

MIDTESOL MATTERS



The Mid-America TESOL Affiliate Newsletter

March 2016

Winter provides plenty of time for introspection and reflection. Many of us yearn for warmer weather and longer days. On snowy days I've shared this wish, but have used my indoor time productively by reading the MIDTESOL Conference Proceedings and articles in the "weekly feature" section of our website. Keeping up with current trends in education is important for personal and professional development; sharing this knowledge is a critical component of MIDTESOL's purpose and mission.

I am very excited about a project our communications committee recently added to MIDTESOL's offerings in the area of member benefits as an exciting way for teachers from around the region to engage with each other and the issues in the field frequently. This new service comes in the form of articles and tips easily accessible and constantly rolling out on our new website area, The Weekly Feature. Found at <http://midtesol.org/category/weekly-feature/>, the features are written by members, for members and provide insight on a variety of topics, such as immigrant education, best practices for home visits, use of positive feedback in teacher coaching, and education technology tips. Recently, I've been researching the value of cultural programming in support of acculturation for international students and plan to share some of my findings through this weekly forum.

MIDTESOL values your input and expertise. Please consider participating via our social media, newsletter, conference or social gatherings. State representatives seek out and publicize regional events; the conference team is developing a great line up for the Kansas City fall conference. TESOL celebrates its 50th anniversary this year with a theme of "Reflecting Forward." If you attend the TESOL conference in Baltimore, we hope you'll join us for the annual MIDTESOL gathering. This year we will meet on Thursday Night, April 7th, at 5 pm at the Pratt Street Ale House, 206 West Pratt Street, an easy walk from the Baltimore Convention Center. Our team has made arrangements to secure a room and plenty of great appetizers at this popular brewery.

Reflective practice is critical to self-awareness and improvement, but collaboration strengthens us. We hope that you take advantage of the opportunities MIDTESOL provides for reflection and collaboration as we strive to improve effective teaching for non-native English learners in Iowa, Kansas, Missouri and Nebraska.

In This Issue

- TESOL 2016 Convention Info:
 - Gatherings
 - Presentations
- New Interest Section Details
- Conversations in the Field



-Roberta Morgan,
MIDTESOL President

MIDTESOL 2016 :

INNOVATION AND IMPROVISATION



MIDTESOL Conference 2016 – *Innovation and Improvisation*

When? Friday, September 30 and Saturday, October 1, 2016.
This conference will begin Friday morning and last two full days!

Where? Kansas City Marriott Downtown, Kansas City, MO

Guest speakers:

Stephen D. Krashen, the pillar of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) whose latest focus is Literacy & Free Voluntary Reading

Deborah J. Short, director of the ESL Standards and Assessment Project for TESOL and co-developer of The Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) Model at the Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL)

Sonia Nazario, journalist and Pulitzer Prize-winning author of *Enrique's Journey*

Roger Rosenthal, Executive Director of the Migrant Legal Action Program (MLAP), a national non-profit support and advocacy center located in Washington, D.C.

Registration will open in March 2016 and you will be able to make your Marriott reservations from the registration link.

More Info at

[http://midtesol.org/
midtesol-conference-
2016/](http://midtesol.org/midtesol-conference-2016/)

MIDTESOL 2016

CALL FOR PROPOSALS

This year's theme of **Innovation and Improvisation** invites you to share ideas on the path ahead for our profession.

Submission Deadline: July 1, 2016

Please note:

All proposals must be submitted through [the electronic proposal submission form](#).

- All communication about the proposal will be via email with the person listed as the primary presenter.
- All presenters must be registered conference participants. If you are presenting as a group, each group member must register for the conference.
- Registration opening soon.

Proposal Acceptance

Notification of acceptance will be sent to the primary presenter via email.

Submit your proposal online at

<http://midtesol.org/midtesol-conference-2016/submit-proposal/>

Editors' Highlights

Top Tweets:

The most inspiring TESOL and Education conversations happening on the web.

