan and collaborate), and other aspects (unequal workload share, power issues).

Despite the challenges, Tran recommended team teaching as the most effective model

because it gives students stronger motivation to learn, since they are supported by two instructors in a smaller teacher-student ratio environment. This model provides also the participating teachers professional development as well as an opportunity to exchange ideas.

Tran collected data on this model of collaboration by conducting interviews and class observations and reading teachers' lesson plans and diaries.

“Fostering Non-Traditional Student Success in an Online Music Appreciation Course,” Arlene Caney, Linda R. Fellag, Community College of Philadelphia

Caney, associate professor of Music, and Fellag, associate professor of English/ESL, illustrated Tran's ideas about cross-discipline collaboration by describing their current project of developing an ESL-friendly online music course for college students. They are collaborating to design a fully online Music for Listeners course that will provide college credit for ESL students who have not fully matriculated into credit-bearing college study.

Using Tran's levels of collaboration, Caney and Fellag are *collaborating* to develop an interactive, communicative online course that builds on Caney's practices of working over eight years with ESL students enrolled in the traditional version of Music 103, which Caney

is converting into an online course. Fellag, an experienced online and hybrid instructor, is assisting Caney in applying her face-to-face practices in the online environment.

Caney's ESL students previously reported that they succeeded in her course because of her six core practices: clear, slow speech; visual “to-do” lists on the blackboard; small and large group work; regular reviews of key content; extra credit assignments; and access to the teacher beyond the classroom.

Fellag explained how Caney could replicate these practices in the online environment, e.g. making screencast videos to replicate blackboard “to-do” lists and using discussion forums to function as interactive review sessions.

Cultural events at CamTESOL

The multi-day CamTESOL conference also included cultural tours, site visits, and a cultural dinner.



CamTESOL attendees tour the Royal Palace of the King of Cambodia.

Linda R. Fellag, Associate Professor of English at Community College of Philadelphia, is a long-time PennTESOL-East Board member.

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sessions. Instead they will be organized by strands, which TESOL describes as “a narrowly defined content area of inquiry and practice.”

Some of TESOL’s new strands are “Advocacy and Social Justice,” “Culture and Intercultural Communication,” and “Digital Learning and Technologies.” As a K-8 teacher, I can apply every one of these strands to my work, and I imagine this would be true for any educator in our field. PennTESOL-East is currently planning for an upcoming reorganization as well, which will be voted on upon completion. If you are interested in learning more about TESOL’s strands follow this link:

<https://www.tesol.org/docs/default-source/tesol-convention/tesol-2019-strands.pdf?sfvrsn=2>.

When I look at the contributors of this newsletter I see English Language Institute instructors and teacher educators. I see teachers from community colleges and universities across Pennsylvania and Delaware. Most importantly I see a group of professionals coming together to strengthen our community by sharing insights, strategies, and beliefs.

Please enjoy reading the articles and I look forward to connecting with you at our next conference!

Courtney Knowlton
PennTESOL-East President



TESOL 2018 - Chicago, IL
TESOL 2019 - Atlanta, GA
TESOL 2020 - Denver, CO
TESOL 2021 - Houston, TX
TESOL 2022 - Pittsburgh, PA
TESOL 2023 - Portland, OR

“Syllabus writing,” from page 3

every competency skill every time the students practice it. Rather, I just write down the target competency we spend the most time on. For instance, if one competency says, “predict content of a reading,” students will probably practice this skill with every reading. However, I will put it in the syllabus on the days when we are specifically focusing on this.

Finally, before the syllabus is complete, I examine the competencies and note that they are all to be included during the semester. Should any not be included, I add materials to meet these missing competencies. After all, the competencies are the course focus, what we want our students to be able to do.

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[“Power of nominalization,” from page 4](#)

pollution,” “exhaust fumes,” and “government regulation of emissions.” Here, an analysis of the subjects of the sentences, where primary focus is normally placed, clearly reveals that the topic of this paragraph is pollution.

“Pollution,” “exhaust fumes,” and “emissions” are synonymous. The point, however, is that “pollution,” “regulation,” and “emissions,” are all nominalizations, and that the clear focus of this paragraph would be impossible without them. Nominalization enables authors to powerfully pinpoint their conceptual focus in single terms.

