

MIDTESOL MATTERS

The Mid-America TESOL Affiliate Newsletter

December 2014

Message from the President

Greetings, MIDTESOL!

A warm welcome to you all as we look forward to another exciting, productive year of fostering excellence in English language teaching. I am the 2015 president of the MIDTESOL board and I am an Academic Specialist at the English Language Institute of Missouri State University. My passion is sociolinguistics, particularly World Englishes and pragmatics. I am honored to get the chance to serve as your president on an enthusiastic board overseeing a dynamic membership of professionals.



The big news for 2015 is that we are welcoming Nebraska back into the MIDTESOL family! We know the Cornhuskers will add great value to our membership. Look for the email from Shaeley Santiago, our Past President and Chair of the Nominating Committee about applying for the position of Member at Large for Nebraska.

"We want to welcome Nebraska back to the MIDTESOL Family!"

- Terry Barakat

In This Issue

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- Highlight on Opportunities in the new Newsletter
- MIDTESOL 2014 Essay Contest

Another great addition is the Educational Technology Interest Section, launched and currently chaired by Summer Peixoto, a lecturer and language lab coordinator in the Applied English Center at the University of Kansas. See her article in this newsletter for details and tech tips.

Be sure to save the dates of October 23-24 for the MIDTESOL Annual Conference at The University of Iowa in Iowa City. Our theme this year is *The Future is Now: Building New Traditions in TESOL*. Looking further ahead, we have signed a three-year contract with The Kansas City Marriott Downtown as our venue for our conferences in 2016-2018. Here we hope to provide convenience, camaraderie, and continuity to presenters and participants alike.

Finally, before we enter the New Year, I need to express our gratitude to those who did such outstanding work in 2014. The MIDTESOL Annual Conference in Warrensburg, MO, this past October was outstanding, thanks to Cheryl Eason and her crew. President Shaeley Santiago was tireless in her efforts to update and organize the MIDTESOL board practices and documentation. Thanks to them and everyone on the 2014 board!

I wish you all joy and wonder in the coming year!

Terry Miller Barakat

Editors' Highlights

Editors Kurtis Foster and Laura McBride

Hello all MIDTESOLers!

We would like to highlight a few pieces in this issue to insure that no one misses the accomplishments of colleagues and opportunities that are coming up for both teachers and students in the region:

- 1) Outstanding research and practice ideas from our MIDTESOL 2014 Travel Award Recipients.
- 2) 2014 Best Student Essay Award Winner
- 3) Call for Submissions to the new Best Essay Award– The 2015 Award is open to students fo any Level. See the announcement and details on submitting on the last page of this newsletter.

Please drop us a line with any questions you have about finding information about MIDTESOL or getting your information and ideas to the region



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Message from the Past President

Looking back on my year as MIDTESOL President, I am awed by the contributions of many to move our organization forward. The executive board has worked hard to redefine roles of board members and tighten up the long-term vision for MIDTESOL. We are dedicated to listening to feedback from members as we work to make MIDTESOL into a vibrant, thriving, professional community that provides leadership and training opportunities to support English language teaching.

I'm excited by new opportunities within MIDTESOL such as our newly formed Ed Tech Interest Section and Nebraska rejoining our affiliate. As we look forward to the new year, I encourage each of you to take advantage of the networking and resources MIDTESOL offers. Here's to an incredible 2015!

Shaeley Santiago
MIDTESOL Past President

Top Tweets:

The most inspiring TESOL conversations happening on the web.



Shelly S Terrell @ShelliTerrell · 2h

"Learning is not the product of teaching. Learning is the product of the activity of learners" - Holt #Edchat

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State by State Update: News from Members At Large

Iowa News:



As we near the end of year, I'd like to share the events that have occurred in the past few months. Iowa has been very active this fall.

In September, Iowa State hosted the 12th Annual Technology for second Language Learning conference. Speakers included Michael (Mick) O'Donnell from Universidad Autónoma de Madrid and Dr. Carol Chappelle. Keep checking their website and the Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/TSLLConference>) for information on next year's conference.

In November, the Iowa Culture and Language Conference was held in Coralville, Iowa. MIDTESOL was one of the exhibitors and we held a social gathering for MIDTESOL members and conference attendees. A group of us met at 30hop, a restaurant featuring local food and beverages. We ate and chatted for several hours. It was enjoyable to talk to people from across the state and from different types of programs. Watch for more upcoming events and join us for more fun in 2015.

In December, Iowa announced its 2015 Teacher of the Year recipient. Clemencia Spizzirri teaches Spanish and also works with children learning English as a second language. You can read an interview with her on the Iowa Department of Education website (<https://www.educateiowa.gov/article/2014/12/08/q-iowa-s-2015-teacher-year>) in which she discusses her philosophy and why she emphasizes multicultural education.

