

Summer 2022

MIDTESOL Matters

*The Mid-America
TESOL Affiliate Newsletter*



*Grinter Sunflower Farm near
Lawrence, Kansas*



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and more....

“MIDTESOL 2022 will offer us the opportunity to think outside the box, to be creative, and to come up with new ways of approaching our teaching and leading.”

**Carolyn Heacock
MIDTESOL 2022
Conference Chair**



MIDTESOL Matters

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A Letter from the President

Kaylene Sasse
MIDTESOL President
Bellevue University
ESL Program Director
Associate Professor
Bellevue, Nebraska



My dear colleagues,

Warmest greetings during a very warm summer!

My term as President marches quickly on—and will be over before I know it. If I were to follow the example of our most recent U.S. Presidents, I think this would be the place and time for me to wax eloquent about all that *“I” have accomplished* over the past months as your senior MIDTESOL leader. But the truth is, it was not me who accomplished everything. I have enjoyed and continue to enjoy working with my team—the full collection of individuals who serve on our board and have helped me find answers to questions and confirm easier and harder decisions. Together, over the past year, (among other things) we have integrated some new board members, finalized an updated MIDTESOL mission statement for member approval, started to rework methods by which communications are put forth to our members, worked through applications and issued appropriate travel awards for TESOL 2022 when the board member who would normally lead that process had to step down from those duties, and made great strides in preparing for our fall 2022 conference—where we will once again be able to meet in person! A hundred thanks to my fellow board members for working independently and together to help me ensure these things got done.

When I stepped into the role of President, one of my main goals was to help increase our membership numbers, to try and lift them back up toward our high points prior to the disruptions of the past two years. Looking at recently-reported numbers, I am thankful to see that, while we have not grown a lot, at least we’ve maintained and grown a little during recent trying times. I still consider this to be a very positive thing and progress in a time when many workplaces and organizations have taken greater blows. I trust that we will continue to grow as individual professionals and maintain growing minds and hopeful hearts as we emerge from previous limitations and muddle through trying economic times. As our upcoming conference theme suggests: may we move onwards and upwards to only emerge stronger through the end of this MIDTESOL fiscal year and into the year ahead.

I greatly look forward to our gathering in September. I hope to see as many of your as possible in Kansas City. Please invite your friends and colleagues to join us as well.

With hope,

Kaylene Sasse
#MIDTESOL2022 President



Kelly McClendon
MIDTESOL Past President
Coordinator/Lecturer, Intensive
English Program
Washburn University
Topeka, Kansas

A Message from the Past President

Hello! Here are some thoughts from me as the outgoing past president...

This has been a rollercoaster journey from Vice President to President to Past President from 2019 to 2022! I really have enjoyed being a leader of MIDTESOL mainly because of the people involved. We have great colleagues here at MIDTESOL!

I would really like to encourage all of you who are even slightly interested in getting more involved, to take a step and **volunteer at the conference** or even **submit your name for a board position**. You will gain colleagues, friends, and develop professionally in a way you wouldn't have before. Please do not think that you are not qualified or should have more experience before you step up. The future of MIDTESOL really is in your hands and together we can continue to provide relevant professional development and current information in addition to support for each other in this field at this time of recovery from world events and rebuilding.

Please consider open positions on the board as chair of the Program Administrators Interest Section, chair of the Community College/Adult Education Interest Section, Treasurer, and Vice President. In addition, there will be Interest Section meetings where more positions within each one might be needed. The conference is coming up in September and MIDTESOL needs an outgoing person to take charge of greeting at the conference in the form of an Atmosphere Coordinator. If you would rather do planning and details, we will need a Registration Coordinator.

Please email me at kellymcclendon@midtesol.org if you would like any information.

Best regards,

Kelly McClendon

#MIDTESOL2022 Past President

Join the MIDTESOL Team!

Open Positions (starting at conference time, 2022)

Are you looking for a way to make an impact while gaining experience, serving the profession, building your C.V., and expanding your network by collaborating with a diverse group of English language teaching professionals? MIDTESOL has several open board positions to be filled yet this year. Please reach out to Kelly McClendon (kellymclendon@midtesol.org) to indicate your interest or with any questions.

Vice President (3-year commitment: Vice President goes on to serve as MIDTESOL President and Past President in subsequent years) [In striving for equal representation on the Board of MIDTESOL's four states, the state of the holder of this position rotates. This year we are looking for someone from MISSOURI to run for the Vice Presidential slot.]

Treasurer (3-year term)

Rules and Resolutions Chair (3-year term)

Awards Committee Chair (3-year term)

Program Administrators (PAIS) Interest Section Chair (term length decided by Interest Section, often 1 year)

Community College/Adult Education Interest Section Chair (term length decided by Interest Section, often 1 year)



MIDTESOL 2022 (September 23-24) in Kansas City!

#MIDTESOL22 Conference

[Registration is now open](#) for the MIDTESOL 2022 conference! MIDTESOL 2022 will be in person once again and will focus on the theme ***Emerging Stronger: Leading Positive Change in ELT Education***. There will be opportunities to network with and learn from colleagues as well as enjoy a wide variety of things to see and do in Kansas City's famous Plaza district.

MIDTESOL 2022 will offer us the opportunity to think outside the box, to be creative, and to come up with new ways of approaching our teaching and leading. At MIDTESOL 2022, you will be able to benefit from the insights others have gained during these strenuous times and, through sessions and networking opportunities, you will have an opportunity to share your insights with others. By coming together and learning from one another, we can positively impact our students, one another and our field.



Join us for #MIDTESOL22! (Info at a Glance)

Theme: **Emerging Stronger: Leading Positive Change in ELT Education**

Dates: Friday-Saturday, September 23-24, 2022

Location: InterContinental Kansas City at the Plaza, 401 Ward Pkwy,
Kansas City, MO

Session Types:

The conference will offer presentations on practical and research-oriented topics as well as workshops, round-table discussions, and poster sessions. In addition, many opportunities for networking will be included and exhibitors will be onsite so you can connect with them face-to-face and learn about available resources.

Featured Speakers: Dr. Wayne Wright (author and ESL specialist), Ahmad Baset Azizi (refugee advocate), Roger Rosenthal (immigration legal specialist), and Lee Perez (Nebraska's 2022 Teacher of the Year)

Bookmark the [MIDTESOL Website](#) for more details about the conference. Information will be updated as it's available.

Early bird discounts for registration are available until **August 30**.

Read on for more conference details!

CONFERENCE INFORMATION (for planning your MIDTESOL 2022 experience)

MIDTESOL 2022 Featured Speakers

Ahmad Baset Azizi – Friday Lunch Invited Speaker

Ahmad Baset Azizi earned bachelor's degrees in Political Science, Global & International Studies, and Music with minors in Intelligence & National Security Studies and Middle East Studies from the University of Kansas. He was born in Afghanistan. During his sixteen years in Kabul and his music career, he has performed for both President Hamid Karzai and President Ashraf Ghani on multiple occasions. He has performed for ministers, government officials, and diplomats in multiple embassies, such as the embassies of the United States, the United Kingdom, Germany, Australia, France, Denmark, and Sweden in Kabul. He received the Musical Ambassador Award from the 10th Mountain Division Band in Kabul, Afghanistan. He also received the Award for Excellence from the United States Army Band, "Pershing's Own," after performing a concert with the Army Band in Washington, DC, and laying a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Arlington National Cemetery to honor the U.S. Veterans of the War in Afghanistan on September 11th, 2021. Baset served as a legislative intern in the United States Congress. It does not matter what the future holds for Baset because he says he wants to plant trees so that future generations can enjoy their fruits. His purpose in life is to live to make a difference for others because we are living when we make a difference and put a smile on others' faces. Otherwise, solely living for ourselves is merely surviving in this world without appreciating the gift of life. His mission is to educate people to accept one another with all our unique and beautiful differences.