Nominalization improves focus in yet another way, as exemplified in the next models.

1. Nominalization makes focus clearer. This makes the author’s point more powerful and memorable.
2. Nominalization makes focus clearer. This clarity increases the power and memorability of the text.

Statement 1 compels the reader to wonder what “this” refers to, whether it is nominalization, clarity, or the whole idea of nominalization leading to clarity. Statement 2, however, is well focused, and it is clear that “this” refers to clarity. Again, “clarity” is the nominalized form of “clear,” and without the nominalization, the meaning of the statement would remain unclear, and the idea would become unfocused. (The nominalizations “power” and “memorability” also add to the impact of Statement 2).

Another reason why nominalization is important in distinguishing academic readiness is that it reveals a well-developed vocabulary. For example, “clear” is a relatively simple word, ranking among the 600 most frequent words in English (Davies, 2008). Its nominalized counterpart, “clarity,” on the other hand, is not even among the top 5000. Similarly, “reduction,” is less common than “reduce,” “recommendation” is less common

than “recommend,” and “recognition” is less common than “recognize.” That is not to say that a noun form is always the most advanced form of a word. “Pollution” is more common (less advanced) than “pollute,” and there are many other counter-examples. Nevertheless, the ability to nominalize tends to indicate a vocabulary that can handle heavily nominalized academic subjects such as sociology, which may deal with concepts such as recruitment, differential association, deviance, criminality, and salesmanship, terms appearing in a single column of a single page of a sociology textbook (Kornblum, 2016, p. 122).

In addition to reflecting a higher level of vocabulary, nominalization also reflects a more sophisticated level of grammar. The list of five terms from the page in the sociology textbook referred to above includes nominalizations that have been formed in five different ways: -ment, -ion, -ce, -ity, and -ship. Many other ways also exist. The ability to construct the nominalized forms of such complicated words and then to use those words properly in sentences requires highly developed grammar - grammar that can probably sustain a second language learner through a college education. It also contributes greatly to proper parallel structure, as demonstrated with “power and memorability” in Statement 2 above.

Thus, even though nominalization was not mentioned in the rubric used in the research of Wherry and Cranker, its use probably had a profound influence on the raters of those essays. It likely did so because it improved focus, revealed advanced vocabulary, and indicated refined grammar. In a subliminal way, nominalization powerfully argued that the writers who employed it were prepared for the university. It would probably be wise for advanced level second language writing instructors to purposefully teach nominalization to enable students to progress faster on their paths toward effective academic writing. That teaching should probably involve recognition of nominalization;

[See “Power of nominalization,” page 18](#)

NOTEWORTHY EVENTS

PTE Spring Conference set for April 14

PennTESOL-East will hold its Spring Fling Conference on Saturday, April 14, at Community College of Philadelphia (CCP). The theme of this year's conference is "Creating an Inclusive Community: Educating Language Learners of All Ages." This year's conference is co-hosted by the English Department of CCP.

The call for proposals is currently posted on the [affiliate website](#). Deadline for submission is March 23, 2018.

We welcome proposals from teaching professionals at all levels, as well as current college students. Sessions include 40 minute presentations and/or workshops. Presenters are accepted pending membership and conference registration. To ensure a place on the schedule you must be registered by March 31, 2018.

The Spring PTE conference has a long history in the organization. In years past, this annual event was a full-day conference, but in recent years, it was converted to a half-day event, held at a local college, university, or school.

Registration for the conference is also open on the [PTE website](#). The conference is **free to current PTE members** and \$10 to non-members before the **April 6 pre-registration deadline**. On-site registration is \$20 for both members and non-members.

The conference will run from 8 AM to 12 noon in the Community College of Philadelphia's Center for Business & Industry, 18th and Callowhill Sts., Philadelphia, PA, 19130.

The Center for Business & Industry is the "C" building on this [map of the college campus](#). The building is a 10-minute walk from SEPTA's Suburban Station, and is also served by city buses. On-street metered parking is available as well as covered parking in the Community College of Philadelphia parking garage, accessible from 18th or 17th Streets.