Studylowa members this fall visited several embassies in Washington D.C. after participating in the Education USA Forum. It held its most recent meeting on Friday, December 5 in Marshalltown, Iowa. For future meetings, go to their website (<http://studyiowa.org/>).

The University of Iowa has announced that it is expanding its ESL faculty to meet the needs of its growing international student population. People who may be interested can go to the Jobs@uiowa website <https://jobs.uiowa.edu/jobSearch/faculty/> and search for the following requisition numbers: 65549, 65559, 65578. Information about the positions and qualifications are available there.

While 2014 was a busy year, Iowa will have even more to offer in 2015. The University of Iowa is hosting MIDTESOL's 2015 conference at the Iowa Memorial Union on its campus in Iowa City. The theme is "The Future is Now: Building New Traditions in TESOL". The conference planners are pleased to announce several of the invited speakers for next year's conference. These include:

Randi Reppen from Northern Arizona University,

Lia Plakans from the University of Iowa,

the ESL Techies (aka Heather Parris Fitzpatrick and Lisa Estrada) from Nassau County, NY.

Keep checking midtesol.org for more updates on the conference and other Iowa events.

Kansas News:

English Language Proficiency Standards Project



Kansas joined ten other states (Arkansas, Florida, Iowa, Louisiana, Nebraska, Ohio, Oregon, South Carolina, Washington, and West Virginia) along with CCSSO, WestEd, and Understanding Language in an effort to more closely correlate English Language Proficiency Standards with College and Career Ready standards for English Language Arts and Literacy, Math, and Science. For our state's part of the effort a 24-person committee was created representing all Board of Education districts, all levels of instruction, teachers, administrators, specialists and higher education. The committee's task was to provide detailed reviews, feedback, and guidance to a national team of expert standards writers.

Kansas Adopts New English Language Proficiency Standards

Adopted December 10, 2013. These new standards were strategically designed to simplify and streamline the process of learning in English in order to meet college-and-career-ready standards in academic subject areas. The ten standards highlight language functions and forms that English Language Learners (ELLs) need in order to succeed.

For more information about the project and the new standards visit:

<http://www.ksde.org/Agency/DivisionofLearningServices/CareerStandardsandAssessmentServices/ContentAreaA-E/>

Missouri News:



The Annual Measureable Achievement Objectives (AMOAs) came out in December of 2013.:

<http://dese.mo.gov/sites/default/files/qs-amao-Understanding-Title-III-AMAO-13-14.pdf>

Nebraska News:



Nebraska is a member of the MIDTESOL Family and will be sharing their news and ideas with us soon. Teachers interested in serving on the MIDTESOL Board as a representative of Nebraska should be ready for an e-mail from MIDTESOL Past President Shaeley Santiago.

Getting Started with the MidTesol Educational Technology Interest Section

Greetings MidTesol-ers! Summer Peixoto here sending news from the University of Kansas. I am happy to announce my newest position as MidTesol's Educational Technology Interest Section Chair. I look forward to working with all of you in the near future.

Because establishing personal learning networks for educators in the Midwest region will help facilitate the development of the ethical and applicable use of technology for educational purposes, MidTesol has allowed for the creation of the Educational Technology Interest section. Our utmost hope is that members will explore, discuss, and share technology, pedagogy, and best practices in the field. We want to learn from each other, but most importantly, we want to grow and meet our students at their own level of technology proficiency. Although "play" is essential in this interest section, our vision includes demonstrating, sharing, and reviewing useful and pedagogically sound software, mobile apps, and other programs, hosting tech sessions at MIDTESOL meetings, attending TESOL Electronic Village sessions in order to promote CALL, supporting a pragmatic approach to teaching that involves understanding current trends, ideas, and skills in technology use, and providing guidance and support for professional development in CALL.



Tech Tool Spotlight

QUIZLET <http://quizlet.com>



The screenshot shows the Quizlet interface. At the top, there are three main sections: STUDY (Flashcards, Learn, Speller), PLAY (Scatter, Space Race), and TOOLS (Edit, Share, Add to Class, Print, Add to Folder, More). Below these are four smaller buttons: Flashcards, Learn, Speller (20% finished), and Test.

Quizlet is an on-line vocabulary learning tool that can be used with all levels of language proficiency and all ages in any skill, is a favorite vocabulary tool for any subject. Teachers can create lists for students, create groups so students can collaborate and create group lists or shared lists, or ask students to search out lists for content-based activities. The possibilities are endless with Quizlet, which currently boasts over one hundred million users to date.

I like to have my students warm up during class by playing a Password style game using Quizlet. I put the words on the screen, ask students to face each other and give clues to the word showing without giving away the answer. After a few minutes, I have students switch places. This simple and quick activity boosts energy in the class while pushing students to use language to identify words. Other times, I use the gaming functions in class and have students go to the board to match words and definitions, do a "space race", or practice the spelling aloud options. As you can see, Quizlet is much more than your average vocabulary practice program.