 TESOL CALL-IS and 3 others follow



Sprout English @sproutenglish · Mar 4

Here's our collection of #grammar resources for Grammar Day!
bit.ly/50EdResources #GrammarDay #ELT #ESL

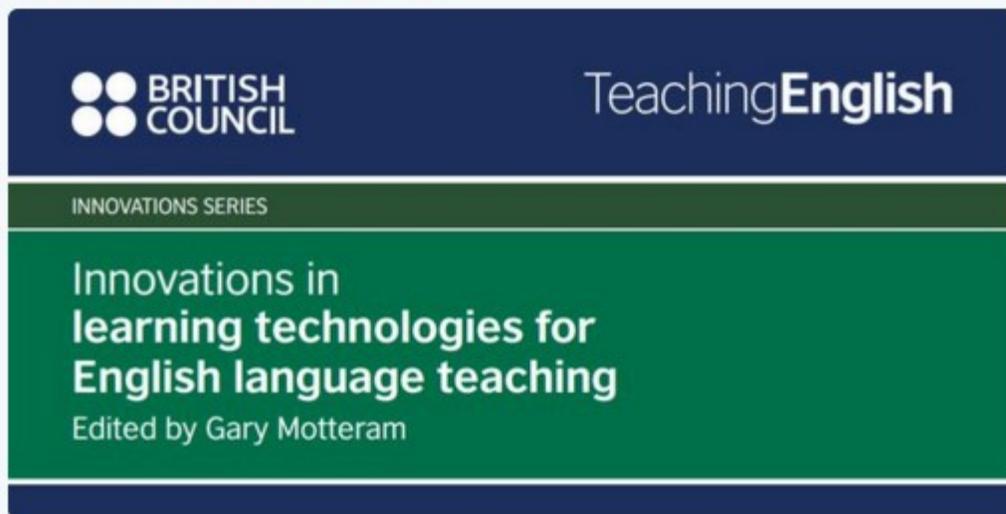


<http://bit.ly/50EdResources>



TeachingEnglish @TeachingEnglish · Feb 29

How can we use technology in class? | Download our free ebook to find out:
ow.ly/YQp1Q #ESL #EFL #TESOL



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<http://ow.ly/YQp1Q>

MIDTESOL Gathering 2016

The theme for this year's convention in Baltimore is Reflecting Forward. As I reflect back on last year in Toronto, I remember our lovely social gathering one evening that allowed all participants to relax, chat, connect with old friends and meet new ones. As we plan ahead to Baltimore, we would like to invite all MIDTESOL members to our social gathering on Thursday, April 7, 2016 for an evening to network and share inspirations from the convention.



LOCATION

PRATT STREET ALEHOUSE

206 W. Pratt St
Baltimore, MD 21201
(410)-244-8900

events@prattstreetalehouse.com

<http://www.prattstreetalehouse.com/menu/>

MIDTESOL is providing substantial appetizers, including crab bruschetta and Roasted eggplant, olive and tomato dip with flatbread among other tasty treats. Participants can buy their own beverages and stay for dinner if they choose.

Since the Pratt Street Alehouse is just across the street from the Convention, you can simply walk to it starting around 5:00pm until 7:00pm. Ask for MIDTESOL or the organizer Melissa Meisterheim to locate our party. We hope to see you in April!



If you have any additional questions, please contact the organizer for this event, Melissa Meisterheim, the current Vice President of MIDTESOL. You can email her at melissa-meisterheim@uiowa.edu.

Baltimore Preparation:

Baltimore Tourism website:
<http://baltimore.org/>

Getting around: <http://baltimore.org/neighborhoods-maps-transportation/getting-around>

Weather: Average weather at the beginning of April has temperatures ranging between 40-60° F, with potential for rain, snow and sun.

Top locations in Baltimore

The Poe House: <http://baltimore.org/listings/historic-sites/edgar-allan-poe-house-and-museum>



There are many other venues of interest – the art & history museums, zoo, aquarium, walks along the waterfront, and of course our primary reason for traveling, the fantastic workshops, teat times, networking events, and talks at the convention.

Enjoy TESOL 2016 !





-Tech Tool Spotlight-

TESOL 2016 App / Mobile Site



Informed



Download TESOL's 2016 Convention Mobile App or use the [Desktop Itinerary Planner](#). Search for sessions, connect with attendees, organize your schedule, and give session feedback in real-time!



[Go to the mobile site for BlackBerry and Microsoft devices](#)

Click to download for Facebook/Instagram

Show your #TESOL16 pride!

Download one of the "I'm Attending" images to share on your social

**STAY INFORMED,
SHARE PICTURES AND
VIDEOS, AND ENGAGE
IN CONVERSATION
WITH FELLOW AT-
TENDEES!#TESOL16**



Click to download for Twitter.

DON'T FORGET TO USE #TESOL16 AND #MYTESOL16

ENGAGE

- Join the [TESOL 2016 Convention & English Language Expo Facebook Event](#)
- Keep up with the action by searching #TESOL16 on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#)
- Use #TESOL16 and #myTESOL16 when posting photos, videos, and convention memories
- Follow us!

