

*Spring lightning storm in Iowa*

# Spring 2024

# MIDTESOL

# Matters

*The Mid-America  
TESOL Affiliate Newsletter*



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## *MIDTESOL Matters*

## SPRING EDITION (2024)

**MIDTESOL Conference Call for  
Proposals is LIVE! See page 7 for  
details.**



# MIDTESOL Matters

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## A Letter from the President

**Ben Vilkas,**  
**MIDTESOL**  
**President**  
*Professor of Education*  
*Wayne State College*  
*Wayne, Nebraska*



### **From the 2024 MIDTESOL President (written in March):**

I will admit, I have been in a bit of a bad mood the past week. Alas, my darker mood is the result of being forced- like everyone else in our region- to “Spring Forward” and have our clocks move up an hour. This change was not something that I agreed to, voted for, or even wanted. Change is often difficult, and it can be frustrating at times. When it comes to something like “Daylight Savings Time” it can be confusing or out of our control. However, it is something that I am gradually getting used to each day and I am slowly getting over my emotional response to this change.

How does this relate to the wonderful world of MIDTESOL? Well, hopefully the annual changes in leadership are not too difficult and don’t create a lot of stress. As the new President for the organization, I know that the moment I started in this role that the clock started ticking as I would only be in this position for a year and then hand the sacred gavel off to our current Vice President, the wonderful Shabina Kavimandan. Thus, I needed to try my best to “spring forward” into this role and learn all that I need to do from our former President, Zachary Smith. MIDTESOL’s organization is one founded on change as we are often filling a need for a year and then helping someone else to take over the next. This is a positive thing for sure as it allows for more people to have opportunities to lead and service. However, the difficulty is that we are constantly looking for that next person and trying to fill roles that are needed.

Currently, many MIDTESOL members are coming together to work on the 2024 Conference- which I hope you all will be able to attend. It will be held on Friday, September 27 and Saturday, September 28. There is still a great need for people who want to help plan this event but also, we simply have a need for many people to attend this event. Spreading the word, blocking off those dates on calendars, and making MIDTESOL a priority is a way to ensure that our organization continues to thrive and serve our region well. Regarding the topic of “change” though is the fact that as we are planning for 2024, we are also discussing 2025, 2026, and 2027. Without having a vision for the future, it can be difficult or impossible to know what all is needed to be done and how to make progress. Thus, we are constantly trying to look ahead and look for the people who will help to lead in the future as we focus on the present.

Finally, I will admit that most of the changes that I am dealing with- whether it is in my personal life with having to deal with dark mornings again or with MIDTESOL planning- is insignificant compared to the changes

that our students and their families are often facing. There are global conflicts that often impact our students directly as many family members around the world face an uncertain future. Learning as much as possible about the global issues that are impacting our local communities is a way that educators can become more engaged with our students and better advocates for them and their families. Facing the harsh realities of these situations can be depressing at times and feel a bit overwhelming but it also allows us to be more understanding, caring, and compassionate with our students.

So, on that note, let's try our best to face all the changes that may occur this year and strive to do our best to encourage each other, especially when the changes cause a bit more darkness in our lives. When that is the case, we can help to be the extra light in each other's lives and support the good work that we are all doing to help our students and their families. Thanks for reading and I look forward to seeing you all in Council Bluffs in September!

Sincerely,  
Ben Vilkas, MIDTESOL President

### ***MIDTESOL Journal Call for Submissions***

The *MIDTESOL Journal* is actively seeking submissions for its upcoming volume of the publication (Volume 7, 2024).

While general submissions are very welcome, MIDTESOL specifically invites EL instructors, practitioners, and researchers to submit their innovative contributions to the *MIDTESOL Journal* for our upcoming special issue spotlighting "Artificial Intelligence in the EL Classroom." As technology continues to shape the education landscape, integrating artificial intelligence presents exciting opportunities and challenges in second language learning and teaching. We seek articles that share real-world insights, strategies, and success stories on how AI tools, chatbots, automated assessment systems, or language learning apps have been effectively integrated into EL classrooms. Whether you have empirical research, case studies, pedagogical insights, or critical analyses, we welcome diverse perspectives that shed light on the transformative role of AI in EL education.

Again, general submissions are also most welcome. *What about turning that conference presentation from last year into a paper that your fellow MIDTESOL members can benefit from?*

**Submission Deadline: ASAP**

See past volumes of the journal on the MIDTESOL Website. Contact Editor [Jeanne Beck](#) ([jeannebeck@midtesol.org](mailto:jeannebeck@midtesol.org)) with questions and submissions.

**Shabina Kavimandan,**  
**MIDTESOL Vice**  
**President**  
*Assistant Professor of*  
*Curriculum and Instruction*  
*Kansas State University*  
*Olathe, Kansas*



## A Letter from the Vice President

### **Hello MIDTESOL community members,**

It brings me so much joy to be sharing my very first post as the MIDTESOL vice president. I am humbled and honored to be serving our TESOL community. As a life-long educator, and a policy enthusiast, I look forward to upholding the organization’s vision and mission to create a robust support system for our multilingual learners within the four state-region. My personal approach towards this position stems from the core ideas of accessibility, collegiality, and competency and how our systems can either inhibit or foster these fundamental aspects for the individuals they serve.