Try out your technology vocabulary skills [here](#) and see if you like what Quizlet has to offer. Be sure you practice the flashcards, learn, speller, test, scatter, and space race to get the full Quizlet experience. You won't be disappointed!

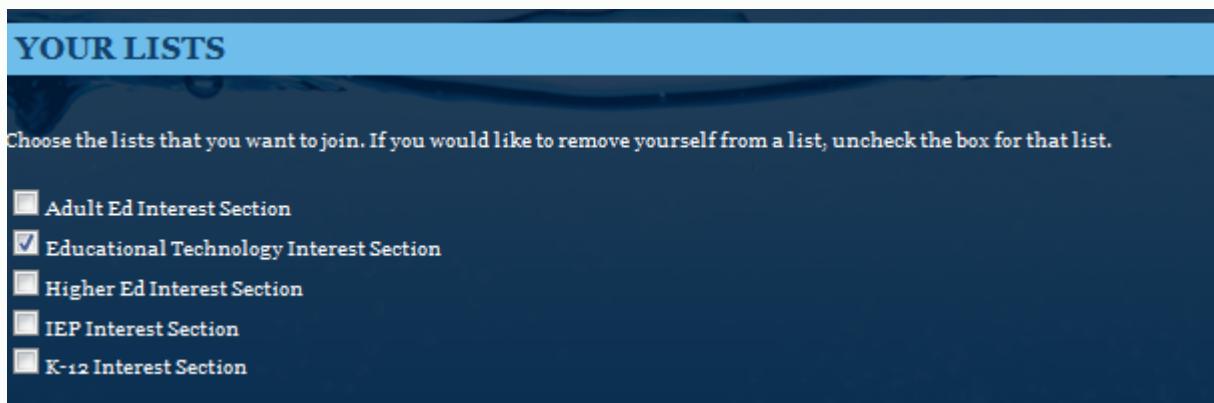
Are you interested in getting involved with our newest IS?

Here's what you can do:

Edit your profile setting in your membership file.



Choose Educational Technology as your interest section.



Like us on [Facebook](#) and leave a comment. Share your projects and ideas with us.

Do you have wonderful apps or tools you'd like to share, too? Let's talk!

Join us! Join us! Join us!

Summer Peixoto

Educational Technology Interest Section Chair

University of Kansas

MIDTESOL 2014 Travel Award Articles

The following articles are submissions from the 2014 MIDTESOL Conference Travel Award winners. They detail the contents of each award winner's presentation at the conference and outline theories as well as specific best practices to follow in the classroom and program-wide.

Help Your Students Become Global Citizens through Service Learning

By Stephanie Lynam Travel Grant Winner, Linda Hanzek , and Anne West-Leclon ,

Presenters Stephanie Lynam , Linda Hanzek , and Anne West-Leclon

Our presentation, "Helping Your ESL Students Becomes Global Citizens through Service Learning," is divided into three parts. The first part, *This is What Works*, presents ILUNO teachers' experiences with their own service learning classes. Part two, *What? So What? Now What?* explains the process. Part three spells out the five stages of Service Learning used in the classroom. We will focus on Parts 2 and 3 to pass along the most practical parts of the process.

What, So What?, and Now What?

"*What?*" First, instructors engage in a dialogue called the "what." They explain the service learning project in which the students will be participating. They explain what the students should know: background information, including the organization's mission and history, relevant vocabulary, and what to expect.

"*So What?*" Then the instructors engage in the "so what" aspect of each service learning project. They explain why participation is important for a successful outcome, and expose students to different types of needs in the community.

"*Now What?*" The presentation closes with an explanation of how the class has impacted students' attitudes and perceptions. Instructors give examples of how students share their experiences after the class is over, such as through social media with friends and family, on campus with other students and faculty, and in academic forums. Students are proud of their personal commitment, achievements, and growth.

IPARD

The third part of the presentation illustrates the five stages the instructor uses to teach service learning. Due in large part to the Service Learning Academy team at the University of Nebraska at Omaha, the teachers follow a paradigm called *IPARD* (pronounced I PAR-DEE): Investigating, Planning, Acting, Reflecting, Demonstrating. These are also known as the Five Stages of Service Learning.

The Investigating stage requires teachers to teach students about the organization and discuss possible projects that they could be participating in. The investigating portion is introduced through web sites, guest speakers, background information as well as introduce terminology relating to the organization and its services.

ground information as well as introduce terminology relating to the organization and its services.

The Planning and Preparation stage requires teachers to guide students into developing a tentative plan for completing the project, if there is one designated. Otherwise, teachers offer predictions of what project they could be working on once they arrive at a project site.