Fun and Useful Apps for the Classroom

Natalie Baskin, NE Member-at-Large

Technology has become ubiquitous in today's classrooms. Regardless of whether or not an academic environment is outfitted with the latest technological equipment, students are likely to be carrying cell phones, a fact that is often the bane of many a teacher's classroom experience. Certainly there are few educators that could report that they have never been frustrated by the sight of a student engrossed in the screen of his or her cell phone during class time. Of course, teachers can put rules in place to mitigate students' screen time, but said rules are often only temporarily effective: Teachers tire of the vigilance required to maintain a no-cell-phone zone and the devices eventually migrate back into the waiting hands of their young owners.

Thus, since technology is here to stay, an excellent approach that an educator can take in order to stay relevant to his or her students is that of making technology in general, and cell phones in particular, part of the learning environment. To that end, there are literally countless digital applications, ("apps," for short), that have been designed specifically with classroom learning in mind, with greater or lesser degrees of student autonomy, depending on the focus of the lesson.

One such app that has great utility for ESL students in Speaking and Listening classrooms is called **Aurasma**. Aurasma is an augmented-reality app; any surface or object can effectively "come alive" for users when scanned with a cell phone camera, the technology being similar to that of a QR reader. Listening and Speaking students in the IEP at UNL experienced exciting results when they used Aurasma during recent poster session presentations. People who were present to view students' posters were instructed to download Aurasma. Then, using this app as they went around the room, they could point their phones at an image on each student's poster and a video (that had been created by each presenter and linked to the image) would appear on the viewer's phone. The videos featured the student presenters speaking in greater detail about their subjects, which were in each student's field of interest or study. The only downside of the activity was that the level of noise in the room made it occasionally difficult to hear student's recorded videos, but that problem could easily have been solved had each attendee used headphones with their device. In spite of this, the experience was a great success and was both rewarding and educational for everyone involved.

Another app that a number of the lecturers in UNL's Programs in English as a Second Language (PIESL) department is called **Kahoot**. Kahoot is an online assessment tool in which all students in a classroom use their phones to answer test questions that have been previously chosen by the teacher and instantly see whether they've answered correctly or not. Furthermore, students can also see how other students in the class have answered (no names are shown, only totals). Points are given to the students who answer correctly, and still more points are given for speed of answering. The program keeps a running total of student points, so students can see who's in the lead. This can easily be modified so that students play in teams if there is concern about competitiveness, although many teachers have found that their students seem to enjoy the competitive component. Having said that, this app is perhaps best used for low-stakes activities (vocabulary review sessions come to mind) so that students are able to relax and enjoy the activity without stress.

In sum, both of the aforementioned apps have the potential to add dimension to the classroom and facilitate student involvement. They are also fairly easy to use, even for novices. These apps, and many others like them, allow students to use their phones and simultaneously stay engaged in the learning process, and thus they represent a link that educators in today's classrooms often so greatly need.

Links:

Aurasma:

<https://www.aurasma.com>

<http://www.teq.com/blog/2014/02/5-ways-use-aurasma-classroom/-VsCdRIImSCo>

Kahoot:

[https://kahoot.it/ - /](https://kahoot.it/)

New/Interesting Educational Technology:

<http://www.cultofpedagogy.com/6-ed-tech-tools-to-try-in-2016/>

Increasing your Fan Base: Using Podcasts to Liven up ESL Lessons

Katie McClintic, CALL IS member

Introduction

Podcasts are weekly audio or video programs that you can listen to from both mobile devices and computers. Listeners can subscribe to podcasts for free so that each new episode automatically downloads each week. There are thousands of podcasts to choose from—just search based on any topic of interest from the podcast app that is included on most phone operating systems. While there are many podcasts available specifically for English language learners, non-ESL specific podcasts can be an engaging way to expose learners to authentic language use. Not only can they hear examples of natural, everyday English, learners will also be exposed to various aspects of American culture. Many of these podcasts also have an enthusiastic and extensive fan base, so a secondary benefit is that by listening to the podcasts, students will be able to contribute to the collective conversation as a way to engage with their American peers.

Recommended Podcasts

[Serial](#) tells a true-crime story over the course of 12 episodes. A journalist investigates a murder case in order to discover who killed a young high school student in 1999.

[This American Life](#) tells true stories in the life of everyday Americans. Each episode is based on a weekly theme and tells several stories related to the theme.