Having been in the field of education for over 20 years, I have seen first-hand how policy mandates, technocratic curricular initiatives, and legislative decisions impact the educational and social landscape tremendously, thereby shaking the very foundation of an institution. At the same time, I have also worked with visionary leaders, administrators, educators, and other decision-makers who ensure that the policies and practices are accountable and inclusive in nature. With this in mind, and to help MIDTESOL achieve its mission of strengthening the effective teaching of English within the four-state region, this is my vision for the organization:

- Strengthening and increasing both the pre-service and Inservice teacher participation at the annual conference.
- Helping educators and the school systems understand the important role students’ funds of Knowledge and funds of identity play in the development of their literacy practices.
- Providing collaborative opportunities for educators to share their ideas for best practices with their emergent bilingual/multilingual learners.
- Focusing on strategies that help educators design and support family engagement opportunities.
- Movement away from a deficit view toward a perspective that builds on the knowledge and resources available in families “funds of knowledge” (González et al., 2005; Moll, 1992, 2008) and “community culture wealth” (Yosso, 2005).

As we take steps for a more robust conference attendance and an increased representation from our PreK-12 colleagues, I would love to see MIDTESOL become a repository of resources, ideas, and materials to support our multilingual learners in the classrooms. I hope to be able to work with the executive board in continuing to advance the efforts that are already underway! Working alongside all of you and hope to see most of you in Iowa at our annual conference.

Sincerely,

Shabina Kavimandan, MIDTESOL Vice-President



## Join the MIDTESOL Team!

### Open Positions

*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 MIDTESOL Past President Zach Smith ([zacharysmith@midtesol.org](mailto:zacharysmith@midtesol.org)) to indicate your interest or with any questions.*

**IMMEDIATE NEED: Treasurer**

**IMMEDIATE NEED: Rules and Resolutions Committee Chair**

**Conference Committee members for MIDTESOL 2025 in Cedar Rapids, Iowa**



## MIDTESOL 2024 (September 27-28, 2024) in Council Bluffs!

The 2024 MIDTESOL Conference planning is in full swing! Remember to “Save the Date” and plan to join us at the MidAmerica Center in Council Bluffs on Friday, September 26 and Saturday, September 27. This year’s theme is “Love, Language and Literacy for All,” and we are planning the conference to be a place to build professional connections and share strategies, suggestions, and principles for helping our diverse English learners (of all ages). Check out this [link](#) for details and instructions. Proposals are **due by June 7**. What tips, techniques, and expertise can YOU share with your fellow MIDTESOL members?

- Registration is open, and the early bird discount goes through **Aug. 27**. See more details [here](https://midtesol.org/midtesol-24/) (<https://midtesol.org/midtesol-24/>).
- There are **limited** rooms available at the reduced rate at the [conference hotel](https://web.cvent.com/event/7e040f72-c6e6-4ddb-9edf-0d2401ee7d5a/websitePage:3fb576c7-db3b-4dc5-afe2-494e83115051) (<https://web.cvent.com/event/7e040f72-c6e6-4ddb-9edf-0d2401ee7d5a/websitePage:3fb576c7-db3b-4dc5-afe2-494e83115051>), so book early if you want one.

*Watch for MIDTESOL Updates and MIDTESOL Website highlights of featured speakers as invited speaker confirmations become available!*

**Join us for #MIDTESOL24!**  
**(“Hosted” by Nebraska, but actually in Iowa)**  
**SAVE THE DATES!**

**Dates:** Friday-Saturday, September 27-28, 2024

**Location:** MidAmerica Center, Council Bluffs, Iowa (right across the river from Omaha)

**Session Types:**

The conference will offer presentations on practical and research-oriented topics as well as workshops and round-table discussions. 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.



## **MIDTESOL 2024 CALL FOR PROPOSALS (all session types)**

#MIDTESOL24 invites you to explore the theme of **Love, Language, and Literacy for All!** We are looking for sessions that highlight how we can nurture and empower our students in their language and literacy learning. The theme is open-ended and flexible, allowing us to create a conference that celebrates and supports all our students in their language and literacy journeys.

The strength of any conference depends on the strength of the proposals. Please consider submitting a proposal and also encouraging colleagues whose work you value to submit proposals. This is a live event with no “virtual options” for presenters.

MIDTESOL serves English language educators from Missouri, Iowa, Nebraska, and Kansas. Attendees include students, teachers, teacher educators, professors, tutors, student service professionals, program directors and administrators from:

- Early Child Education
- K-12 school districts
- Community colleges
- Universities
- Migrant, immigrant, and refugee organizations
- State education programs

We aim to design a program that delivers useful content and networking opportunities for everyone who joins us. We want sessions that cater to the particular needs of professionals working in any of the environments previously mentioned. Based on the feedback we received from previous conferences, a large number of MIDTESOL participants prefer practical sessions that offer effective strategies, techniques, and tools for students of all ages. However, many participants also appreciate sessions that explore research, policies, and concepts. We welcome any kind of presentation that meets the needs of ELT professionals.





## 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*



### Greetings, Advocates!

It is an election year, which means it is time to hone those advocacy skills. Luckily, TESOL is offering a few options, including Advocacy Action Days, both virtual and in-person. These sessions include updates on current legislation that will affect multilingual learners and their teachers. The sessions also include training on effective advocacy and how to effectively share perspectives with elected officials. Finally, the trainings offer support for actually scheduling meetings with your representatives!