The Action stage is the actual hands-on work that the students will complete at the project site. Sometimes it's not always pleasant and so it is important that instructors help students to overcome any concerns students may have by preparing them with anticipated outcomes in Stage two. The Action stage is where students make the connection between their services and the community they have integrated in. It is in this stage where students find the most rewarding experiences.

The Reflecting stage is used to contemplate the project that was completed. There are activities that engage students to think about the overall result of what they have completed, and their attitude regarding what was accomplished. In this stage, discussions of improvement and suggestions are made; students are allowed to discuss not only the positive aspects of the project, but the negative ones as well. What is more rewarding in this stage is that students realize their value in the community. This is crucial for international students at any level of their English learning.

Lastly, the Demonstrating stage is a celebration of their service and it is at this stage where students express their attitudes toward the service learning class in forms of acting out in skits, writing articles for newsletters, and just plain dialogue between peers and faculty. It is this stage where students and teachers are able to connect the learning and the engagement.

Our mission and hope is to foster greater interest in providing service learning and civic engagement within ESL classrooms. This type of learning instills self-confidence and compassion among ESL students, and provides a richer more fulfilling experience abroad. As students engage in meaningful English dialogue with community partners, the community partners learn about other cultures. Later, when students return to their home countries, they bring a wealth of ideas about engaging in service in their own communities. This sort of outcome is invaluable and is learned through real life experiences: service learning.

An Ineffective Academic Writing Course: A Deception for ESL Students

By Hoi Yuen Chan, Travel Grant Winner

It has always been a challenge for many college-writing teachers to teach L2 writing since academic writing covers so many areas but with limited class time. Therefore, a careful planning is critical. Without it, teachers of L2 students may either mainly focus on grammar but neglect literacy instruction (Truscott, 1996) or concentrate too much on global issues at the expense of language issues, hoping that L2 students' accuracy problems will be solved by themselves (Ferris, 1995). The challenge of teaching L2 writing for teachers of L2 students is to strike the balance between language features and content-related features in academic texts (Ferries, 2009; Paltridge et al, 2009). Therefore, teachers may need to raise students' awareness of the importance of both. For this presentation, the instruction of grammar will be the focus.

Grammatical features are frequently covered as well in academic writing such as tenses, clauses, parts of speech, and nominalization (Paltrideg et al, 2009). Teachers can spend a portion of the class on grammatical items by having students look at their own texts for any lexical variety (Ferris, 2009), or teachers can use authentic academic texts for students to examine what grammatical items could be found and evaluate which tenses are more commonly used in academic texts (Paltridge et al, 2009). The goal of teaching grammar constructions is to help L2 students develop fluency in academic writing (Hinkel, 2004). However, a substantial and advanced L2 proficiency in lexical and grammatical items may not be achieved without an explicit, focused, and consistent instruction (Ellis, 2002; Richards, 2002). A number of studies have also pointed out that without the development of grammar skills required in academic writing, L2 students could not construct an acceptable academic text (Nation, 2001; Paltridge, 2001; Read, 2000). Being said, teachers probably need to teach grammar explicitly in class because explicit instruction can help students attain greater language gains than an implicit instruction approach (Norris & Ortega, 2000), and constant grammar instruction helps L2 students develop language awareness and improves the quality of L2 students' work (Fotos, 2002; Norris & Ortega, 2001; Muranoi, 2000).

Besides the teaching pedagogy, insufficient class time is also a major issue. A careful planning and deciding what grammar structure to teach are fundamental in order to maximize L2 students' language learning. According to Hinkel (2013), here are some of the grammar structures that are worth the time teaching in a classroom:

Sentence fragments and run-on sentences

It is common to notice this type of language errors such as sentence fragments and run-on sentences L2 students make. These errors can easily create unclear and confusing meanings in L2 students' written texts; as a result, the true meaning intended to be conveyed will be lost. Teachers need to find a way to help students avoid making this type of errors.

Present tense and past tense

Most grammar textbooks cover all the tenses, yet it might be better for grammar or writing teachers to use discretion as to which tenses should be taught and which should not due to the fact that class time is insufficient. Reid (2000) notes that present,

present perfect, and past tenses are commonly found in academic writing conventions. Therefore, these tenses are important to be discussed in class; whereas future perfect and future perfect progressive tenses might not be worth the class time.

Passive voice

Some writing teachers might suggest that it is better to use active voice than passive voice in writing. However, the use of the passive voice is very common in academic writing, and its function allows students to avoid subjectivity and directness required in traditional academic writing conventions, particularly in sciences and engineering discourses (Hinkel, 2013).