[RadioLab](#) discusses topics about “science, philosophy, and the human experience.” Each show is also based on a weekly theme, using a variety of stories to explore the theme.

[Grammar Girl](#) gives short explanations and tips about using English grammar. It also gives advice about how to improve your writing.

[VOA Learning English](#) podcasts are created especially for ESL students. Each story uses a limited vocabulary and a slower pace to support students who are learning English.

[TED Radio Hour](#) is a theme-centered show based on TED talks. This podcast explores those themes more in-depth with stories and speaker interviews.

[Invisibilia](#) “explores the intangible forces that shape human behavior – things like ideas, beliefs, assumptions and emotions. [This podcast focuses on human behavior,] interweaving narrative storytelling with fascinating new psychological and brain science.”

Suggestions for Using Podcasts with your Students

While podcasts themselves are essentially weekly recorded audio programs, with a little creativity they can become an effective and versatile teaching tool. These are but a few suggestions for ways to incorporate podcasts into your lessons:

Create a mobile language lab in your classroom. Tell students to bring their mobile devices (phones or tablets) to class. Students can listen at their own pace for note-taking, answering questions, etc.

Create an individualized critical listening activity. Have students listen to the same podcast on their personal mobile devices. While students listen, they can contribute their observations/questions about the content to a group brainstorming area. Teachers can also send out polls to mobile devices to gauge understanding and interest (Tools like [Poll Everywhere](#) or [Socrative](#) would work well with this type of activity.)

Create vocabulary focused listening activities. Encourage students to listen for key content words while listening to podcasts. Students can individually contribute to group word clouds while listening at their own pace. The more frequently individual students add the same word, the word will grow in size in the word cloud in real time. Teachers can use this information to create student-driven vocabulary activities. (Again, [Poll Everywhere](#) would be an effective tool for this type of activity.)

STATE BY STATE UPDATE:

Iowa News:



My big push over the past few months has been to work on a database of our membership and recruitment. We have had some great events in the past few months, as well. The Iowa Culture and Language Conference (ICLC) was a great learning and networking opportunity for our members. We were able to learn from amazing presenters such as Dorina Sackman, Dr. Kate Kinsella, Dr. Luis Cruz, Sonia Nazario and Clemencia Spizzirri. MIDTESOL also received some great publicity having a publicity table staffed through the whole conference.

EdCamp, in the middle of February, took place in five locations around Iowa. Our members who attended took place in thoughtful and meaningful discussion that is relevant to current educators. This is a newer event in Iowa, and we hope to continue to have a strong presence at this wonderful event in the upcoming years.

Be looking for more information on monthly Iowa member webinars. The first webinar will be on the topic of finding high interest/low readability materials and resources for our EL students. Upcoming webinars will include integrating new technology and apps into the classroom, and differentiating strategies for ELs coming from a symbolic vs alphabetic first language.

If you have any questions or suggestions for topics for upcoming monthly webinars, please don't hesitate to contact me at zasmith001@gmail.com.

Zachary Smith
Iowa Member at Large

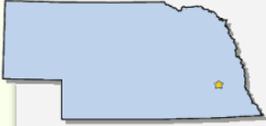
Keep checking midtesol.org for more updates on the conference and other Iowa events.



MIDTESOL representing our membership at the *Iowa Culture and Language Conference (ICLC)*.

STATE BY STATE UPDATE

Nebraska News: Nebraska K-12 Update



Nebraska is in the middle of the rollout of their new English Language Proficiency Assessment, ELPA21. The testing window goes through March and standards setting will occur this summer. Nebraska ELL teachers will be part of the standards setting process that will impact student proficiency levels and exiting students from EL programs. In April, the NE ELL Cohort, a group of district and school ELL personnel, will meet to continue their work in professional development regarding ELL issues. This group meets periodically throughout the year to facilitate collaboration and instructional improvement efforts throughout the state.

Kansas News:

English Language Proficiency Standards Project

Kansas joined nine other states (Arkansas, 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/>

STATE BY STATE UPDATE

Missouri News:



March 24-31 is Farmworkers Awareness Week with Tuesday March 29th having a special focus on education and how the lives of students are impacted by food and immigration policies.