*I will be attending the virtual session and hope to see you there!* If you do attend, please send me a message at [adriennejohnson@midtesol.org](mailto:adriennejohnson@midtesol.org) so we can, meet each other, coordinate our hill ‘visits,’ and/or debrief afterwards about next steps for our MIDTESOL region. *See below for more details.*

-Adrienne Johnson (Sociopolitical & Professional Standards Chair)

### TESOL Advocacy Action Days

Register here: <https://www.tesol.org/advocacy/events/advocacy-action-days/#register>

#### Virtual Action Schedule (just an FYI)

- **29 April** (Mon) - Advocacy Day preparation webinar
- **30 April** (Tues) - Virtual policy updates
- **1 May** (Weds) - Virtual U.S. Capitol Hill visits

#### In-Person Action Schedule

- **10 July** (Weds) - Advocacy Day preparation webinar
- **17-18 July** (Weds-Thurs) - Virtual policy updates
- **23 July** (Tues) - In-person U.S. Capitol Hill visits (beginning at 8:00 a.m. with a keynote address in the Rayburn House Office Building)



#### Registration Rates

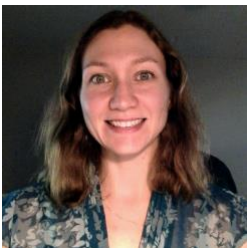
	<i>Virtual</i>	<i>In Person</i>	<i>Both (20% savings!)</i>
Member	\$60	\$140	\$160
Nonmember	\$80	\$170	\$200

## Updates from MIDTESOL Interest Sections



*Interest sections drive our organization's professional development!*

MIDTESOL's **six** different interest sections work hard to enable MIDTESOL members to grow professionally and to find resources to meet the needs of their particular English learners. How many interest sections do you belong to? (MIDTESOL members can belong to more than one interest section!) The reports below come from this year's MIDTESOL interest section leaders and are intended to give you an update on the group and its activities, a look into the current state of affairs in our area for an interest section's specific population of English learners, or whatever the interest section chair decided was most important to communicate. A huge thanks from MIDTESOL to these interest section leaders for all of their work!



**Elissa Jones**  
**MIDTESOL K-12 Interest**  
**Section Chair**  
*ESOL Teacher*  
*Topeka West High School*  
*Topeka, Kansas*

### From the K-12 Interest Section

*Elissa sends monthly e-mails to K-12 Interest Section members which are full of ideas and teaching tips. Greatly appreciated! To sign up to receive Elissa's e-mails, you can contact her at [elissajones@midtesol.org](mailto:elissajones@midtesol.org). Below are excerpts of the e-mail Elissa sent out to the K-12 Interest Section on April 27.*

**Hello friends,**

I hope you are staying safe during the storms this weekend, and if you're counting down the school days to ☀️ summer vacation 🌴, you are not alone! This morning I was able to attend the spring MIDTESOL board meeting by Zoom, and it was full of exciting stuff that I want to share with you.

First and foremost, you should have received an invitation to [the MIDTESOL24 conference](#). This year it will be September 27-28 in Council Bluffs, Iowa (near Omaha) at the Mid-America Center. Mark your calendars!



- Registration is open, and the early bird discount goes through **Aug. 27**.
- There are limited rooms available at the reduced rate at the conference hotel, so get on that early if you want one.
- [Proposals are currently being accepted!](#) #MIDTESOL24 invites you to explore the theme of **Love, Language, and Literacy for All!** We are looking for sessions that highlight how we can nurture and empower our students in their language and literacy learning.
- The proposal deadline is **June 7** at midnight. That will creep up on you at the end of the school year, so start thinking about your proposals now!

I am planning to propose a workshop on how we create the Curriculum Design Maps that support our quarterly thematic project-based units. I hope you will think about what you could present from your professional practice: your colleagues WANT to see and hear from other K-12 educators!

## LOOKING AHEAD

Next month I will send out a May email update highlighting how we encourage and celebrate our graduates who earn the **Seal of Biliteracy** on their diplomas. I've heard from a couple of you about how that looks in your schools. I would love to compile a year-end showcase featuring how we honor our bilingual, biliterate graduates. **What do you do in your building or district to encourage, support, and celebrate these students?**

**Batten the hatches and stay safe, friends,**

**Elissa**  
**(K-12 Interest Section Chair)**

## From the Intensive English Program Interest Section

**Joe Scott**  
**MIDTESOL Intensive English Program Interest Section Chair**  
*Center for English Language Learning*  
*University of Missouri*



### Intensive English Programs Interest Section News

Many thanks to the small but hardy number of colleagues who attended the IEP interest section online coffee chat on March 14! The topic of discussion was “Intensive English after Covid: Challenges and Opportunities,” and in particular we spent much of the hour talking about trends in student enrollment in Intensive English Programs. The mid-2010s saw record numbers of international students at IEPs in the US, and then political uncertainty and Covid led to rapid declines in those numbers. Though IEP enrollments are starting to climb compared to the low numbers seen during Covid lockdowns, they’re still lower than at any time for nearly a decade before the pandemic began.