Reporting verbs and noun clauses

These reporting verbs and noun clause construction are prevalent in academic prose. They are commonly used and helpful in paraphrasing and citing information. It is worthwhile teaching L2 writers to be familiar with reporting verbs and noun clauses.

Normalization and impersonal it-constructions

These constructions are common in academic prose but so complex that they require academic L2 writers extensive time and practice to feel comfortable with these types of constructions in their academic writing. Understanding these types of constructions, L2 writers will not only find it easier to understand the complex constructions of academic written texts as they read, but also be able to apply these common types of constructions in their academic writing as well.

As teachers of L2 writing, it is impossible to teach all the grammar items listed in a grammar textbook due to insufficient class time. Therefore, being able to identify what types of grammar constructions are common in an academic written text, and are necessarily to be taught in a classroom is important. Without the understanding and the awareness of various grammar constructions, teachers could not fully help L2 writers develop the language proficiency and fluency required in the convention of an academic written text.

Besides the teaching pedagogy, insufficient class time is also a major issue. A careful planning and deciding what grammar structure to teach are fundamental in order to maximize L2 students' language learning.

-Hoi Yuen Chan

Successfully Update Your Placement and Exit Processes

By Amy Roither, Travel Grant Winner

As student demographics and enrollment numbers change, so should the placement and exit processes for students. To create a stronger program in terms of curriculum planning and meeting the needs of both students and the university, all four language skills need evaluation. The session, "Successfully Update Your Placement and Exit Processes," that I presented with my colleagues at MIDTESOL 2014 shows how we reshaped our program's placement and exit evaluations in order to better assess all four language skills.

The first part of our presentation gave background information about our program. We teach in a small program which enrolls typically less than thirty students per semester into three levels: intermediate, upper intermediates, and advanced/bridge. Our program is attached to our university, not a stand-alone IEP. The small size of our program is part of our impetus to change our enrollment and exit evaluations. By shifting our overall focus from TOEFL scores to other forms of assessment, we have been able to capture a greater range of abilities among potential students.

The second part of our presentation focused on the research we consulted as we updated our placement and exit exams. First, for overall guidance on how to reshape our entrance and exit exams, we looked at Leki's research (1991). Her research emphasizes making the shift from objective, standardized placements to comprehensive tests which look at language proficiency in all four skills: reading, writing, speaking, and listening. She also advocates switching from personal essay topics or "surprise" topics based on an unfamiliar text to those that incorporate reading texts more prominently by also using them in the written and oral portions of the exam. As recommended by Leki, during our oral exams we ask students questions based on the article that they previously read and wrote about during the essay portion of the test. We based the process for our oral exam on research from Applebaum & Taborek (1986). Their focus is on best practices which are based on the four phases used in Foreign Service Institute's oral exam. Therefore, in our oral exams for placement and exit, we adopted those four phases: warm-up, level-check, probe, and wind-down. Finally, part of our exit exam includes evaluating student portfolios. We based our decision to use portfolios on research by both Godwin-Jones (2008) and Shulman (1998). Godwin-Jones writes about how portfolios are an effective tool for students to develop self-awareness about their skills, maintain a record of their work, and evaluate their progress. Likewise, Shulman states that portfolios help students connect the stages of learning with their results and encourage students to have ownership of their work through reflection and discussion.

Next, we explained what our placement and exit tests originally included. In the beginning, the placement and exit processes were the same. They included the Institutional TOEFL (ITP), a written exam based on an article, and an oral exam based on another article which was only given to the students ten minutes in advance. There were many difficulties with this process. First, students put too much importance on their TOEFL scores and not enough on achieving the academic skills that make up the foundation of our broader curriculum, often causing a disconnect between students' academic performance and their TOEFL scores. And the oral exam was stressful for the students be-

cause it did not give them enough preparation.

Our first revision tried to address these difficulties. The processes for placement and exit evaluations became more distinct. Our placement exam kept the TOEFL but now included the same article for both the written and oral exams. Likewise, the exit exam included a consistent article for the written and oral exams, as well as, a portfolio evaluation of students' work. In addition, students needed to achieve a C- average among all their ESL courses to exit from one level to the next. The most significant change in the first revision was the removal of the

"By supporting our changes with a combination of documented research, program-generated data, and the objectives of our curriculum, we are growing closer to finding the optimal process.."

-Amy Roither

TOEFL from the exit exam. The advantages of the changes were that students became more focused on their academic work rather than TOEFL scores and their output increased during the oral and written exams due to the shared article. However, the disadvantage was that students complained about a lack of objectivity in the exit exam since the TOEFL was longer used.