Wayne Wright – Saturday Lunch Plenary Speaker



Dr. Wayne E. Wright serves Purdue University as the Associate Dean for Research, Graduate Programs and Faculty Development, Professor, and the Barbara I. Cook Chair of Literacy and Language in the College of Education. He received his Ph.D. in Educational Leadership and Policy Studies from Arizona State University. He earned his M.A. in Language, Literacy and Learning as well as his B.A. in Liberal Studies from California State University Long Beach. Besides Purdue University, Dr. Wright has taught in Higher Education at University of Texas at San Antonio, Arizona State University, Mesa Community College, and Northern Arizona University. He also was a Bilingual and ESL Teacher for the Long Beach Unified School District. He has authored several books, including *Foundations for Teaching English Language Learners: Research, Theory, Policy and Practice*, as well as numerous journal articles. His current research focuses on effective language and literacy instruction for ELLs, professional development of bilingual and ELL teachers, and bilingual education programs in Cambodia.

Roger Rosenthal – Workshop Leader

Roger C. Rosenthal, an attorney, is the Executive Director of the Migrant Legal Action Program (MLAP) in Washington, D.C. MLAP is a non-profit, non-governmental support and advocacy center representing migrant and seasonal farmworkers and immigrants and their families nationwide. He also serves as Executive Consultant to the National Association of State Directors of Migrant Education (NASDME) and some years ago served for two years as the Co-Chair of the national Hispanic Education Coalition. Mr. Rosenthal is widely recognized as one of the foremost legal experts in the country regarding the rights of immigrant children and English Learners in the public schools. He has extensive experience training in this area of expertise around the country, in all regions, and at the national level. He is also an expert on the basics of U.S. immigration policy. Mr. Rosenthal is known for being able to explain complex issues in a straightforward manner that is easy to absorb. Through his many years of service, he has gained a great deal of experience with practical issues involving the implementation of ESL/ESOL and other education programs.



Lee Perez – Invited Speaker



Lee Perez teaches English as a Second Language (ESL) to fifth through eight grade students at the Alice Buffett Magner Middle School in Omaha. He was named the 2022 Nebraska Department of Education’s Teacher of the Year. Mr. Perez is the first male Latino English as a Second Language teacher to receive this award. His personal journey from his childhood in North Platte, Nebraska, to becoming a high successful teacher is one that fits the MIDTESOL 2022 conference theme well. In his life, Mr. Perez has **emerged stronger** by overcoming obstacles, demonstrating resilience, persevering through difficult times, and finding ways to help educate his students in powerful and effective ways. Along with teaching, Mr. Perez is the head coach for his school’s boys’ cross-country team and assistant coach for the girls’ track and field team, where he can model hard work and dedication outside the classroom. Mr. Perez also serves on the Nebraska Department of Education Commissioner’s Advisory Group, the Nebraska State Education Association Ethnic Minority Affairs Committee and the National Education Association’s Teachers of Color cohort.



MIDTESOL 2022 Scheduled Events

Friday Night Hosted Dinners

If you are looking for an opportunity to meet others and network over a relaxing dinner, sign up to participate in the Friday Night Hosted Dinners. A list of MIDTESOL hosts and participating restaurants within walking distance of the hotel will be provided. All you need to do is sign up and meet your group in the hotel lobby at 6:00 pm. Everyone is responsible to pay for their own dinner, but the benefits of connecting with other ELT professionals is tremendous.

Tentative Schedule at-a-Glance

Thursday, Sept. 22: Onsite registration and check-in, 5 – 7 pm

Friday, Sept. 23:

- Registration and check-in: 7am – 5 pm
- Continental Breakfast (included with registration): 7:15-8:30 am
- Sessions: 8:30 am – 12pm and 1:30 – 4:30 pm
- Exhibit Hall: 8am – 5 pm
- Lunch (included with registration): 12 pm – 1:30 pm
Invited Speaker: Ahmad Baset Azizi
- Hosted dinners: Meet at 6pm in the hotel lobby (Sign-up lists will be available on the conference registration site and at the registration area in the hotel.)

Saturday, Sept. 24:

- Registration and check-in: 7am – 12 pm
- Continental Breakfast (included with registration): 7:15-8:30 am
- Sessions: 8:30 am – 12pm and 1:30 pm – 4:30 pm
- Exhibit Hall: 8am – 5 pm
- Lunch (included with registration): 12 pm – 1:30 pm
Plenary Speaker: Dr. Wayne Wright

MIDTESOL 2022 Fees

Registration Fees

MIDTESOL members get a significant discount on the conference rate. In fact, the annual membership fee plus the early-bird rate for the conference is less than the non-member fee. If you aren't a member, consider [joining MIDTESOL today](#).

Early Bird Rates (register by August 30, 2022)

- Student & Paraprofessional Member: \$129
- Student & Paraprofessional Non-Member: \$160
- Professional Member: \$229
- Professional Non-Member: \$280

Regular Registration Rates (for registration August 31 – September 21, 2022)

- Student & Paraprofessional Member: \$229
- Student & Paraprofessional Non-Member: \$280
- Professional Member: \$249
- Professional Non-Member: \$299

Onsite Registration for all attenders: \$319

See the MIDTESOL Website for a description of various conference registration awards available to a limited number of MIDTESOL members through an application process.

Included in registration

- Access to all in-person sessions
- Access to pre-recorded sessions online after the conference
- Breakfasts, lunches, and morning and afternoon refreshments
- Free hotel parking for all conference participants
- Complimentary Wi-Fi throughout the hotel

[Register Now](#) for MIDTESOL 2022

MIDTESOL 2022 Hotel Information

Hotel: InterContinental Kansas City at the Plaza, 401 Ward Parkway, Kansas City, Missouri
MIDTESOL 2022 will take place at the iconic InterContinental Kansas City at the Plaza Hotel with views of the renowned Country Club Plaza and its iconic fountains and architecture.

- The hotel is offering a **reduced rate** to MIDTESOL attenders who use [THIS LINK](#) to book hotel rooms by August 30, 2022. Click “Book Now” and enter the conference dates.
- Key hotel amenities:
 - **Complimentary Wi-Fi** in guest rooms and throughout the conference spaces
 - **Free hotel parking** for conference participants (a \$20 per day value)
 - **Live music** in the lounge area in the evenings
 - **Indoor fitness center**
 - Paved **walking path** along the scenic river right outside the hotel doors

MIDTESOL 2022 Kansas City Information

Kansas City Tourism Information

Escape for a little evening or post-conference fun or make the conference weekend a KC event for the entire family!

Country Club Plaza: The Country Club Plaza is famous for its Spanish-inspired architecture, dozens of fountains, unique shopping opportunities and a wide variety of restaurants, from simple bistros to elegant dining establishments. As you stroll through 15 beautiful city blocks, you will be able to shop for trendy designer brands and the best of Kansas City’s locally made products.

Art lovers are in for a special treat! The hotel is also within a mile of two world-famous art museums. In addition, Kansas City's 91st Annual **Plaza Art Fair** is taking place September 23-25!