Nationwide, according to the IIE Open Doors enrollment report on IEP student trends at <https://opendoorsdata.org/data/intensive-english-programs/iep-student-enrollment-trend/>, there are now fewer than half as many students as there were at the high point in 2015. 2022 (the most recent year for which data are available) saw 64,106 IEP students in the US. In order to see numbers so low before Covid, we’d have to go back to 2010, when the US was still feeling the effects of the Great Recession and East Asian countries that send large numbers of IEP students were in the midst of a financial crisis. Decreasing student numbers are not the only challenge these data show; the average number of weeks per student has dropped from 15 to 10 as short-term programs become more popular, so we have fewer students who are also staying for a shorter time.

In fact, though, these new challenges aren’t completely new. Enrollment numbers in IEPs have always been cyclical and closely tied to global political, social, and economic changes. There was a similar downturn in the early 2000s after 9/11, and my coworkers with longer memories have related that the late 1970s saw large numbers of students from Iran travel to the US to study, only to leave the States after the revolution in 1979.

At the end of our discussion, the consensus was that IEPs will evolve and adapt to face these challenges, and I feel like that kind of cautious optimism is central to what we do and who we are as IEP teachers. In order to continue to do what we do, we’ll need flexibility and an ability to communicate the value that we add to universities, communities, the US, and the world – and if we can do that, the opportunities are out there!

**Best,**

**Joe Scott (Intensive English Program Interest Section Chair)**

## From the Educational Technology Interest Section

### MIDTESOL Educational Technology Interest Section Co-Chairs

#### **Amber Schrage**

*Center of Grace ESL  
Coordinator/Educator  
Johnson County Adult Ed.  
Johnson County Comm. College  
Overland Park, Kansas*

#### **Carmen Durham**

*Assistant Professor of  
TESOL/Applied Linguistics  
University of Northern Iowa  
Cedar Falls, Iowa*



### Who are we?

If you are an educator who wants to know more about 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.

### What is our focus?

These past two quarters we have been focused on understanding Digital Literacy and how what it means constantly changes with the evolution of technology, as well as Artificial Intelligence in the classroom.

Digital Literacy and Artificial Intelligence (AI) are two pivotal concepts in today's education, each playing a crucial role in shaping how we interact with technology and information.

Digital Literacy refers to an individual's ability to find, evaluate, communicate, and create information using digital technologies. It encompasses a range of skills that are essential for functioning effectively in a digital world. These skills include the use of computers and mobile devices, understanding and utilizing the internet, engaging with social media, and navigating the vast array of digital tools available today.

The importance of digital literacy cannot be overstated. It empowers people to access information, connect with others, and participate fully in society. It also enables individuals to discern credible information from misinformation, enhancing their decision-making capabilities and fostering critical thinking.

Artificial Intelligence, on the other hand, is the simulation of human intelligence processes by machines, especially computer systems. AI is built upon the foundation of digital literacy, as it requires the ability to interact with digital data and systems.

AI has the potential to revolutionize every aspect of our lives, from the way we work to the way we learn and communicate. It can analyze vast amounts of data quickly and accurately, identify patterns and insights that

would be impossible for humans to discern, and automate routine tasks, freeing up time for more creative endeavors.

However, the rise of AI also brings challenges. Ethical considerations, such as privacy, security, and the potential for job displacement, must be addressed. Moreover, there is a growing need for individuals to be digitally literate to interact with AI effectively and responsibly.

In conclusion, digital literacy provides the foundational skills necessary to engage with digital technologies, while AI represents the advanced capabilities of these technologies to perform tasks that typically require human intelligence. Together, they represent the synergy between human skills and machine capabilities, highlighting the importance of education and ethical considerations in the digital age.

Check out the Tech Interest Section Newsletter in the Resource Library (link below) for more detailed information!

The EdTech Interest Section thrives when members share ideas and help educators grow. We plan on holding a webinar in the spring, sending out tech tips and information quarterly and spotlighting educators in their educational technology discoveries. Please follow us below and share your ideas often!




**Resources:**

Education, University of San Diego-Professional & Continuing. “What Is Digital Literacy? A Complete Guide for Educators.” *University of San Diego - Professional & Continuing Education*, 19 Dec. 2022, [pce.sandiego.edu/digital-literacy/](http://pce.sandiego.edu/digital-literacy/).

Coursera . “What Is Artificial Intelligence? Definition, Uses, and Types.” *Coursera*, 29 Nov. 2023, [www.coursera.org/articles/what-is-artificial-intelligence](http://www.coursera.org/articles/what-is-artificial-intelligence).

**Join the conversation!**

 <p><b>Resource Library</b></p>	 <p><b>X</b> (formerly Twitter)</p>	 <p><b>Facebook</b></p>
<p>Bookmark this website to find tips on using technology for speaking, writing, literacy, home-school communication, and much more. Let us know what topics you want to know more about!</p>	<p>Follow us on Twitter for up-to-date tech tips. Mention us in your posts and questions!</p>	<p>Join our NEW Facebook group to talk to one another, ask questions about technology, and receive up-to-date tips from everyone in our Educational Technology Interest Section. If you already follow our Facebook page, you will receive an invitation.</p>

 tinyurl.com/EdTechLibrary	 @Midtesol_EdTech	 tinyurl.com/EdTechGroup
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**MIDTESOL Community  
College/Adult Ed Interest  
Section Co-Chairs**

**Georgia Deming**  
*ESL Program Manager  
Johnson County Comm. College  
Overland Park, Kansas*

**Lorraine Gardner**  
*ESL Instructor  
Ozarks Technical Comm. College  
Springfield, Missouri*

**From the Community  
College/Adult Education  
Interest Section**

**Community College/Adult Education Interest Section News**

**What is Adult Education?**

Adult Education is defined under WIOA (Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act)

“The term adult education’ means academic instruction and education services below the postsecondary level that increase an individual’s ability to- (A) read, write, and speak in English and perform mathematics or other activities necessary for the attainment of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent; (B) transition to postsecondary education and training; and (C) obtain employment.”