The second revision kept the placement process the same but made a few changes to the exit process in response to student complaints. In order to balance students' requests for more objectivity with our program's desire to emphasize academic skills, not TOEFL scores, we reinstated the TOEFL as part of the exit exam but also changed the grade criteria from needing a C-average to needing a C- or better *in every course*. However, while these adjustments appeared to have achieved balance, in reality they brought us back a step. Again we felt the financial and time restraints of the TOEFL. In addition, our student demographics at the time had shifted to those with lower skill levels and their exit TOEFL scores often did not improve. Finally, we still felt that we lacked authenticity in our assessment of all four language skills.

The third revision is the one that we are currently using. For the placement exam, we still use a shared article for the written and oral tests. We have chosen to include a standardized element and now include the EPT (CMLA) test in our placement evaluation. For the exit exam, the only change is that we are using the MTELP instead of the TOEFL. It provides a better fit for the needs of our program. Future plans include creating a lecture-based listening exam which will correspond to the article used in the oral and written sections. In conclusion, changing our placement and exit exams has been a valuable experience. By supporting our changes with a combination of documented research, program-generated data, and the objectives of our curriculum we are growing closer to finding the optimal process. We encourage other programs to do the same.

Conference Presentation Summaries

More articles outlining great presentations at the 2014 Conference

Teaching Word Stress and Rhythm

by Denise Mussman, UM-St. Louis.

While correct pronunciation helps clarity, teaching word stress and rhythm is time better spent. One reason is that stressing and lengthening the correct syllable facilitates communication and compensates for incorrect sounds. Say “photography” while stressing incorrect syllables and the word becomes incomprehensible, especially to those not used to speaking with non-native speakers. Another reason is that all ESL students struggle with learning accent while difficult sounds depend on the first language interference. Furthermore, it is physically easier to lengthen a sound than to work on muscularity of the tongue.

However, the English accent is hard to master because it has an unusual pattern of long and short sounds. English is a stress-timed language while most languages are syllable-timed languages in which syllables are nearly the same length. Thus, it's difficult for non-native speakers to imitate the various vowel lengths in English. For instance, in French and Spanish, the word “photography” is pronounced with equal stress on each syllable; in English, its first and third syllables are shortened, and the second syllable, stressed, has a long /ah/ sound and an aspirated /t/. Note how the first and last syllables are reduced and the second is long with a clear /ae/ vowel sound in the word “banana”.

Stress often when a word changes part of speech. Say these words aloud: “photograph” and “photography”; “politics” and “politician”; “probable” and “probability”. Some syllables are reduced, which means the vowel becomes shorter and is replaced with a schwa or short I sound. Be sure to emphasize to students that stressed syllables are longer, not necessarily higher or louder.

Here are some basic rules of word stress:

1. Two-syllable nouns (except French nouns) stress on the first syllable and verbs on the second. Examples: present - present; product - produce; and record - record. This is also true for two-word nouns and verbs: look-out - look out; pickup - pick up.
2. Compound nouns stress on the first syllable: bookshelf, air conditioner, post office, pickup truck
3. Adjectives have less stress than nouns: an interesting book, a good day, a nice guy, a small town.
4. Syllables before many suffixes are stressed: communication, community, geographical, economics
5. On numbers: the final “teen” syllable is stressed while “ty” is reduced and sounds like /d/, such as thirteen vs. thirty

Rhythm in English is just like that of word stress, with lengthened and reduced vowels. Content words, which contain meaning, are longer. These include nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, negatives, numbers and question words. Short and reduced words are grammar words: pronouns, prepositions, helping verbs, and articles, though they can be stressed for emphasis. For example, in the sentence, “You can meet me at the airport at 5 on Sunday.”, meaning could be deduced from the stressed words but not by the function words.

Here are some activities I have used for teaching word stress and rhythm:

1. Show some basic words and have students listen to the number of syllables (vowel sounds) and underline which syllables are most stressed. They then listen for reduced syllables and cross those out. Be sure to emphasize that stressed vowels are long and flat, not high and loud. Give each student a rubber band to stretch on the stressed syllables. Prepare a listening quiz of ten words, one point for hearing and writing the number of syllables and one for marking the stressed syllable.
2. Students write a list of words that are difficult for them to pronounce but used often. They can listen to the pronunciation of the words on a website such as www.dictionary.com, note the number of syllables, and underline those most stressed. Next, they write sentences with synonyms or examples to make the meaning of each word clear, which helps them develop strategy and fluency.
3. From your textbook book or a handout, have students each present a rule to the class
4. I transition from word stress to rhythm by having students repeat words and phrases that have the same pattern. We begin with words and students add I progress from words to sentences. Security = He's nice to me. Christmas tree = Talk to me. Physician = He'll listen.
5. Chant sentences and clap on the content words. Clap at the same pace throughout this exercise. An example:
Teachers like students. The teachers like the students. The teachers should like their students. The teachers should have liked most of their students.
6. Use rubber bands or clap for stress of sentences on the board. Then they have simple but real conversations, "WHAT did you DO this WEEKEND?" using the new pattern while clapping.
7. Students write sentences they hear outside of class and mark the stressed words to develop their "ears". They read them aloud in class.
8. Have students create dialogues with phrasal verbs, mark the stressed words, and perform them.
9. Students can read a passage aloud with the class and mark phrasing, stress and other features. They record the reading for rhythm and then comment on the ideas using the same patterns.
10. Sing! Music is a wonderful tool to teach word stress and rhythm. In fact, the only student I ever had whose accent was like that of a native speaker learned English by listening to rock music. Strong beats fall in a regular pattern on content words, as do lyrics in a song. Choose a song that is easy to sing, not too fast. Have students read the lyrics aloud, sing the song, mark the stress, and reread the same lines aloud. You'll be amazed at how much their rhythm will improve the second time. Songs I have used include *Tomorrow* from the musical Annie, *Blowing in the Wind* by Joan Baez, *You've Got a Friend* by Carole King, *With a Little Help from my Friends* by the Beatles, *Dream On* by Aerosmith, and *Hero* by Enrique Iglesias. He also sings this song in Spanish, and you can compare the rhythm patterns. For homework, students choose another song of their choice, download the lyrics, and mark the stressed words.