Dining Options

- [Country Club Plaza Dining](#)
- [Eat KC: The Country Club Plaza](#)

Shopping Options near the hotel

- [Plaza Art Fair, September 23-25, 2022](#)
- [Country Club Plaza Shopping Guide](#)

Museums within a mile of the hotel

- [The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art](#)
- [Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art](#)
- [The National Museum of Toys and Miniatures](#)

Other Kansas City Highlights

- [Kansas City Royals](#) are playing 3 home games during the conference weekend:
 - vs. Seattle Mariners, Friday, Sept. 23 at 7:10 pm
 - vs. Seattle Mariners, Saturday, Sept. 24 at 6:10 pm
 - vs. Seattle Mariners, Sunday, Sept. 25 at 1:10 pm
- [Worlds of Fun](#)

[Register Now](#) for MIDTESOL 2022

See you at MIDTESOL 2022!

Best regards from the MIDTESOL 2022 Conference Planning Committee:

Conference Chair Carolyn Heacock (University of Kansas)
Program Chair Ben Vilkas (Wayne State College in Wayne, NE)
Exhibitor Coordinator Abdulsamad Humaidan (Southern Illinois University)
Communications Chair Vicki Anderson (Concordia University Nebraska)

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Reports from TESOL Travel Award Recipients!

MIDTESOL provided support for a number of MIDTESOL members to attend the TESOL 2022 Convention. This edition of MIDTESOL Matters features reports from Amy Alice Chastain and Patrick T. Randolph.

FROM AMY ALICE CHASTAIN

TESOL International Association Annual Convention (in-person!!!) 2022 was a true roller coaster of emotions for me. Anyone who knows me knows that I consider attending TESOL on par with attending a family reunion as that is what I have found in this organization during my time in this rewarding, challenging field. This year was certainly no different and yet it was also a bitter sweet reminder of all that we have lost and experienced—and gained—in the three years that had passed since the last time TESOL was held face-to-face in Atlanta, GA.

On Monday, I arrived late in Pittsburgh and was greeted first by my roommate, a dear colleague from Italy whom I first met at TESOL Toronto and have presented with on three continents since and roomed with now multiple times at annual conventions. The next morning at the Leadership forum and luncheon, I was met with more faces (though many of them new to leadership with the number of years and election cycles we have seen since the onset of virtual meetings and conferences) and the challenge of discerning which were familiar due to masking and the passage of time, which has affected us all. Finally at the end of the forum, I saw the familiar Kelly McLendon top center of the screen when, through the power of technology, leadership brought those of us in the room together with those joining from around the world! We texted our hellos and the warmth was evident even through the distance.

The tone and content of these meetings was quite unlike years past and rather than serving largely as receivers of updates and information, we were called upon to provide feedback, ideas, critique and reflection. TESOL leadership was and is seeking a path to greater relevance, to playing a more integral role in professional development and support, and to identifying the tools and mechanisms to streamline accessibility and convenience for our profession in a changing field in tenuous times. This positionality feels different somehow, so I challenge you all to remember that, as a member, TESOL is your organization and your voice matters. Make it heard.

Wednesday began in a most unusual, unprecedented way as I attended the first memorial service to be held as part of the TESOL program. A dear colleague, among others, Lynne Diaz-Ricco passed away shortly after we would have met in Denver. She was a fixture within the Intercultural Communication Interest Section (ICIS) at every convention and was to have been on a panel with ICIS in Denver. Her passion for all humans, from all backgrounds, and her connection with and inclusion of greater cultural and spiritual ritual and practices, especially those of indigenous peoples, was inspiring. She drew people in. She made people feel seen and appreciated. You can read ICIS tributes to her here:

<http://newsmanager.commpartners.com/tesolicis/issues/2021-01-26/5.html>

The inclusion, for the first time, of this memorial in TESOL was a welcome one and provided a safe space to mourn for a number of us in attendance and to acknowledge the place that many of us hold for our colleagues in this organization—like family. It was inclusive of many traditions and rituals around mourning and loss and celebration of lives well-lived. It was also where I first reunited and hugged my dear Ukrainian colleague that I have also collaborated and served alongside professionally for many years. This was the first of many emotionally-charged hugs, accompanied by tears, tears that held a multitude of emotions—sorrow, pain, comfort, joy, relief, uncertainty, love.

My time in the memorial was extremely brief as it overlapped with my own panel where, aptly, I spoke about the importance and value of community in our field and for our professional development. In community, we are able to take more control of our own professional development; we can do this through forming diverse groups of teachers and practitioners and sharing informal, reciprocal conversations that remove rank, hierarchy, cultural or racialized privileging and create beneficial dialogue where new ideas are shared and inspire still more creative solutions. It is important that we make room for everyone at the proverbial table—whether our colleagues or our students. We all must feel valued, heard, welcomed, seen, supported. One such forum, TTELT Talks, happens every last Saturday of the month, hosted by members of Educators Worldwide. To join the conversations, register here: <https://www.ttel.org/p/events/>

The most moving, inspirational moment of the TESOL International Association Convention was the Thursday morning plenary delivered by the "SLOP" (Second lady of Pennsylvania), Gisele Barreto Fetterman: Invisible Immigrant to Advocate. I knew I would love her when I read that she was a self-proclaimed hugger like me! This is how her bio read for this event:

Gisele Barreto Fetterman is an access and equity advocate, a hugger, and the Second Lady of Pennsylvania. She is the founder of Freestore 15104, where surplus and donated goods are distributed to neighbors in need; cofounder of [412 Food Rescue](#), a community-wide effort to end hunger and reduce food waste; and cofounder of [FOR GOOD PGH](#), a nonprofit that works to advocate inclusion and inspire kindness. Gisele was born in Brazil and emigrated as a child to the United States, living as an undocumented immigrant for over a decade. Her work has been featured in the TODAY Show, CNN, NPR and more. Gisele is a Forty under 40 honoree, a Tedx Speaker, and a Jefferson Awards recipient.

If you missed it and have virtual access to the convention, go back and take the time to view it. If you have not attended TESOL International, seek out an opportunity to be inspired by this amazing human achieving transformative things in community.

During the week at TESOL International Association Annual Convention, we were reminded that we are stronger together; we challenge one another, inspire one another and hold one another accountable for our

personal and professional well-being. Thank you, MIDTESOL, for awarding me a travel grant which enabled me to attend and be enriched by this experience, both personally and professionally.

Amy Alice Chastain
Associate Professor of Instruction
ESL Programs
University of Iowa
MIDTESOL Past President, 2018-2019

FROM PATRICK T. RANDOLPH

**TESOL 2022 International Convention & English Language Expo:
A Reflection on Observations and Insights**



“You can’t stop the waves, but you can learn to surf.”

—Jon Kabat-Zinn

A Look Back and A Note of Gratitude

One of the valuable lessons that life frequently teaches us is not to take people, places, or things for granted. No better example of this was the assumption that the TESOL International Convention or the numerous worldwide TESOL Affiliate Conferences would always be in person. Why wouldn’t they be? Then, the 2020 Armageddon-like phenomenon hit the TESOL world and everyone else on the globe. Soon after, human contact was limited to computer screens and phone calls—gatherings of friends and family, colleagues and co-workers disappeared. These gatherings became mere memories of a time longed for like no other. News channels featured street images of Chicago, New York City, Istanbul, Madrid, Milan, and Tokyo that looked like scenes from a science-fiction film with only one or two people present on the sidewalks. Even taxis seemed non-existent.

Many teachers wondered if we would ever have in-person conferences again. Lesson learned: Appreciate what you have and do not take life or its simple treasures for granted. So, this year's semi-return-to-normal TESOL International Convention in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, was a blessing, indeed.