*Spring 2018
Conference Chair
Jennifer Howse (r)
and Conference
Committee
member Stephanie
Zangwill at a PTE
conference*

[“Using *The Little Prince*,” from page 5](#)

Movies

I showed the students five movies of *The Little Prince* to increase their comprehension of the text. They are: 1) 1979 (claymation), 2) the 2015 version 3) 2004 opera version 4) part of the 1966 Russian movie and 5) part of the 1974 movie. Movies are a useful tool for helping ESL students to understand the literal and figurative meanings of literature. I used the movies as aids to assist me to teach the students to interpret the subtle philosophical meanings within the book. I used the movies as supplements to the text to understand the book from multiple perspectives.

My use of each movie differed in terms of the complexity of the spoken text, adherence to the plot of the book, philosophical perspective, style and duration. My students learned about the deeper meanings in the book regarding life such as the importance of friendship, love, time, imagination, creativity, diversity and appreciating the moment. We used subtitles when they were available for the movies.

Analysis of Symbols

We discussed in class the many symbols used in the book to uncover the multiple layered meanings of the text. This was the students’ first introduction to literary analysis. Therefore, I created a table of the symbols used in the book. We discussed the symbols and completed the table in class. An example of a symbol used in the book is the little prince who symbolizes childhood, innocence, imagination, creativity, fun and hope. Another example of a symbol used in the book is the pilot who symbolizes adventure, freedom, independence and friendship.

Reflective Writing Activities

I used several activities to improve the students’ writing skills and their critical thinking skills. They include a homework assignment, reflection questions and two essays.

Homework Assignment

The students completed a homework assignment that required them to write two paragraphs about one idea they learned from reading *The Little Prince*. I wrote a model homework that I gave to the students on the theme “Friendship- Don’t forget your friends.” Here is a combined list of the themes that the students in both of my Fall 2016 classes wrote about what they learned from reading *The Little Prince* and seeing the movies.

1. Friendship
2. Childhood and Growing Up
3. The Visible and Invisible
4. People in Your Life
5. Life Changes
6. Important Life Values
7. Work and Life
8. Fun Advice about Life

Here are selected lessons that the students learned from the sixth theme “Important Life Values”: 1) Don’t forget where you come from. 2) Courage is needed in life. 3) Understand why you do something. 4) People learn lessons (from the book and movies). 5) Don’t forget every place or time that is important. and 6) Life cannot be planned.

Reflection Questions:

The students wrote about their reflections regarding *The Little Prince* when they answered the following questions.

1. Did you enjoy reading *The Little Prince*? Why or why not?
2. The fox told the little prince:
“Here is my secret. It is very simple: It is only with the heart that one can see rightly; what is essential is invisible to the eye.”
What do these sentences mean? Do you agree with them? Why or why not? Provide an example to support your opinion.
3. Some grownups saw Drawing Number One as a simple hat. The little prince saw the elephant inside a boa constrictor. Why?

[See “Using *The Little Prince*,” page 17](#)

“Using *The Little Prince*,” from page 16

4. Points to Reflect Upon:

1. What is important to one person may not be important to another person.

2. We need to think deeply about why something is important to someone. It might not be obvious (easily understood) right away.

3A. Our first impressions (understanding) of someone may be incorrect. The little prince needed a sheep to keep his planet safe which was very important to him. He was not asking for a sheep to keep as a pet.

3B. What would be your first impression if a little man asked you to draw him a sheep? Would you think that he needed the sheep to keep as a pet? Yes or No? Explain.

5. Antoine de Saint-Exupery, the author of *The Little Prince*, wrote

“Few grownups remember what it was like to be a child.”

This sentence means that grownups forget what life was like when they were children. Do you agree with it? Why or why not? Provide an example.

6. What did you learn about friendship by reading *The Little Prince*?

7. Do you recommend that other people read *The Little Prince*? Why or Why not? Children? Adults? Both? Why?

Essays:

The students wrote two essays about *The Little Prince*. The first essay assignment was to write about the role of friendship in the book. Many students wrote about these friendships: 1) the pilot and the little prince 2) the little prince and the fox and 3) the little prince and his rose. I gave the students an outline to follow, an essay that I wrote as a model, an outline of my model, a rubric, a checklist to complete about the essay and a former student’s essay to read.

