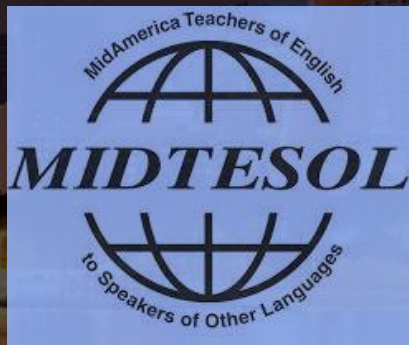


**Summer 2020**

# MIDTESOL Matters

*The Mid-America  
TESOL Affiliate Newsletter*



Gateway Arch  
St. Louis, Missouri

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### **Advocating Through Uncertainty and Trauma**

*"I have never been so proud in my life to be a professional, life-long educator because there is no "magic" that switched schools to an online delivery model overnight, only the skill, creativity, determination, and intelligence of the world's best problem solvers."*

-Adrienne Johnson  
Socio-Political Concerns and  
Professional Standards Chair

# MIDTESOL Matters

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### Follow Us!



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## A Message from the President

**Dr. Thu Tran**  
**MIDTESOL President**  
Missouri University of  
Science & Technology  
Rolla, Missouri



Dear MIDTESOL members,

MIDTESOL is in an unprecedented time. The pandemic has forced us to move our long cherished face-to-face conference online to protect our members from any potential risk of COVID-19 transmission. The conference committee has been doing a sterling job of preparing for the first e-conference ever in the history of MIDTESOL. I am eagerly waiting to attend our e-conference in October.

The field of English language teaching is facing multiple challenges. The pandemic disrupts our daily lives. English language educators have been laid off as result of budget constraints or are worried about job security due to significant drop in international student enrollment. Students as well as teachers miss the in-person interaction of the physical classroom that no online environment is able to replace.

English language educators have been extraordinarily resilient in coping with the sudden move to online teaching. We are a community of lifelong learners. Despite challenges, MIDTESOL is committed to serving its students and teachers. One concrete step MIDTESOL is going to take is organizing coffee hours online where MIDTESOL members can socialize and learn together. Please watch for upcoming information about virtual coffee hours.

We can get through this together and become an even stronger, more resilient and creative professional community.

Thu Tran  
#MIDTESOL20 President, [tranthu@mst.edu](mailto:tranthu@mst.edu)

Connect with MIDTESOL on social media



# Follow #TESOL2020



Registration is now closed, but you stay up-to-date by following #TESOL2020 this weekend & look for information to be shared out on MIDTESOL's website after the conference concludes.

## THE Online Event for English Language Educators



3 DAYS OF LEARNING & NETWORKING



HEAR ENGAGING KEYNOTES



CONNECT WITH COLLEAGUES WORLDWIDE



LEARN FROM 100 SESSIONS



FIND NEW ELT PRODUCTS & SERVICES



Andrés Ruzo  
**Opening Keynote**  
Thursday, 16 July, 12:00 PM  
Hacking Parallax: A  
NatGeo Explorer on the  
Power of Perspective



Mandy Manning  
**James E. Alatis  
Plenary**  
Friday, 17 July, 02:00 PM  
Our Paramount Duty:  
Language as a Vehicle for  
Connection and  
Belonging



Michel DeGraff  
**Saturday Keynote**  
Saturday, 18 July, 09:00 AM  
#BlackLivesMatter, so no  
language is 'other'!



Deborah Healey  
**Presidential  
Keynote**  
Saturday, 18 July, 02:30 PM  
Teaching with Play:  
Games, Game-based  
Learning, and  
Gamification

# #MIDTESOL20 Des Moines, IA

## Speaking on the Right to Education



**Molly Kelley**  
**MIDTESOL 2020**  
**Conference Chair**

Registration is now open for MIDTESOL's 2020 E-Conference, ***Community at a Crossroads: The Right to Education***, which will be held on **Saturday, October 3rd online**. Thinking of education as a human right does not apply to our students alone, and to this end, our conference will be more inclusive than it has ever been. Registration is only \$25 for members, \$35 for affiliate members, \$45 for non-members, and \$10 for paraeducators and students. By reducing registration fees and eliminating travel costs, we are making our conference more inclusive, and there's never been a better time for that.

We look forward to seeing you in October.  
-Molly Kelley



**MIDTESOL 2020**  
**[Click Here to Register!](#)**

## #MIDTESOL20 - Community at a Crossroads: The Right to Education

~~October 2, 2020—October 3, 2020  
7:30 AM-5:00 PM~~

~~Des Moines Marriott Downtown  
700 Grand Avenue  
Des Moines, IA 50309~~

**Now Online!**

# #MIDTESOL20 Featured Speakers

**Kory Stamper** has been a lexicographer and editor for two decades and has grappled with everything from the meaning of “god” to the vagaries of “the” for native speakers and English-language learners alike. Her writing on language, lexicography, and usage has appeared in *The New York Times*, *The Boston Globe*, *The Washington Post*, and in her best-selling book *Word by Word: The Secret Life of Dictionaries*. She currently works with Cambridge Dictionaries as a senior editor of American English on their ELL dictionaries, and is presently writing more books about the wild, wending paths that the English language takes. She will speak about linguistic identity, the origins of Standard English, and the importance of English education to combat the weaponization of words.