We have slowly moved from completely online conventions and conferences to hybrids—half online and half in person. Despite being far from what once was, this year's TESOL International Convention was ever so sweet. If you attended in person as I did, you could see familiar faces: Amy from Iowa, Deany from Missouri, Michael from Maryland, and Bob from Florida. In addition, I finally got to meet a number of Instagram and YouTube friends from around the world who I have been in contact with since the teaching profession went completely online. And, once again, the TESOL concurrent sessions were full of real human contact where laughter, questions, comments, and smiles could be felt with both nostalgia and a sense of true gratitude and appreciation. The song of the immediate, physical human voice touching the human ear was never so dear.

Before I look back on the Convention, I would first like to genuinely thank the MIDTESOL Board for offering me the travel award of \$500 to cover a portion of my convention expenses. It was truly an honor and a privilege to represent the MIDTESOL organization. The funds helped immensely, and I am grateful. I would like to express my thanks with a smile and also let MIDTESOL know that they were represented by one very busy and enthusiastic member.

Seven Presentations: A True Passion

I was originally scheduled to give nine talks—a TESOL record for presentations. However, two colleagues could not attend the convention due to vaccine issues or conflicting schedules and transportation costs, so two of the talks were unfortunately cancelled. I, however, still gave seven presentations, which was an unofficial record number of talks for one speaker. At first, I wondered if giving so many presentations was a wise decision, but then I recalled the philosophy of Viktor E. Frankl. He was a holocaust survivor who went on to develop the humanistic practice of *logotherapy*. He believed that the primary drive we all have is to find meaning and purpose; it is meaning that gives us a genuine sense of purpose to live and live a fulfilling life (Frankl, 2006). In his books and lectures, Frankl often quoted Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's insight that "[i]f you treat an individual as he is, he will remain how he is. But if you treat him as if he were what he ought to be and could be, he will become what he ought to be and could be." In short, we are responsible for pushing ourselves beyond our self-prescribed limitations; and, in doing so, we will become the best versions of ourselves.

I am often told that I expect too much from my English language learners (ELLs) and that I am overly idealistic. But it is only in being idealistic and encouraging them to find their magic and meaning that I am able to elicit the best from them. Semester after semester, I have found that if I inspire and motivate my students to climb up the symbolic mountain, they will. And, perhaps most important, they will feel all the better for having done so. To that end, I pushed myself to prepare and give seven presentations, and what a wonderful experience it was. I told my wife that the difference between me and many others is the following: When I am at TESOL or other conferences, I often hear the comment, "Thank God! I'm done with my presentation. Now, I can relax." With me, however, it is, "Oh, no! I just finished my last presentation! When can I give another one?" My passion is presenting and offering ideas to others. This is what gives me meaning and pleasure as a human being and as an educator.

Moreover, it had been two years since my last in-person talk, so I figured I would make up for lost time and present as many talks and workshops as I could. The presentations I gave at TESOL this year are listed below with the titles and their short abstracts. If the reader would like a PowerPoint from any of the presentations,

please feel free to contact me. There are also versions of some of these talks that are available on my Teaching and Learning YouTube Channel. You can find these and other educational videos at **Patrick T. Randolph**: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCY1nnTeRVsus0RAKCFsXa8Q>.

Presentation Titles and Abstracts

Wednesday: March 23, 2022

Creating a Healthy Spirit: Mindfulness Ideas and Activities for Teachers

Conference presentations usually focus on students, but teachers also need encouragement and motivation. This energetic session discusses the psychological, cognitive, and physical benefits of mindfulness, and demonstrates four insightful mindfulness activities that guarantee to help teachers find joy and inspiration in their daily life, in- and outside the language classroom.

A Brain-Based Approach for Acquiring Vocabulary: Movement, Mindfulness, and Music

This innovative session introduces embodied semantics as a new approach to teach vocabulary through using movement, mindfulness, and music. The method allows ELLs to personalize and internalize lexical items at a heightened level. Participants learn the method and practice it to help their ELLs use vocabulary with ease and enthusiasm.

Thursday: March 24, 2022

Using Neuroscience to Support Creative Writing for English Language Learners

This workshop marries neuroscience and creative writing. Recent research shows that creative writing is the most beneficial type of writing for ELLs in order to develop their analytical thinking and their writing skills. The presenter examines neuroscience research and offers writing activities that develop the necessary academic skills for ELLs.

Music and Movement: Cheerfully Solidifying Vocabulary in the Long-Term Memory

This fun session demonstrates how to use song lyrics and movement in concert with discoveries in neuroscience to help ELLs learn vocabulary. This activity can be used for all ages and at all levels of instruction. Participants learn about the brain-based concepts and practice the music and movement method.

Overcoming Burnout: Livening Up Your Teaching Career with Professional Development

Have the recent world events demotivated your sense of enthusiasm for teaching? If so, these tips will revitalize your spirit by offering a number of inspiring and easy-to-implement ideas for professional development and personal growth. These career enhancing ideas will most certainly reawaken your love for both teaching and learning.

Friday: March 25, 2022

Developing Critical Analysis: Introducing the One-Point Multi-Skills Analysis

This hands-on session introduces participants to a practical, useful, and effective multifaceted critical analysis that is a refreshing alternative to the research paper. Participants are carefully guided through the six steps of the analysis and provided with helpful student examples for each step. Analysis guidelines and grading rubrics are available.

Using Peer-to-Peer Observations for Professional Development and Personal Growth

This session introduces a refreshing and productive peer observation method that moves away from punitive evaluations and focuses on peer observations that foster and promote both professional development and personal growth. The results of these observations can be used for annual reviews, teaching portfolios, improved pedagogy, and mindful self-reflection.

My Sessions and Testimonials

TESOL International usually has between 6,000 to 8,000 attendees at its annual conventions. This year, however, it was a hybrid convention, and a number of the attendees chose to attend virtually from their homes or offices. Unfortunately, for them, they did not have access to the in-person sessions. They were limited to the pre-recorded, non-interactive sessions and the keynote speakers. Those who chose to attend TESOL in person had access to both the online pre-recorded sessions as well as the live concurrent sessions. That said, there were only 1,800 in-person attendees at the TESOL International Convention this year, so the hallways were not packed with participants as in years past. But, at least TESOL slowly moved back to normal.

I was able to reach over 200 participants through my presentations. The fact that there were fewer attendees at TESOL was apparent, but the enthusiasm and energy were at full force. I had many lively, inquisitive, and cheerful participants at my sessions. The 2022 TESOLers were happy to be back in person—there was no doubt about that. And, the fruits of my labor were appreciated by those who attended my presentations. I was overjoyed to receive comments like the following from experienced and novice teachers alike:

“Thank you, Patrick, for making TESOL so much fun with your presentations.”

“Your sessions, by far, were the most memorable. We loved them.”

“I have missed attending your sessions. Thanks for the energy.”

“I want to use your vocabulary method next week. It makes so much sense.”

I was also encouraged to discover that a Big Ten university will soon implement some of my ideas for their annual teacher observations. The new director of their Intensive English Program found my talk, “Using Peer-to-Peer Observations for Professional Development and Personal Growth,” to be exactly what he was looking for in order to create a “non-stressful teacher observation platform” for his instructors. After my talk, he and I discussed how essential it is to transform these class observations into enjoyable learning experiences

versus punitive ones that do not inspire or motivate the teachers. I will be interested to see how they implement my ideas and how the method helps their faculty.

The Exhibitors' Hall

Again, during a typical TESOL Convention, the Exhibitors' Hall is full of thousands of teachers and administrators, teacher trainers and private tutors, graduate students and teachers-in-training. Some exhibitors used to offer wine, cheese, and complimentary books to the attendees. There used to be hundreds of free giveaways available—everything from stuffed animals to frisbees. Those days are temporarily gone. There were free pens and water bottles, but you felt the presence of cutbacks everywhere.