You should soon see a remarkable difference in the projection, clarity, and confidence of your students!

Some of these activities have been adapted by my favorite textbooks for teaching speaking skills:

Well Said 3rd edition by Linda Grant. Heinle/Cengage. ISBN 13: 978-1-4240-0623-0.

Clear Speech 4th edition by Judy Gilbert. Cambridge. ISBN 10: 978-1-107-682955.

Communicate: Strategies for International Teaching Assistants by Smith, Meyers and Burkhardt. Waveland Press. ISBN 13: 978-1-57766-530-4.

Focus on Pronunciation 3 3rd edition by Linda Lane. Pearson/Longman. ISBN-13: 978-0132315005.

Pronunciation Pairs 2nd edition by Ann Baker and Sharon Goldstein. Cambridge. ISBN: 13: 978-0521678087.

- MIDTESOL 2014—High School Essay Contest Winner

MIDTESOL Matters would like to recognize Rachel Chun of Ames High School in Ames, Iowa for her outstanding essay entry into the 2014 High School Essay Contest. Rachel is a sophomore at AHS where she has been involved in Cross Country and Choir since coming to Iowa in February 2014 from South Korea. Her writing on the importance of being open-minded and humble, which won the 2014 competition appears in its entirety on the following pages.



From Left: ESL Teacher: Kendall Schulte, MIDTESOL Past President: Shaeley Santiago, Essay Contest Winner: Rachel Chun, & Assistant Principal ,Dr. Mike

The Wise learn from Everyone

By Rachel Chun

Actually, I am not such a wise person. A wise person will learn from anyone, but I was not kind of a person having flexible thinking and mental attitude who looks for what's worth learning from anyone and then corrects my shortcomings accordingly, but rather who was

surprised and upset when I was advised from somebody of anything about me or pointed out my shortage that I refused to take the advices and acted on how I felt at the moment.

I have had a friend, who has been the best of the best friends I could ever have in my life. One day, she unexpectedly gave me an advice that I had a part of personality which she thought should better be corrected. It was so sudden and serious to me that I felt bad about her rudeness, and I kept away from her since then without ever doubting even a second whether I had indeed had what's been pointed out by her. Come to think of it, it seems that I was not used back then to listening to somebody's advices of my shortcomings and taking it, because I had thought that what I did would be definitely correct and what I thought of would be always right. I just became angry, thinking how she, as my best of the best friends, could directly say such a thing to me.

In retrospect, what I behaved that way to her at that time was such a foolish behavior because I realized that the

advice she had given to me was right in a way and that it would have taken her some courage to give such a bitter advice for her best friend.

Sometime later after the conflict, I met with her to have some talk and after that I understood what her intention was to say that, how sorry she was to me and how much she had missed me since our break up. She told me she had never imagined that it would have made us break. At that moment I felt ashamed of what I have done to her after having heard her side of the story and that got me thinking a while. I thought that if there would be no longer anyone who wants to advise me to correct my shortcomings or a part of personality for me, then how that would be fearful of and how much worse off I would become. And I saw the importance of listening to others and seriously considering their advice and realized that we should be thankful to be advised from others.

I told my friend that I still need her advice and that I really appreciate her helping me learn that lesson through her hearty opening later to me. And then I asked her just to tell and correct me whenever I do something wrong.

She made me realize that ‘The people should learn from everyone at any moment and that is what the Wise do’, ‘There is no one who just wants to blame you without a good reason’, and ‘Wherever you are, there would be always a person who willingly gives you advices just for your good sake only if you always would like to listen to them’.