<https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2016-08-19/pdf/2016-16049.pdf>

“THE ADULT EDUCATION AND FAMILY LITERACY ACT (AEFLA), Title II of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), is the principal source of federal funding for states for adult education programs. The Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education’s (OCTAE) Division of Adult Education and Literacy (DAEL) administers AEFLA.” (<https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ovae/pi/AdultEd/aeffa-resource-guide.pdf>)

Adult education differs from postsecondary education (Academic English) in that it typically doesn’t involve students receiving college credit or grades and is funded through federal, state, and sometimes local funds.

These programs must comply with federal regulations as specified under WIOA.

<https://www.dol.gov/agencies/eta/wioa>, <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/eta/wioa/guidance>

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) was signed into law on July 22, 2014. WIOA is designed to help job seekers access employment, education, training, and support services to succeed in the labor market and to match employers with the skilled workers they need to compete in the global economy. Congress passed the Act with a wide bipartisan majority; it is the first legislative reform of the public workforce system since 1998. The [federal register](#) defines the act, and summaries changes in performance accountability. NRS (National Reporting System), is [the accountability system](#).

State agencies receiving federal funds make these funds available to local agencies and programs under their own set of rules and regulations while maintaining compliance with WIOA.

Companies designing tests such as TABE, CASAS, BEST, must go through this agency to ensure that the tests measure the standards set by the federal regulations. Those standards have recently made a shift from life skills English to academic English. Several testing companies have not received full approval for tests to be used in

federally funded programs, leaving many programs in limbo or in the position of having to change tests, (which is a state decision). and therefore, change curriculum which is a time consuming and expensive endeavor.

Many adult education programs receive matching funds or partner with other agencies, such as DCF or Workforce, state institutions such as community colleges or school districts, and grants from companies such as Dollar General, or private agencies such as Catholic Charities. Each of these entities has their own grant compliances that are in addition to federal compliance guidelines.

Connect with MIDTESOL on social media





*A huge thanks to the MIDTESOL Interest Section leaders for hosting various professional development events during the March-April MIDTESOL “March Madness” Schedule. Below is a re-cap of the events; join us for more events in July!*

## MIDTESOL “March Madness” 2024 Schedule

Date	Time (Central Time)	Title	Interest Section Host(s)
February 28 (Wednesday)	4:15 pm and 7:30 pm	<p><b>Sip &amp; Study Series:</b> "Wordless but not silent: Unlocking the power of wordless picture books"</p> <p>[In this conceptual feature article, the authors discuss misconceptions and opportunities around using wordless picture books for equitable literacy development for ELs of varying ages and proficiency levels. What other examples could you share from your practice of using wordless texts to develop language?]</p>	Elissa Jones (K-12 Interest Section)
March 1 (Friday)	Noon - 1:00 pm	<p><b>Lunch Break ZOOM Chat for Program Administrators</b></p> <p>[Please join other Program Administrators as we take a lunch break together on Zoom and discuss current issues for those that wear many hats. See you there!]</p>	Kelly McClendon (Program Administrators Interest Section)
March 1 (Friday)	4:00-5:00 pm	<p><b>Publishing in the <i>MIDTESOL Journal</i></b></p> <p>[Come with your questions and ideas for the Editorial Committee!]</p>	Ananda Muhammed, Vicki Anderson (MIDTESOL Journal Editorial Committee)
March 4 (Monday)	5:30-6:15 pm	<b>LIVE CHAT: Digital Literacies</b>	Amber Schrage and Carmen Dunham (Educational Technology Interest Section)
March 6 (Wednesday)	4:15 pm	<p><b>Sip &amp; Study Series:</b> "Beyond sentence frames: Scaffolding emergent multilingual students' participation in science discourse"</p> <p>[In this empirical research article, the authors examine and critique the overuse of sentence frames in middle-grades science classrooms. Using transcripts from classroom research, they illustrate how different forms of scaffolding helped ELs make meaning and participate in academic</p>	Elissa Jones (K-12 Interest Section)