If we take just a brief look back at the TESOL 2018 International Convention in Chicago, Illinois, there were 102 exhibitors in the Exhibition Hall. In 2019, in Atlanta, Georgia, the number dropped to 80. This year at TESOL, there were only 40 exhibitors! What once took almost an entire football field to accommodate the exhibitors has been decreased to the size of a mere end zone. If you blinked while crossing the bridge over the Exhibitors' Hall, you would have literally missed it.

Still, many of my preferred textbook and teaching material companies were there. I also noted that some companies consolidated with others. For instance, two of my all-time favorite companies recently merged: *Language Arts Press*, formerly based out of Maryland, and *Pro Lingua Associates* from Vermont joined forces and are now called *Pro Lingua Learning*. This company has a number of wonderful resources for teachers and students. Please check out their website at <https://www.prolingualearning.com>.

The Sessions I Attended

Despite my busy presentation schedule, I was fortunate enough to attend a number of insightful and helpful sessions. The particular presentations that stand out in my mind all dealt with one of the most useful tools we have as language educators—creative writing!

The sessions that drew my attention all focused on the significance of writing and studying poetry. For decades, I have used creative writing in my language classes, and I have set up different creative writing workshops and seminars at various Intensive English Programs in both the States and abroad. I have experienced how creative writing, perhaps more than any other kind of writing, helps students develop their language skills—from beginning to advanced ELLs (Randolph, 2012). So, I understand and know the value of poetry, flash-fiction, prose, dialogues, and creative non-fiction. I was very happy to see that MIT is also a serious proponent of creative writing, and the director there promotes it with great enthusiasm.

The three specific talks that I attended and would like to highlight are “Massaging the Shoulders of Giants: Scaffolding for L2 Writers,” “A Differentiated Way of Teaching Poetry to ELs,” and “Teachers’ Perceptions of Poetry Instruction for ELs and Their Practices.” The first talk was based on a class given at MIT that focuses on reading and writing poetry. The presenter demonstrated how the use of Shakespeare and Dr. Seuss’s work can assist in providing effective scaffolding for different kinds of poetry and also help in developing the necessary tools such as alliteration, imagery, metaphor, personification, simile, and symbolism. The speaker, then, showed how his ELLs created impressive lines of alliteration and rich imagery in their poems by using literary giants like Langston Hughes, Dr. Seuss, and Shakespeare as constructive models and inspiring mentors. The second talk looked at the importance of teaching poetry because of its profoundly useful and efficacious qualities. That is, various kinds of verse are used in high-stakes testing as well as in helping ELLs enhance their language skills. The presenter discussed how she introduces multiple kinds of poetry and literary devices and then applies these



to both language development and standardized test preparation. The third talk featured current research that the presenter had gathered on how English language teachers perceive poetry and use it in their respective classes. In short, poetry was employed in all three presentations as a creative and analytical tool to help ELLs further their writing, vocabulary, reading, grammar, speaking, listening, error correction, and creative and critical thinking skills.

Concluding Remarks

The night before I left for the TESOL Convention, I was looking at my presentation schedule and took a sudden, audible breath of air. I had a fleeting vision of my first presentation. My mind quickly scanned what the area around my podium would look like: There were my coffee-stained notes, the laptop, a glass of water, and the photo of my family that I always keep near the laptop for inspiration. But I had forgotten one significant item for my talks and workshop. My wife, who knows me better than anyone on God's green earth, was sitting on the other side of the room. When she heard my breath, she said, "Chocolates! You forgot the chocolates for your participants." She knows I always bring chocolates to give away as prizes for the insightful answers and comments during my presentations. I had not presented in person for so long that I had actually forgotten about my beloved sweets. My wife went out the next morning and made sure that I had my chocolates ready for the convention.

Yes, it was splendid to be at TESOL this year—in person and face to face. It was refreshing to hear the mutual laughter in the sessions and learn with people who have one of the most beautiful professions there is—teaching. I do not, however, think I will take these conventions or conferences for granted ever again. I will attend each one with hopes that we are finally on our way back to in-person conferences where we can shake hands with others and feel the warmth of the human smile as we celebrate the joys of teaching and learning, of investigating and discovering the meaning of who and what we are as living, breathing works in progress.

Correspondence concerning this article can be addressed to patricktrandolph@yahoo.com.

Patrick T. Randolph specializes in vocabulary acquisition, creative and academic writing, speech, drama, and debate. Patrick was awarded the "Best of the TESOL Affiliates" in 2018 for his 2016 MIDTESOL presentation on plagiarism. He has also received two "Best of CoTESOL Awards" for his 2017 and 2018 presentations on observation journals and creative writing. In 2021, Patrick received his fifth "Best Session Award" from MinneTESOL (2019-2020), and he has published *New Ways in Teaching with Creative Writing* with Joseph Ruppert. Patrick lives with his wife, Gamze; daughter, Aylene; cat, Gable; and puppy, Bubbles, in Lincoln, Nebraska, USA.

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Images from www.pixabay.com and the Randolphs



A Message from the Socio-Political Concerns Chair

Adrienne Johnson
**MIDTESOL Socio-Political
Concerns & Professional
Standards Chair**

Associate Professor of Education
Missouri Western State University
St. Joseph, Missouri



TESOL 2022 Advocacy Summit News

Greetings MIDTESOL Members!

As we all shift between resting and recovering from a difficult few years to restarting routines that have long been on hold, there is one event that I am personally so glad is back – the TESOL Advocacy Summit! This inspiring and informative event was held virtually, as well as in-person for the first time since 2019, in Washington, D.C., from June 20-22nd.

Because of the transition back to an in-person summit, information for the 2022 TESOL Advocacy Summit was not announced until May, which limited MIDTESOL's ability to participate, but we will be back in D.C. in 2023! *Importantly, did you know that, as a MIDTESOL member, you can also attend this TESOL Advocacy Summit?* Hopefully, TESOL will continue to offer a hybrid version of the Summit, with sessions virtually and in-person. Even if the Summit is entirely in-person, we hope you will consider applying for one of three MIDTESOL Advocacy Awards, which provide funding for MIDTESOL members to attend the Summit in Washington, D.C., gain advocacy skills, and engage in first-hand advocacy experiences on Capitol Hill. If this sounds interesting to you, be sure to follow MIDTESOL through MT Matters newsletters, check the MIDTESOL website (insert link), and follow MIDTESOL on social media (insert social media handles). Announcements about the 2023 TESOL Advocacy Summit and MIDTESOL Advocacy Awards are typically announced in March 2023, with MIDTESOL Award applications due in April 2023. For more information, to connect, or to learn more about how to advocate in your local region, please contact Adrienne Johnson, Sociopolitical and Professional Standards Chair at adriennejohnson@midtesol.org.

2022 TESOL Advocacy Summit Recap and Updates

The TESOL Advocacy Summit includes two days of advocacy training and policy updates, followed by a day of meetings on Capitol Hill with members of Congress. This year's speakers included the TESOL Policy expert and Summit organizer, Jeff Hutcheson, Amber Crowell Kelleher (TESOL Executive Director), Dr. Supreet Anand (Deputy Director for OELA, U.S. Department of Education), Roger Rosenthal (Migrant Legal Action Program), Domminick McParland (OCTAE, U.S. Department of Education), Julie Sugarman (Senior Policy Analyst for PreK-12 Education, Migration Policy Institute's National Center on Immigrant Integration Policy), Lydia Breiseth (Director of Colorín Colorado), and Caroline Treschitta (Policy Analyst, National Skills Coalition), among others. These presentations provided background on the policy recommendations supported by TESOL International Association, as well as tips and hints for effective advocacy.