Please check out the amazing Film "The Harvest/La Cosecha" <http://theharvestfilm.com/>

National Farmworker Awareness Week Instagram Challenge March 24– 31 2016



Student Action
with Farmworkers

Thursday March 24 | Border Issues
Friday March 25 | Community
Saturday March 26 | Invisibility
Sunday March 27 | Farmworker Life
Monday March 28 | Women in the Fields
Tuesday March 29 | Education
Wednesday March 30 | Separation of Families
Thursday March 31 | Broken Agricultural System

Participate by posting a picture that focuses on the farmworker issue for each day of the week of action (@farmworkerawareness, #NFAW2016). Be creative! See directions and rules below.



Find out more!

<http://theharvestfilm.com/>

<http://saf-unite.org/content/national-farmworker-awareness-week>

<http://saf-unite.tumblr.com/post/126174529479/i-am-a-young-man-i-like-playing-a-lot-i-like>

Are you interested in getting involved with an IS?

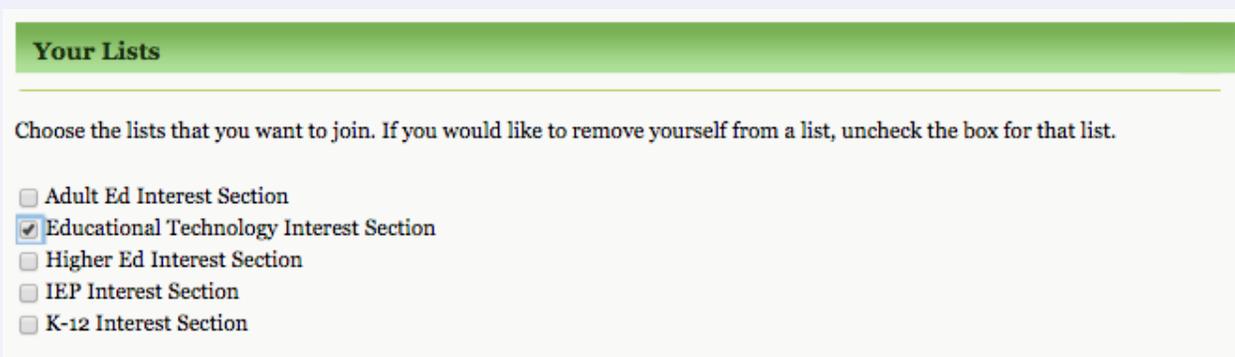
Here's what to do:

1. Edit your profile setting in your membership file accessible form the midte-sol.org site, or at <https://www.cvent.com/Events/ContactPortal/Login.aspx?cwstub=19255e93-37d9-4d38-ac7d-2ac8779a50d1>



The screenshot shows a web interface for the MIDTESOL Membership Website. At the top, there is a navigation bar with a "Follow" dropdown menu on the left and a "Logout" link on the right. The main content area features the MIDTESOL logo, which consists of a stylized globe with the text "MidAmerica Teachers of English" above it and "to Speakers of Other Languages" below it. The word "MIDTESOL" is prominently displayed in the center. Below the logo, there is a section titled "MIDTESOL Membership Website" with three buttons: "Edit", "Purchase Membership", and "Change Password". A message below these buttons reads: "Please take a moment to update any out of date information." On the left side, there is a sidebar menu with the following items: "Information" (highlighted), "My Profile", "My Events", "Member Directory", "Conference Proceedings", and "MIDTESOL Member Benefits". At the bottom of the sidebar, there is a "Personal Information" section.

2. Choose Interest Sections to get involved with:



The screenshot shows the "Your Lists" section of the website. It has a green header with the text "Your Lists". Below the header, there is a paragraph of text: "Choose the lists that you want to join. If you would like to remove yourself from a list, uncheck the box for that list." Below this text, there is a list of five interest sections, each with a checkbox:

- Adult Ed Interest Section
- Educational Technology Interest Section
- Higher Ed Interest Section
- IEP Interest Section
- K-12 Interest Section

3. Start receiving and sharing great info about the field!

Call for Submissions in The 2016 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 essay for the 2016 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 May 6th 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 May 6th.

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 May 6th. The subject line of the email should read "MIDTESOL 2016: 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 30th. 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

Announcement From the Board:

MIDTESOL would like to recognize the contributions of our members to the association of which we are an affiliate, TESOL International. We will be posting this information on our website in honor of TESOL's 50th anniversary celebration in 2016 and would ask that any MIDTESOL member who has presented, been published, volunteered, or otherwise served TESOL in a leadership capacity since TESOL's inception please fill out the following [survey \(http://goo.gl/forms/q2VwWPNxdT\)](http://goo.gl/forms/q2VwWPNxdT).



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 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. (stayed the same) 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