The second essay assignment was to write about the use of symbols in the book. Examples are the rose as a symbol of beauty, the fox as a symbol of a teacher and the well water as a symbol of life. The following essay was written by my student Elda Gjuzi, a native Italian speaker, who gave her permission for it to be published in this article. Elda demonstrated in this analytical essay her understanding of the important use of symbols in the book. This well written second draft illustrates Elda’s comprehension of the life and death symbols found in *The Little Prince*.

“The Symbols for Life and Death in The Little Prince”

The symbols for life and death in The Little Prince are a necessary part of the book. There are many interesting symbols used in the book entitled “The Little Prince” because the story has many layers of meanings. On one hand, the story is about a little boy who comes to Earth in search of friends. On the other hand, the story is about the power of belief and how it can change our lives. There are two types of symbols in the book: 1) symbols of death (the snakes, the Sahara Desert) and 2) symbols of life (the pilot, the water in the well.) These symbols represent life and death and the battle between them. In this essay, I will discuss examples of the use of symbols in The Little Prince. They are the snake that bit the little prince and the water in the well.

The snake is the symbol of danger and power. In addition, the snake represents death. The little prince met the snake for the first time in Chapter XVII. Initially, the little prince thought that the snake was a funny creature because (sic, the word he is missing) was not thicker than a finger. However, the little prince was completely wrong. In fact, the snake’s bite is very powerful and dangerous. The snake could bring the little prince home with only a bite. Here are two examples from the book about the snake as a symbol of death. First, in Chapter XVII, the little prince met the snake which said that it was dangerous. Second, in Chapter XVII, the little prince met the snake again and asked

See “Using *The Little Prince*,” page 18

“Using *The Little Prince*,” from page 17

the snake to take him home. Here, the little prince was very scared because he knew the snake’s bite is mortal.

The water in the well is the symbol of life. Water represents life because people, animals and plants can’t live without water. It is absurd to think that the pilot and the little prince would find a well in the desert. However, they found the well. This means that there is life in the desert. Every person knows the importance of water in his or her life. Here are two examples from the book *The Little Prince* about water as a symbol of life. First, in Chapter II, the pilot had a crash landing. He had water for only eight days. However, that water kept him alive. Second, in Chapter XXIV, the pilot and the little prince found the well which had the water that they needed to live. In fact, we can see the importance of the water because the pilot started to feel feverish during his night walk in the desert. However, when the pilot drank the water in the well he felt better. The water made it possible to regain his health.

In conclusion, the many symbols in *The Little Prince* make the story more interesting and more exciting for whoever reads the books. It is fantastic to discover all the amazing symbols in the book and learn what they represent. The two symbols discussed in this essay, the snake and water in the well, represent death and life. In *The Little Prince* there is a conflict between life and death. I was relieved to learn that this conflict was resolved which means that life won. In addition, it is wonderful to know that the story had a happy ending.

Midterm Writing Exam, Portfolio and Students’ Opinions

The students were given a writing exam at the end of a thematic unit in the middle of the semester. I created a study guide to assist the students to prepare for the midterm writing exam about *The Little Prince*. They submitted all of their writing assignments about *The Little Prince* in a portfolio before the midterm break. I have only received positive comments from my students about the

use of the book *The Little Prince* as required reading for the course.

Conclusion

It is important for teachers to ask and answer the question of how can ESL teachers make a text accessible to their students. ESL students need to learn how to comprehend a text, think critically about it and write clearly about their thoughts. I have used *The Little Prince* successfully to promote students’ abilities to understand the philosophical underpinnings of the book. My students enjoy the thematic unit and have improved their ability to express themselves in writing and think critically.

Joanna Labov is Assistant Professor in the English Department at Community College of Philadelphia.

“Power of nominalization,” from page 14

formation of nouns from verbs, adjectives, or other nouns; and use of nominalization to improve focus, clarity, and efficiency of expression (Cranker & Petersen, 2016).