A major priority for TESOL International continues to be increasing awareness and support for the *Reaching English Learners Act* (H.R. 3779, S. 1963) originally introduced by the Honorable Jim Langevin, a Rhode

Island Congressman. This act is intended to address the shortage of English language teachers by improving EL training for pre-service teachers. As a result of the advocacy work by TESOL members in 2018, this bill has received bipartisan support. Other P-12 and teacher preparation issues that TESOL is supporting include increasing funding for Titles I, II, and III of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), passing the Supporting Providers of English Language Learners (SPELL) Act (H.R. 3830), which increases student loan forgiveness for English language teachers, and establishing a federal grant program to help states implement Seal of Biliteracy programs (Bilingual Education Seal and Teaching “BEST” Act; H.R. 1731, S. 680).

Additional policy priorities this year included asking Congress to increase funding for Title II of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and supporting immigration reform and international education. Specifically, TESOL International is urging Congress to pass bipartisan legislative immigration proposals – the *American Dream and Promise Act of 2021* (H.R. 6) and the *DREAM Act of 2021* (S.264). TESOL International also urges Congress to “establish a national strategy for international education that builds off the Joint Statement of Principles issued on July 26, 2021, by the U.S. Departments of State and Education.” To read about these and other TESOL advocacy priorities, as well as to take steps to show your elected officials which of these priorities you, as their constituent, support, visit TESOL’s Advocacy Action Center at:

<https://www.tesol.org/advance-the-field/tesol-advocacy-action-center>

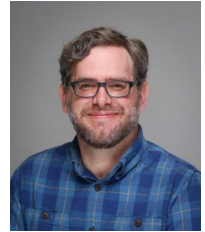
MIDTESOL encourages you to build your advocacy skills, connect with other members, and share your experiences with your elected officials. MIDTESOL is committed to continuing to provide members with the tools you need to share your own stories, issues, and beliefs. To connect with MIDTESOL and share your stories, we invite you to join MIDTESOL’s 2022 Conference in Kansas City from September 23-24, 2022, visit the MIDTESOL Advocacy & Leadership website (<https://midtesol.org/advocacy-leadership/>), or connect with Adrienne Johnson, Sociopolitical and Professional Standards Chair at adriennejohnson@midtesol.org *Don’t forget* – Midterm elections are this fall and local elections shape more of our day to day worlds than federal ones. Please register and vote!!

Connect with MIDTESOL on social media



Members-At-Large State News

MIDTESOL wants to give a hearty shout-out to all the state representatives that serve as members-at-large on the MIDTESOL Board! These representatives are the most direct link between the MIDTESOL organization and the particular needs of your state, working hard to make connections between people and resources in a way that builds us up as professionals and helps our students. Way to go, State Reps!



State Report: Missouri by Phil Bridges



MISSOURI

The English Language Institute at Missouri State University began exploring online courses and support offerings before the COVID-19 pandemic and has embraced the concept, expanding into many offerings since. We offer several programs, both fully online and as online/face-to-face hybrid programs. We have [online and hybrid CELTA](#) teacher training programs and the [Hybrid English & Leadership Immersion Program](#) (HELIP) with 2 weeks online and 2 weeks here in Springfield. For fully online programs, we offer [English Skills in Focus and Academic Research Tutorials](#) for academic tutoring for MSU or other university internationals, **Conversation Circles** twice weekly for an hour in the evening, where international students interact with domestic students and one another, the [Leadership and Oratory Online Program](#) (LOOP) for short-term English and leadership skills development, and [English Connections](#) for studying English as a language for international communication. Let's take a closer look at this last offering.

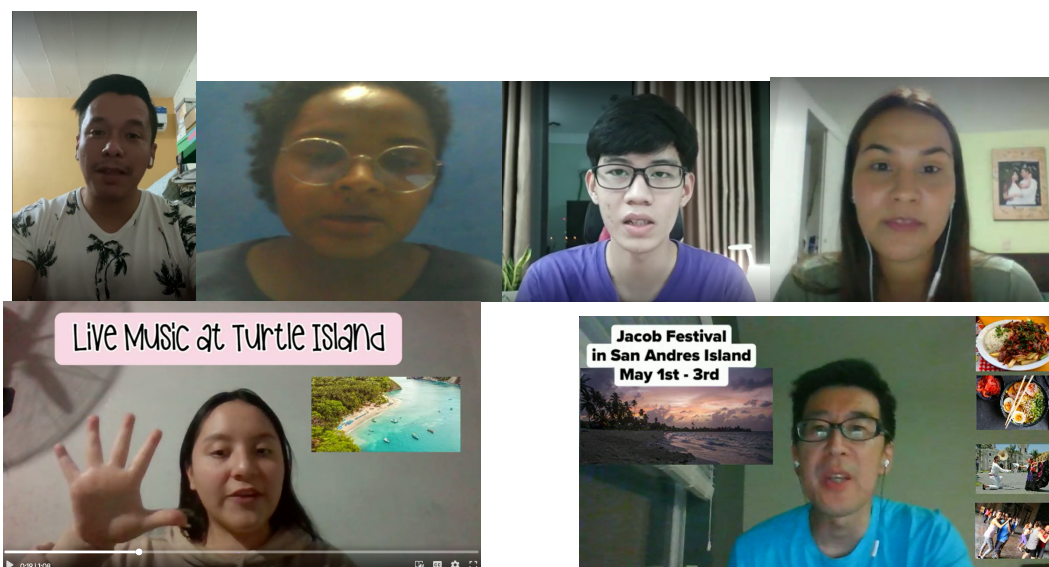


An [English Connections \[EC\]](#) session is 20 hours of an online, synchronous, integrated-skills English class. This means a 2-hour highly interactive class twice a week (Tuesdays and Thursdays) for 5 weeks. Depending on demand, we have level A (CEFR A1-

A2+) and level B (CEFR B1-B2+), and we offer both a 9:00-11:00am Central time slot and a 7:00-9:00pm of each level to catch just about any time zone in the world.

The online interactive textbook and optional practice exercises are included in the price. We negotiated a bulk price for a bank of access codes to [National Geographic Learning World Link](#), and then we assign codes and enroll the students in the NGL class we have created so they have access to materials from day one of the class – no individual publisher payment and class enrollment hassles for the students or instructors. The focus of this program is oral communication and formal assessment is limited. Throughout the session, we use Google [Jamboards](#) and Docs as well as [Padlet](#) for lots of dynamic shared interactivity. We cover two units ending with a unit test and we do a final project that involves a student recording themselves on [Flipgrid](#).

The target audience for EC includes learners who may want to matriculate to Missouri State University someday, but the windfall has been that we are also reaching a whole audience that may never come to the States that we would not have served pre-pandemic. The program has proven attractive to many people from the business world, as well as high school and university students and teachers. For more EC information, contact the program coordinator, Christy Conaway, at cconaway@missouristate.edu.

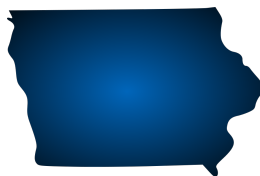


If you have any questions about EC or any of our other online programs, feel free to contact one of us. We would also love to hear about what other IEPs in the region are up to, so please consider coming to the IEP interest section session at the **MIDTESOL22** conference in Kansas City in September to ask questions and share.