		discourse. What other examples could you share from your practice of scaffolding in the content areas for content and language development? Article: <a href="#">Beyond sentence frames: Scaffolding emergent multilingual students' participation in science discourse</a>	
<b>March 8</b> (Friday)	<b>12:30-1:15</b> <b>pm</b>	<b>LIVE CHAT: Digital Literacies</b>	<b>Amber Schrage and Carmen Dunham</b> (Educational Technology Interest Section)
<b>March 13</b> (Wednesday)	<b>7:30 pm</b>	<b>Sip &amp; Study Series:</b> "Revise federal policy on classification of English language learner"  [Article: <a href="#">Revise federal policy on classification of English language learner</a> David Klayton, 15 November 2022  Article: <a href="#">Individualized Language Plans: promises and pitfalls</a> Sara E. N. Kangas, María Cioè-Peña, 20 November 2023]	<b>Elissa Jones</b> (K-12 Interest Section)
<b>March 14</b> (Thursday)	<b>4:00 pm</b>	<b>"Intensive English after Covid: Challenges and Opportunities"</b>	<b>Joe Scott</b> (IEP Interest Section)
<b>March 29</b> (Friday)	<b>12:30-1:30</b> <b>pm</b>	<b>Lunchtime ZOOM Chat: Adult Ed Testing and Regulations and their Impact</b>	<b>Georgia Deming and Lorraine Gardner</b> (Adult Education / Community College Interest Section)
<b>March 29</b> (Friday)	<b>4:00-5:00</b> <b>pm</b>	<b>Publishing in the <i>MIDTESOL Journal</i></b>  [Come with your questions and ideas for the Editorial Committee!]	<b>Ananda Muhammed, Jeanne Beck, Vicki Anderson</b>  ( <i>MIDTESOL Journal</i> Editorial Committee)
<b>April 9</b> (Tuesday)	<b>4:00-5:00</b> <b>pm</b>	<b>Feature lecture:</b>  <b><i>Oral corrective feedback: A teacher trainer's perspective</i></b> <b>(Dr. Hilal Ergül)</b>	<b>Jacob Rigal</b>  (Higher Education Interest Section)



## MIDTESOL 2024 Presenter and Interest Section Travel Award applications are being accepted!

**MIDTESOL  
Member benefit!**

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

### ***Interest Section Travel Award***

Up to six MIDTESOL members from different interest sections (one member per interest section) will be awarded a check in the amount of **\$150** to cover travel and registration costs for the **MIDTESOL 2024** Conference on **September 27-28, 2024**.

The six MIDTESOL interest sections are

- Community College/Adult Education
- Educational Technology
- Higher Education/Teacher Training
- Intensive English Program (IEP)
- K-12
- Program Administrators

To be eligible, applicants must be employed in the ELL profession but receive little or no funding from their employers for expenses to attend the conference.

#### **To apply, please submit the following in writing:**

1. Name, Position, Employer(s)
2. IS section applying for
3. Statement verifying that little or no funding is received for professional development from employers
4. Statement indicating whether you have previously been awarded any travel awards from MIDTESOL
5. Statement verifying that you are a current member of MIDTESOL
6. Statement verifying that you're willing to volunteer a few hours at the conference
7. A brief summary explaining the impact attending the MIDTESOL conference has had on you in the past, the benefits you will receive by attending this time, and any professional involvement you have had and/or contributions you have made to the field of TESOL (these may include professional organizations, publications, interest groups, or projects in your workplace/community)

Applications must be sent to Awards Committee Chair Andrias Susanto ([andriassusanto@midtesol.org](mailto:andriassusanto@midtesol.org)). The subject line of your email should read my “#MIDTESOL24: IS Travel Award.”

**Deadline is August 20, 2024.** The Awards Committee and IS Interest Chairs will judge entries. Winners will be contacted by August 26, 2024 so that they can register for the Early Bird rate for the conference.

## ***Presenter Travel Award***

*If you have been notified of acceptance to present at #MIDTESOL24, you are encouraged to apply for a Travel Award to help fund expenses. Up to three (3) Travel Awards of \$150 each will be granted.*

To apply, the following items must be submitted to Awards Committee Chair Andrias Susanto ([andriassusanto@midtesol.org](mailto:andriassusanto@midtesol.org)) by **August 20, 2024**. The subject line of your email should read “#MIDTESOL24: Presenter Travel Award Submission.”

**All application materials must be combined into one continuous document *arranged in the order listed below*:**

1. Contact information, including name, email, and institutional affiliation;
2. Notification of proposal acceptance;
3. A brief statement (approximately 300 words, 12-point and double-spaced) describing the benefit that attending and presenting at the MIDTESOL conference will bring to you and other ELT professionals in your community;
4. An account of any outside funding sources received for travel to the conference;
5. A list of MIDTESOL Travel Awards received in the past; and
6. An agreement to submit a report outlining your presentation within a month of the conference for publication in MIDTESOL Matters, the organization’s electronic newsletter.

**You will receive confirmation from the Awards Chair that your submission has been received and then a notification if you are a winner by August 26, 2024 to allow you to register for the conference at the Early Bird discounted rate.** Submissions undergo blind peer review. Incomplete applications or applications that are not in compliance with the instructions listed above will not be considered out of fairness to all applicants.

In the event that there are more proposals deemed worthy than there is money available to fund them, preference will be given to the applicant who (1) does not have external support for travel to the conference and (2) has never before received a MIDTESOL Travel Award. Decisions made by reviewers are final.