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- Kenneth Cranker has a background in biology and has taught English for 12 years internationally and for twelve years at the University of Delaware English Language Institute. He has served as the primary mentor and level coordinator for the high-advanced level of English for Academic Purposes (EAP) there.*
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“From scramble to scribble,” from page 6

ideas and the connections between ideas. Prior subject knowledge of the lecture content can be elicited or taught through pre-lecture readings or discussions.

How can teachers help students improve their notetaking?

Since notetaking requires a synergy of many skills, activities that isolate certain skills for discrete practice can be less overwhelming. These activities also provide students the opportunity to focus more exclusively on the notetaking skills that are the most troubling for them. Perhaps some students have especially weak motor skills. Others might have more difficulty identifying the main ideas. In order to ease the cognitive load and help scaffold students toward effective notetaking, the following three practice exercises have been developed focusing on particular aspects of notetaking skills.

Dictation Activity

This dictation activity gets students out of their seats and moving. It requires that students be paired together, one student the designated “writer” and the other the “reader.” The readers walk to a wall on the other side of the classroom, where the first half of a story has been posted. Each reader then memorizes as much of the story as possible and returns to the writer to dictate the story word for word and punctuation for punctuation. Precision is necessary. The reader cannot summarize the story so must continue moving back and forth between the wall and the writer until the story has been transcribed completely. Once the transcription is complete, the second half of the story is posted on the wall, and the partners switch roles. This activity provides students with practice that relies heavily on transcription and working memory, and it can be adapted to different language levels through the selection of level-appropriate stories. [Here](#) is a riddle that has been used with lower-intermediate students. Each part of this story contains two

intentional mistakes for the more discerning student eyes to identify and correct.

“Since notetaking requires a synergy of many skills, activities that isolate certain skills for discrete practice can be less overwhelming. These activities also provide students the opportunity to focus more exclusively on the notetaking skills that are the most troubling for them.”

Info Gap / Cloze Activity

For the Info Gap portion of the activity, the instructor presents a recorded conversation which includes previously taught vocabulary forms. Students are divided into two groups to listen for the targeted vocabulary and respond to questions about its use in the conversation that they hear. Each group listens for different target vocabulary. In their respective groups, they compare answers, and the instructor checks for accuracy, offering to repeat the conversation as necessary. For the Cloze phase of the activity, students are paired across groups and work with a partner, each using their notes to contribute to completion of a cloze version of the conversation script. Students practice use of transcription fluency and encoding to transfer audio input to written form, and, then, decoding as they process conceptual connections, again changing input from visual (first completed handout) and audio (conversation with partner) form to written form. The activity can be adapted with the selection of appropriate themes or vocabulary in the conversation text. [Here](#) are samples of handouts and a conversation that has been used with lower-intermediate students focused on phrasal verbs.

See “From scramble to scribble,” page 20

“From scramble to scribble,” from page 19

Guided Notetaking Activity

This activity can be done in class or be assigned as homework. The students listen to a recorded text about the number of international students attending American colleges and universities from LearningEnglish.VOANews.com (Number of International Students Attending American Colleges and Universities Continues Rising, 2012). The instructor provides a handout [here](#) which has the basic outline of the recorded text with blanks for the students to fill in the missing information.

There are two ways to complete this activity. The easier way is to fill in the blanks of the handout as the students listen to the audio. The more difficult way is to provide students with a blank sheet of paper so that they can take notes on their own. After that, they can use their own notes to fill in the blanks of the handout. This activity is designed to introduce the students to how English lectures are organized by showing the outline of the recorded text and providing scaffolded assistance for notetaking. Practice provided for summarizing and synthesizing is particularly useful.

Suggestions for Lecturers

Once students have practiced the above discrete notetaking skills, an obvious activity is to practice notetaking while listening to lectures. Level-appropriate lectures are often available in ESL textbooks or online audio files. In order to help students with this type of activity, Kuo gives four suggestions to lecturers. One, pre-lecture content schema building should be provided. This could consist of pre-teaching vocabulary or providing students with discussion questions on the topic.

Two, lectures should be delivered slowly. This suggestion assumes that instructors are vocalizing lectures themselves instead of relying on an audio file. When the lecture is an audio file, it can be paused after key ideas.