ELI at MSU Academic Specialists:

Phil Bridges philbridges@missouristate.edu (MIDTESOL Member-at-Large (Missouri))

& Terry Barakat terrybarakat@missouristate.edu (MIDTESOL member and former President)



State Report: Iowa by Cindra Porter

Some notes from developments in work with English learners in Iowa!

IOWA

K-12 Language Assessment: ELPA21 Summative Assessments

- **ELPA Summative reports** were returned to EL educators and administrators on May 28, 2021. Scores for 20-21 have been uploaded into the state reporting system, EdInsight.
- **Participants were recruited this spring (2021)** for *Collaborative for the Alternate Assessment of English Language Proficiency (CAAELP)*—a four-year (2019–2023) project supported by UCLA’s National Center for Research on Evaluation, Standards, and Student Testing (CRESST). In collaboration with ten states, CAAELP is creating a new, research-based alternate assessment (Alt ELPA) for K–12 students who are English learners with the most significant cognitive disabilities.
- **The Future Kindergarten Screener** was adjusted after voiced concerns that the screener was over-identifying students for Title III support. Future Kindergarten Scoring Rules: The 3333 domain profile to indicate Proficiency will be in effect for the August 3rd opening of the Dynamic Screener. The Individual Student Reports (ISRs) will be reflective of this change. The general Kindergarten Screener will remain a 4444 domain profile to indicate Proficiency. The regular Kindergarten will open January 15. This is a change for SY 2020-1-22. Previously, it had opened the first school day in December.

Upcoming Language Conferences in Iowa:

- **The Iowa World Language Association Conference** (to be held online on October 1-2 [Conference link](#))
- **The MwALT conference** (This conference will be held in Ames, Iowa on October 9th, 2021. The MwALT plenary speaker, Elvis Wagner of Temple University will speak on “Technology and Testing: The Future is Here (Whether We Like it or Not). [Conference link](#))

Recent Iowa Legislation that Impacts Education

HF 605 - ELL Tiered Weighting (Was signed by the Governor April 30, 2022; divides students with limited English proficiency into two categories for purposes of generating ELL supplemental weighting.

[Link to legislation](#)

Current weighted funding for all EL students = .22

Intensive category - generates .26 weighted funding

Intermediate category - generates .21 weighted funding

Categories determined by most recent summative language assessment scores

Approximately 80% of EL students in Iowa were identified in the Intermediate category prior to the 2021 ELPA21 test results.

HF 802 - *“Providing Requirements to Racism or Sexism Training and Diversity and Inclusion Efforts by Governmental Agencies and Entities, School Districts, and Public Postsecondary Institutions.”*

[Link to the legislation](#)

- The Governor signed off on this bill June 8; Higher Education and K-12 Schools are currently analyzing this legislation to better inform how the state’s new guidance will impact teaching and learning actions in affected educational institutions.
- Potential impact on Language field in Iowa relates to topics of intersectionality and identity for students learning English, and the educators who deliver training in this topic area. (Language Policy classes, Lectures, Guest Lectures, Instruction, etc.)

Connect with MIDTESOL on social media





State Update: Kansas by Cara Codney

KANSAS

Greetings from Kansas! As the relatively new Kansas-at-large rep for MIDTESOL, I'll start by giving a little introduction to myself. I am the director of the Intensive English Program at Emporia State University, and I also help with coordinating short term programs for international and domestic students in ESU's Office of International Education. Prior to this I taught as an instructor in ESU's Intensive English Program for 13 years, and I've also advised students in our former MA-TESOL program and taught on assessing language learners for ESU's TESOL endorsement program. I'm also the representative for the Teaching, Learning, and Scholarship (TLS) Knowledge Community for NAFSA Region II.

Like most of our neighbors, education in Kansas has continued to navigate the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, and some recent state legislation related to education has been connected to that. Recently passed bills have created requirements to offer full-time in-person classwork in K-12 schools, along with the usual school finance bills. SB455 also passed, which allows K-12 students to transfer to and attend school in any school district in the state, provided that district has space. SB 455, as amended, would establish a transfer system for nonresident students between unified school districts based upon the student capacity of each unified school district, removing restrictions regarding school districts and allowing students to change school districts by choice. KSDE provides summaries of legislation related to education at <https://www.ksde.org/Agency/Fiscal-and-Administrative-Services/School-Finance/Legislation>. This page also includes a legislative bill tracker to make it easier to follow legislation of interest to educators, as well as a list of bills currently being followed by KDHE.

University of Kansas Center for Educational Opportunity Programs (CEOP) has been awarded a five-year, \$2.44 million project to serve 125 educators, 450 students and 100 families through a partnership with Topeka Public Schools (TPS) by the US Dept. of Ed's Office of English Language Acquisition.

In the coming months, KSDE Summer Academies will be offered throughout Kansas and virtually, including July 12-13 in Garden City and July 19-20 virtually. More information is available at www.greenbush.org/ksde-summer-academies/. On October 29 the World Languages Fair will be hosted by the Open Language Resource Center at the University of Kansas. This is an all-day event for high school students focused on exploring world languages and cultures. More information is available at <https://olrc.ku.edu/wlf>.

I would love to hear about your news and upcoming events, so that I can share them with others. Please contact me at caracodney@midtesol.org. Enjoy your summer!



State Report: Nebraska

The Nebraska Report: English Language Learners, An All-Staff Conference, and A Teaching Tip by Patrick T. Randolph

NEBRASKA

MY PEOPLE

The night is beautiful,
So the faces of my people.

The stars are beautiful,
So the eyes of my people.

Beautiful, also, is the sun.
Beautiful, also, are the souls of my people.

—Langston Hughes

Introduction

In this report, I will first survey the current state of immigrant children and English language learners (ELLs) in Nebraska; next, I will feature a recent conference at the University of Nebraska; and I will conclude with a short teaching tip that focuses on using *Personal Memory Associations* to enhance the encoding, learning, and memory processes for vocabulary acquisition.

I. Immigrant Children and English Language Learners in Nebraska

Nebraska, which means *flat water*, is home to 1.924 million residents. I am always impressed that, like the ever-dynamic Platte River from which Nebraska derives its name, the state welcomes and maintains a steady flow of immigrants from different countries around the globe. For instance, the cities of Grand Island, Kearney, Lincoln, and Omaha are now home to 100 to 150 new families from Afghanistan. As a consequence, the public schools across the state also become homes for a number of recent immigrants and ELLs.

According to the Nebraska Department of Education (2022), the state has 6,122 immigrant children and 24,000 ELLs in the public school system. Immigrant children are defined as those students who are ages three to 21; were not born in any of the 50 states; and have not been enrolled in any schools in the United States for more than three academic years. ELLs are students who are learning English as an additional language. Below (see Table 1) is a breakdown of the current statistics regarding the number of the K-12 immigrant children and

ELLs in the 10 largest cities in Nebraska. These cities are listed by population from largest to smallest. The 10 largest cities in Nebraska are Omaha, Lincoln, Bellevue, Grand Island, Kearney, Fremont, Hastings, Norfolk, Papillion, and North Platte.