**Best regards from the MIDTESOL 2024 Conference Planning Committee!**

*Carolyn Heacock (Acting Conference Chair and Exhibitor Coordinator)*

*Takijah Logugda (Conference Program Chair)*

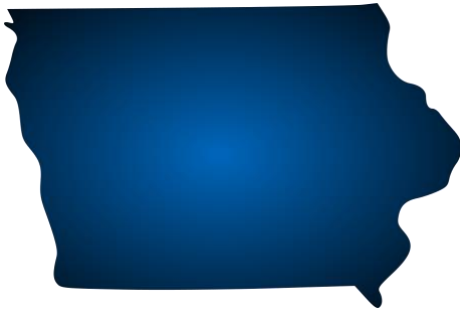
*Sule Yildirim Biten and Shaeley Santiago (CVENT Support)*

*Ben Vilkas, Lorraine Gardner, Zach Smith, Kara Hutton (Conference Counsel, Registration, etc.)*

*Vicki Anderson (Communications Director)*

## MIDTESOL State News

*MIDTESOL wants to give a hearty shout-out to 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; they work 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!*



**Brianne Arnold**  
**Iowa Member-at-Large**  
*Linn-Mar Community  
Schools*  
*Linn County, Iowa*



### State Report: Iowa

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

IOWA

#### State and Testing Updates:

The state website is being updated to reflect new information.

- We have a new Title III Coordinator, Rachel Pettigrew.
- There was a recent change to the state's screening process and schools now need to screen and provide services for foreign exchange students.

#### Adult Education Spotlight

One spotlight for adult education comes from Kirkwood Community College in Eastern Iowa. Like many other schools in Iowa, they are facing some big changes and challenges. One big change was their movement from being overseen by the Iowa Department of Education to the Iowa Works/WIOA.

They are also experiencing some challenges for their program. One major challenge being that they are seeing an increased demand in their program and a high staff turnover. Kirkwood's ESL program has set registration dates throughout the year. On those registration dates, they "try to take 40-60 students" but "are having to turn

away 50-90 students” due to not having enough space with the limited staffing. With the increased number of enrollments, the program is also seeing more students with minimal literacy skills in both English and their heritage language. The struggle with this is that many staff “do not have experience or higher education training to teach adult learners how to read and write”. Finally, like many schools across Iowa, the program is learning how best to serve and support language learners with disabilities.

Despite all the faced challenges the program has had some pretty spectacular results. One story was shared with me about a student who was referred by the Department of the Blind. This student had never been to school before and was not able to do many things for himself. Upon enrollment, the student was very excited to have the opportunity to learn. Through the program and the advocacy from staff, the student now has a reader and scribe paraeducator (something that is not supported by higher education despite the need) and is able to do many basic communication tasks by himself. Another amazing success was that the program was the only college in the state to have “met the state’s metrics of achieving 65% of all learners in the program making one measurable skill gain within a program year.”

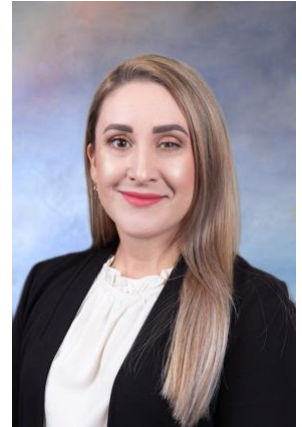
## **Iowa Legislative Update**

Governor Reynolds has signed a bill to overhaul the state’s AEA’s. It allows schools to opt out of AEA services and seek help from other outside private sources. It also puts the AEAs under the Iowa Department of Education requiring them to seek approval for provided services and learning opportunities and it restricts their services to Special Education and professional learning opportunities for staff.

The new bill is concerning for many Iowans as it greatly overhauls the sources available to many school districts across the state. The AEAs not only provide special education services and professional development opportunities, they also support gifted and talented, behavioral, English language learners, printing, online materials and programs, and many others. The bill will go into effect gradually, but once fully enacted for the 25-26 school year, schools will receive 100% of the general education and media services funds and can choose to continue to pay the AEA’s for these services under a “fee for service” model or pay for private companies. While this bill does allow for more flexibility of funding use for schools, it also makes it much more difficult for smaller districts to support their students as they wouldn’t be able to compete with the larger school districts. Follow [Iowa’s Legislative Information](https://educate.iowa.gov/legislative-information) page (<https://educate.iowa.gov/legislative-information>) for updates.



**Diana Mendoza**  
**Kansas Member-at-Large**  
*Dodge City Public Schools*  
*Dodge City, KS*



## State Report: Kansas

# KANSAS

### ESOL News in Kansas

#### Approved Language Screeners:

- KELPA Screener
  - This year KSDE implemented the use of the KELPA Screener to identify EL’s for initial placement. The same process for identifying those students that need to take the screener has not changed.
  - When should a student take the KELPA screener?
  - Students new to Kansas districts that indicate a language other than English on the home language survey must take the KELPA screener.
  - Students that enroll on the first day of school must take the screener within 30 days.
  - Those students that enroll after the first day of school should take the screener within two weeks.
  - Must be administered by a licensed educator
  - Test proctors must be trained prior to screening
  - KELPA Pre-Screener Option
  - Students that are new to the country can take the KELPA Pre-Screener versus taking the entire KELPA Screener.
  - Results from the Pre-Screener will identify a student as an EL or as needing to take the entire KELPA Screener.
  - Must be administered by a licensed educator.
  - Test proctors must be trained prior to screening.
- **Preschool Students**
    - **Pre-IPT or Pre-LAS**
      - Some programs screen at the end of the school year to monitor progress.
      - If the Pre-IPT or Pre-LAS is administered to a preschool student in the Spring, the student would not need to complete the KELPA screener upon entering Kindergarten to be eligible for services.