I think that one way for us to become a wise person is that we should always be open-minded, have a positive attitude to take anybody’s advices to heart, exert ourselves for following the advices and try to approach everyone else with our cordial and loving heart.

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Call for Submissions in The 2015 Essay Contest

It's time for the next student writer extraordinaire to take their place in the MIDTESOL Hall of Fame by submitting their own High School Essay for the 2015 Contest. This time the contest is open to any ESL student at any level, Elementary, Middle, and High School. The details below will guide you in assisting students with the submission process. Please take special note that the deadline is April 25th and encourage your students to submit their work.

Best ESL Student Essay Award

MIDTESOL is pleased to invite teachers to submit student essays for the Best ESL Student Essay Award.

Eligibility: Must be an ESL student in good academic standing who is enrolled in an ESOL/ELL program in Iowa, Kansas, Nebraska, or Missouri.

Topic: Student essays must relate to this year's conference theme, *The Future is Now: Building Traditions*. What are traditions from your family, culture or home country that you think are important? Which one do you value most? Explain it. Your essay should develop its main points, either by sequence or ways it is expressed. How will you continue this tradition in your future?

Rules and Format:

Each student may submit only one essay.

Essay must be submitted with a cover page, including the following

student name and contact information (phone number, address, email)
school (name, address, phone number)
sponsoring teacher

Essay must be solely the work of the student with limited guidance from others.

Essay must be 500 to 700 words in length; typed (12-point *Times New Roman* font) and double-spaced.

There should be no identifying information listed on any pages of the essay. This includes any mention of name or school.

The deadline is April 25.

Failure to abide by any of the above conditions will result in immediate disqualification.

Judging: Essays undergo blind peer review.

Scoring Criteria: Essays are scored on content, organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanics. In short, judges look for writing that is clear, creative, articulate, and logically organized.

Awards: The selected recipient will be awarded \$100. His/her name, photo, and school affiliation will be published in the ensuing issue of *MIDTESOL Matters*, the organization's electronic newsletter. Additional awards include one second place award of \$50 and one third place award of \$25.

To apply, submit essay, including cover page, to Denise Mussman (denise@umsl.edu), *MIDTESOL Awards Chair*, by April 25. The subject line of the email should read "MIDTESOL 2015: Best Student Essay." You will receive confirmation from the Awards Chair that your submission has been received and a notification if you are an award recipient by May 25. Please note that essays will not be returned. All applicant information will be kept confidential. Decisions made by reviewers are final.

Contact Us

Reach us with any questions about MIDTESOL

Visit us on the web at www.midtesol.org



MIDTESOL's new Membership Benefits Through CVENT

Last year, your executive board made an important decision to bring our organization into the digital age and make being a MIDTESOL member easier and more beneficial! We purchased a contract with CVENT, an event and membership management system which allows you to register and pay for conferences and memberships all online – no more need to print, write checks, use envelopes, or spend money on stamps! Of course, if you prefer to use postal mail to send us fees, we are still glad to accept checks through the mail, although we do require membership registration be completed online.

Major benefits of this new system include:

- ◆ it puts your membership and registration information at your fingertips. You will always have access to your membership history;
- ◆ the system will remind you when it's time to renew!
- ◆ You can see a record of each conference you have attended starting from October 2013, including workshop sessions.
- ◆ A page highlighting member benefits on the membership website
- ◆ You will find a code to use for a discount on your first TESOL International membership!

Finally, it provides you with a membership directory, from which you can easily contact colleagues that you have met at our conferences. We hope that you have already found the system to be helpful. If you have any questions about using the system or discover any issues that need to be solved, please feel free to contact Paula Moore, Past-President and Marketing Co-editor: paulamoore@missouristate.edu .

About our Organization

MIDTESOL is a professional organization, an affiliate of International TESOL, whose goal is to support teachers and enhance the teaching of English to Speakers of Other Languages.

MIDTESOL Matters is a quarterly publication and is distributed to subscribers and dues-paying members of MIDTESOL. Articles, Teaching Tips, and Reviews are welcome from all members. The editor reserves the right to edit for space, clarity, or editorial balance. Materials published in MIDTESOL Matters become the property of MIDTESOL and could be shared with other TESOL affiliate organizations.

Expressed opinions do not necessarily reflect the views of MIDTESOL, TESOL, or

Our Mission

The mission of Mid-America Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages is to strengthen the effective teaching of English in Iowa, Kansas, and Missouri to people whose native language is a language other than English while respecting their individual language rights. As a regional affiliate of TESOL and a professional organization, MIDTESOL:

- Supports those involved with English language teaching, teacher education, administration and management, curriculum and materials design, and research;
- Provides leadership and direction through the dissemination and exchange of information and resources;
- Encourages access to the standards for English language instruction, professional preparation, and employment