Table 1

Number of K-12 Immigrant Children and ELLs in Nebraska

Public School Systems	Number of K-12 Immigrant Children	Number of K-12 ELLs
Omaha	2,900	10,185
Lincoln	601	2,958
Bellevue	73	370
Grand Island	583	1,780
Kearney	29	161
Fremont	301	876
Hastings	63	291
Norfolk	85	229
Papillion	73	232
North Platte	3	82

Current Statistics on Languages Across the State

Our world is rich with numerous languages, and each language adds to the poetry and magic of each culture. The Linguistic Society of America reports that there are currently 6,909 unique languages worldwide (Anderson, 2022). When the average American thinks of Nebraska, he or she usually considers it to be a monolingual state with maybe an occasional European or Asian language spoken in Lincoln or Omaha. However, this is far from the truth. If we look across the state, there are close to 115 different languages spoken by children in the Nebraskan Public Schools. What is more, there are over 150 countries represented in the rather small, midwestern capital of Lincoln (Nebraska Department of Education, 2022). The top 10 languages spoken in Nebraska are Spanish, Vietnamese, Arabic, Chinese, German, French, Somali, Nepali, Swahili, and Hindi (Zhang & Towab, 2021). What makes this fact rather intriguing is that these 10 languages represent eight completely distinct language families.

A Local Sampling

As we can see from the above statistics, Lincoln, Nebraska, has a significant amount of both new immigrants (601) and ELLs (2,958). Adams Elementary, nestled on the South Side of the city, is a nice example of how a typical school in Lincoln represents a wide variety of international citizens and ELLs. According to the Nebraska Department of Education (2022), of the 806 students at Adams Elementary, 56 are ELLs. These students represent 11 different countries: Afghanistan, Colombia, India, Iraq, Japan, the Philippines, Poland, Thailand, Ukraine, the United States, and Vietnam. In short, the state of Nebraska is home to a number of international cultures, languages, new immigrants, and ELLs.

II. The University of Nebraska's All-Staff Conference

This spring, the University of Nebraska—Lincoln (UNL) held its second annual All-Staff Conference, “UNL Connects: Powering Development & Innovation.” From May 23rd to May 25th, the campus hosted approximately 300 to 400 attendees with 35 different presenters from both the university and the local community. The topics on professional development ranged from well-being and mindfulness to fostering creativity in the workplace. And, although this conference was not focused on language teaching, many of the presentations were apropos for English language teachers (ELTs) and English language programs. Learning how to be mindful and encouraging creativity are positive, universal concepts that can help everyone become better colleagues at work and better individuals at home.

I also wanted to highlight this two-day event because it was a free, local conference for all staff at UNL. These events are valuable because they tap into many insightful and beneficial ideas from colleagues across the campus and professionals within the community. As the reality of inflation has hit hard in recent months, it is difficult to afford the membership and registration fee for a major convention like TESOL International or even a regional conference like MIDTESOL. However, in-house conferences can make a significant difference in one's professional development and personal growth. Moreover, they promote new and innovative teaching and learning ideas as well as create a nurturing work environment. These types of conferences foster a healthy sense of inspiration for the host institution's employees—both faculty and staff alike. I recommend that Nebraska's Intensive English Programs, community colleges, adult English programs, and K-12 English language programs create and host similar personal growth and professional development events to inspire, motivate, and nurture a love for teaching and learning.

III. A Teaching Tip: Using Personal Memory Associations

Before concluding this report, I would like to offer a vocabulary teaching tip for our Nebraskan ELTs and MIDTESOL colleagues. This tip focuses on what I call Personal Memory Associations. A Personal Memory Association is “a particular, personal, and genuine memory that a student has of a person, event, or place. It does not have to be sensational in any way; rather, the memory can be very simple. It merely needs to have value in the student's psyche and involve a crucial emotional connection” (Randolph, 2018, para. 2).

After introducing a vocabulary item, (i.e., a single word, an idiom, or a phrase) and establishing its definition, part of speech, and *verbpathy* (i.e., the immediate and intuitive positive or negative response that a lexical item elicits), I ask students to reflect on a PMA that has a direct connection or relationship to the vocabulary term. This rather visceral and very personal connection helps encode the term at a deeper level and begins to slowly transfer it to the long-term memory. The PMAs can be discussed orally in class for added reinforcement and listening practice, or they can be assigned as written homework to further enhance the

meaning and use of the vocabulary term. Each written PMA is generally about one to two sentences in length. These, however, can be shorter or longer depending on the level of the students. For a detailed explanation of this teaching tip, please see my Teaching and Learning YouTube Channel. The video on PMAs is featured here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Tq792xbzfgc>.

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2022 MIDTESOL Travel Award applications are being accepted!

**MIDTESOL
Member benefit!**

Description

MIDTESOL is proud to offer awards to help members with conference-related fees.

The Interest Section Travel Awards. Two MIDTESOL members from each interest section are eligible to receive \$125 to help cover expenses to the September MIDTESOL Conference in Kansas City, MO.

MIDTESOL's interest sections are Community College/Adult Education, Educational Technology, Higher Education/Teacher Training (HETT), K-12, Program Administrators (PAIS), and Intensive English Programs (IEP).

Criteria for application

To be eligible, applicants must be employed in the ESL profession but receive no funding from their employers for expenses to attend the conference. Applicants must be members of MIDTESOL. Applicants do NOT have to be presenters at the MIDTESOL conference.

Submission requirements

To enter, please submit the following in writing:

1. Name, Position, Employer(s)
2. Statement verifying that no funding is received for professional development from employers
3. Statement whether you have previously been awarded any travel award from MIDTESOL
4. Statement verifying that you're willing to volunteer a few hours at the conference
5. A paragraph: What impact has attending the MIDTESOL conference had on you? How will the conference benefit you professionally? What professional involvement or contributions, if any, have you had on the field? They may include but aren't limited to professional organizations, publications, interest groups, or your workplace. How does this connect to your interest section?

Selection criteria

The Awards Committee and Interest Section Chairs will judge entries to make a selection. Applications should be sent to Zachary Smith, Awards Chair, at zacharysmith@midtesol.org. Application deadline is Monday, August 15; winners will be contacted by August 19.



Interest Section Spotlight: EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY

Who are we?

If you are an educator interested in technology, this group is for you! No matter if you are a novice or expert, we want you to join the conversation about equitable technology practices in the field of TESOL.

Meet the Chair

I'm Carmen Durham, and I am an Assistant Professor at the University of Northern Iowa. My favorite technology tools are Jamboard and Nearpod because they allow my students to be creative in how they demonstrate their knowledge.

Share Your Technology Hacks

Do you have a technology hack or a favorite class activity? Do you have questions about how to use technology in the classroom? We want to hear from you!

Share your tips and questions:

NEW! Twitter @Midtesol_EdTech

Facebook @MidtesolEducationTechnologyInterestSection

Email carmendurham@midtesol.org

Other MIDTESOL Interest Sections

No matter what area of English language teaching you are involved in, MIDTESOL has an Interest Section to help you network with other professionals in your field! Check out the MIDTESOL Website to find out how to follow social media accounts for each of them.

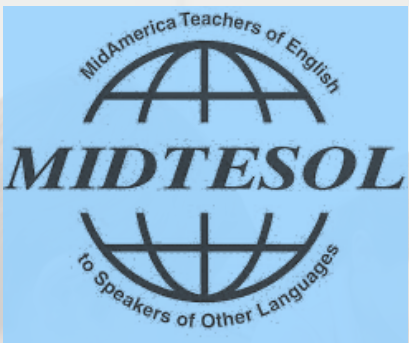
Adult Education/Community College (*seeking chair*)

**Higher Education/Teacher Training (co-chairs Jacob Rigal and Dr. Karolina Achirri;
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/midtesolhighered>)**

Intensive English Program (chair Aimee Leisy)

K-12 (chair Elizabeth Ault)

Program Administrators (*seeking chair*)



About our Organization

Contact us at
www.midtesol.org

MIDTESOL is a professional organization, an affiliate of TESOL International Association, 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 the MIDTESOL Executive Board.



Our Mission

The mission of **Mid-America Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages** is to foster excellence in English language learning in Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, and Nebraska 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*