### **WIDA Alternate ACCESS ELP Assessment (began 23-24):**

- For English Learners with a most significant cognitive disability
  - Student has a home language survey indicating a language other than English and are DLM eligible.
- The WIDA Alternat ACCESS assessment window is the same as the KELPA window
- Paper format, not computer based
- Assesses the four domains: listening, reading, writing, and speaking.
- Test administration training is required every year.
  - There are 4 modules to complete and one quiz that must be passed.
  - Approximately one hour to complete.

### **ESOL Endorsement: How will requirements change?**

- A “test plus” requirement
  - Must pass the ESOL PRAXIS exam.
  - Content-Specific professional learning and assessment of the professional learning will be required. This professional learning will take place through college/universities that approved ESOL programs. The list of approved programs will be provided to districts.
  - Professional learning component for ESOL will be related to the practical application of content knowledge.
  - Minimum of 6 credit hours. Courses to be determined by program.
- Estimated Implementation date: Not earlier than July 1, 2024
  - A transition period will exist to allow for the creation of the professional learning component and assessment for the professional learning component.
  - Endorsement may be added by testing during the transition period. If the content exam is passed and application made to teacher Licensure on or before June 30, 2024, the endorsement may be added to a license by passing the content exam only.

### **Book Study Opportunities:**

- KSED offered two book studies during the 23-24 school year that aimed to assist ESOL teachers and general education teachers in understanding language acquisition; planning, teaching, and assessing English Language lessons; using evidence-based skills and activities.
- Books included:
  - *ELT Basics: A Beginner’s Guide to English Language Teaching* by Jan Edwards Dormer
  - *7 Steps to a Language-Rich, Interactive Classroom, Second Edition* by John Seidlitz and Bill Berryman

*\*Information listed above can be found in the webinar information shared by KSDE. Access webinar information here: <https://www.ksde.org/Agency/Division-of-Learning-Services/Special-Education-and-Title-Services/Title-Services/Title-III-State-ESOL/ESOL-Education-Resources>.*





**Madina Djuraeva**  
**Nebraska**  
**Member-at-Large**  
*University of*  
*Nebraska - Omaha*



## State Report: Nebraska

### Nebraska's Multilingual Learner Education:

NEBRASKA

#### Good efforts

- UNO is launching a dual enrollment Introduction to Teaching ESL course for high-schoolers in Millard Public Schools. One of the goals to recruit more teacher candidates of color and multilingual teacher candidates to the teacher education program.
- Some districts are trying to have one designated school counselor for multilingual learners, which seems to be yielding positive results.
- Nebraska Department of Education is starting the 3<sup>rd</sup> cohort of Project ASSETS for Educators this July.

See [https://drive.google.com/file/d/1t2kMZA5Ji8mnq3Vu8IFThep56gSxz\\_JB/view?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1t2kMZA5Ji8mnq3Vu8IFThep56gSxz_JB/view?usp=sharing)  
The flyer with information and links to the schedule and registration is here: They will also have their 4<sup>th</sup> cohort for parents with the Project ASSETS FLI this fall.

- English version: [https://drive.google.com/file/d/11U0FgiTj4jYUwF0Frshx1CXWIOFZSt\\_b/view?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/file/d/11U0FgiTj4jYUwF0Frshx1CXWIOFZSt_b/view?usp=sharing)
- Spanish version: [https://drive.google.com/file/d/18snXuU-4iVDTIiHI85IZL6e-Zir2U\\_R7/view?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/file/d/18snXuU-4iVDTIiHI85IZL6e-Zir2U_R7/view?usp=sharing)

- Several school districts in Omaha Metro Area are organizing wonderful events and workshops for multilingual learner families, including goal setting workshops for parents (Bellevue Public Schools), reading club for parents and children (Papillion-La Vista Public schools).
- Translanguaging strategies were discussed in the recent MATELLs (Metro Area Teachers of ELLs ) meeting, as a way to let students' rest their brains from English, yet still stay engaged with content.
- Millard Public Schools just finished up some Spring Break Art Classes for their Afghan students. They had middle and high school art teachers in their district teach some classes on creativity. The finishing products turned out great. It was a great opportunity for their MLs,

but also for some teachers that don't usually work with MLs.

- They are also organizing a Tea time for Multilingual Moms coming up on April 23 at 9:30 a.m. They had one in the fall and the women who attended loved it and asked them to do another. It's really a chance for these women to get out of their house and be with other women like themselves.

## **Assessment**

- Nebraska was one of the states to develop and implement the alt-ELPA over the last several years. It was a multi-state project that UCLA coordinated, and they hired teams of teachers from the participating states (in ELL and SPED) to work on the test. They piloted it last year and this year is its first "live" year. 29,217 students were tested with the ELPA21 this year, which is up from 26,588 students last year. 69 students took the Alt ELPA this year. ELPA21 results are expected to be out on May 6.

## **Instructional products**

- Some districts are looking into HMH's new product called English 3D and CKL's ELA curriculum with 1.5hr block for multilingual learners.

**Population** – There is a shortage of multilingual teachers in the nations, and NE demonstrates a growing need for bilingual educators. Just Grand Island, NE welcomed 975 students in one AY, hoping to reach 1,000 by the end of the AY 😊. Adult ESL classes are growing in number as well.

Sincerely,

Madina

Connect with MIDTESOL on social media





## About our Organization

Contact us at  
[www.midtesol.org](http://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 of 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*