Three, difficult terminology should be repeated. This may be achieved by repeating not only the same word but also words in the same word family, such as entrepreneur, entrepreneurship, and entrepreneurial. Four, clear transitions should be incorporated. Although authentic lectures often do not rely heavily on transitions, the use of transitions in language classrooms can provide a scaffold for students as they learn to navigate underlying organizations of ideas.

Conclusion

Although notetaking can be a particularly daunting task for ESL students unaccustomed with the complex process, instructors can isolate the elements of the process, providing training and practice even among lower level students. Because “The palest ink is better than the best memory;” the identified elements of notetaking—transcription fluency, working memory, summarizing and synthesizing skills, and prior subject knowledge (Chiang & Dunkel, 1992; Peverly et al., 2007)—are particularly important in the world of academics and transferable well beyond.

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“Mr. Tanimoto's hadj,” from page 7

the shadow of a bow. Then he points to a bigger article on the top of the page: “U.S. Women Crush Senegal.” He gestures: the article is twice as big as Ichiro's!

“Hey buddy, you're in Delaware, University of Delaware, in fact. Elena Delle Donne's alma mater. She's sorta like Ichiro here, and captain of that Olympic team!”

He gets my drift, and we both laugh. Nancy, whose student is late, listens in, giggling along.

Me, I care about as much for baseball, as Tadash for women's basketball. We both, of course, want to be cowboys. So, when this session's “Cultural Connection” celebrates

cowboy culture, I get up and sing Patsy Montana's “Cowboy's Sweetheart” to the fluttering of a dozen iPhones. Yahoo.

Then, after we all practice “Cowboy Vocabulary” and the tutors pass out a list of cowboy lore, Nancy directs Mr. Tanimoto off to the Fair Hill Rodeo in Maryland. He and I have a plan. Since he's a pretty good writer, he's going to bring me a one-page journal with his impressions of the rodeo.

On Monday, I read his journal to him and then he reads it back to me. Reading like this slows him down considerably. I make a few corrections, but I have understood every word.

The following Monday, Tadash brings me his review of a New York play.

The next week he's gone. First stop Seattle, home of Ichiro's first American team; then back to Japan, his *hadj* completed.

Haven't paid much attention to Ichiro this year. One of my current students plays pro baseball in Korea. He went to see the Phillies, and on Monday showed me his picture with relief outfielder Hyun Soo Kim. They went to the same high school.

What a gift, to share a bit in my students' big adventures. And once in a while play cowboy.

Jerry Thompson is a tutor in the English Language Institute at the University of Delaware.



“Difficult students,” from page 8

Also, students can learn to use their strengths to compensate for their weaknesses.

Reach out

Although teachers can feel isolated in the classroom, help is available. Students with learning disabilities can be referred for tutoring, or other services available at the school. Also, teachers who share difficult students can compare notes and share effective strategies for dealing with these students.

Dealing with difficult students can be frustrating and time consuming. However, by being patient, flexible, sensitive and responsive to these students' needs, the instructor can ultimately achieve success and personal satisfaction.

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A TESOL Symposium in Vancouver, Canada

With the world-wide web growing daily, TESOL professionals are faced with a desire to create not only English language users, but global citizens as well. With an increasingly mobile population, cultural awareness is more important than ever! Participants attending this one-day symposium will be exposed to ways technology can simultaneously teach English and build global citizenry.

When? Thursday, 3 May 2018. This event will precede [BC TEAL's 50th Annual Conference](#), which will take place 4–5 May 2018.

Registration Registration fee: 95 Canadian Dollars

Register for both [BC TEAL's 50th Annual Conference](#) and TESOL Symposium, or register for just the TESOL Symposium on 3 May 2018, by clicking [here](#).



A TESOL Academy in Tegucigalpa, Honduras

This TESOL Academy is designed to meet the needs of a diverse attendee audience at the HELTA conference, including English language educators from both K–12 and higher education contexts. The themes will include the latest in current classroom practices and theories, and will focus on grammar methodologies and CALL in different learner settings, as well as teachers in action research.

When? 11–12 July 2018

Note: This event will precede the [4th Annual HELTA Honduras Conference](#), 13–14 July 2018.

Where? [Universidad Tecnológica Centroamericana \(UNITEC\)](#), Tegucigalpa, Honduras