**Dr. Christel Broady** is an international leader in the field of English Language teaching. She is a professor of advanced graduate education as well as the director of the ESL teacher Education Program at Georgetown College. At TESOL, Dr. Broady is a member of the TESOL Board of Directors and, over the past 20 years, has served in many leadership roles in Kentucky at Southeast TESOL, and TESOL International.



She currently represents TESOL on the national workforce for the revisions of a Seal of Biliteracy in K-12 schools. As an English Language Specialist for the US Department of State, Dr. Broady conducts assignments abroad. Most importantly, as an immigrant and English learner herself in a tri-cultural household, she represents internationals living in multicultural and –lingual families in the United States, raising a multilingual child. She is a fierce advocate for immigrants and their teachers. Dr. Broady will give a talk and a breakout session discussing literacy and the brain with respect to second language education and research, setting the stage for effective classroom practices.

**Erica Johnson**, is the Director of the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC), an organization which focuses on immigrants’ rights by providing legal services to and advocating for immigrants here in the Midwest. Erica has been advocating for immigrants’ rights for more than a decade and has a diverse background in



organizing with grassroots meat-packing plant workers and statewide coalition partners as well as providing direct assistance for immigrant victims of crime. From coordinating mega-marches for comprehensive immigration reform in Washington D.C. to building local, congregation-based approaches to address human trafficking and domestic violence, her work is driven towards positive, systemic changes at the local, state, and federal levels. Her workshop will aim to build the capacity of educators and service providers to respond to their students and clients in this anti-immigrant socio-political context of our times. She will share basic steps to address the unique needs of immigrants facing or who fear deportation, and she will provide an overview of information, tools, and strategies to support families and communities.

2020

## K-12 ESL Student Essay Winners



### K-12 Student Essay Winner Kimberly Flores-Ruiz 1st Place \$100

Sponsoring Teachers: Judy Sanner & Debra Stevens  
Junction City High School, Junction City, KS

#### Is education equal?

Equality: The state of being equal, especially in status, rights, and opportunities. More than 72 million children of primary education age are not in school and 759 million adults can't improve their living conditions or the education their children need. My mom has always told me her struggles in Mexico for her education. She told me that "It was very hard for her mom to pay schooling for all 5 children." She dropped out during her high school year and decided to work so she could help her mom out. Her father passed away when she was young, so it was very hard for her family. A lot of families in Mexico go through what my mom has been through. Children between 5- 15 and older drop out of school and

start working so they can help their parents out. When I tell my mom "I'm tired of school," "I hate school," "I don't want to go to school," she will always respond with "You guys get free education, I bet some other kid would want to be in your shoes and would love to go to school because they can't," and I agree with that because it's true. Not every country has good education or education at all.

Inequality is not the same in other countries. For example, Mexico has a population of 129.2 million people and more than 1 million children which is 13% of children do not attend school. In the United States we have good technology, good schools, and good teachers

who care about our education. My mom would tell me that in Mexico the teachers didn't really care about your education or if you even passed the class. She said I should be grateful to have a good learning environment because not everyone is fortunate to have a good education with people who care about you and want you to succeed.

One of the main reasons why children don't attend school is because they can't afford it. A lot of families go through this, they either send their oldest child to go to school so they can get an education, or they send the second oldest child to school. 260 million children across the world do not attend school because they are either poor, they don't have any schools, they can't for religious reasons etc. In Africa one of the reasons why children don't attend school is because they don't have enough teachers, half of the children cannot read or write, and the distance of how far/close the school is. But most importantly is the poor-quality environment they live in.

What are we doing now to help children get the education they need? In the article

<https://www.borgenmagazine.com/education-in-developing-countries/> it says people want to reduce the cost of education in Africa so more families can afford their children's education, and improve resources for teachers so they can help educate children better. There are also websites that you can go to and help donate money to children who want to go to school but can't because they don't have the money.

[https://pearlsbuck.org/sponsor-a-child/?gclid=EA1aIQobChMllcD6xs2D6AIVDdbACh2I7gk7EAAYASAAEgJCw\\_D\\_BwE](https://pearlsbuck.org/sponsor-a-child/?gclid=EA1aIQobChMllcD6xs2D6AIVDdbACh2I7gk7EAAYASAAEgJCw_D_BwE) is a good charity website that helps donate money to children in need of education. There are also people who travel around the world and build schools in poverty countries.

Education is so important because it gives us knowledge and helps us be successful in the real world. If I could help children who want to go to school but can't I would because I know how important education is especially if you want a good life in the future. Not everyone is lucky enough to go to school. Education is not equal in every country and we should change that. Equality is very important not just in human rights but also in education rights.



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**K-12 Student Essay 2<sup>nd</sup> Place**  
**Jesus Gonzalez**  
**2<sup>nd</sup> place \$50**

Sponsoring Teachers: Judy Sanner & Debra Stevens  
Junction City High School, Junction City, KS



**K-12 Student Essay 3<sup>rd</sup> Place**  
**Jocelyn Montenegro**  
**3<sup>rd</sup> place \$25**

Sponsoring Teachers: Judy Sanner & Debra Stevens  
Junction City High School, Junction City, KS



2020

## Adult ESL Student Essay Winners

### Adult Essay Winner

#### Essoyodou Victor Houzou 1st place (will receive a \$100 check)

Sponsoring Teacher: Elizabeth Baertlein, Kirkwood Community College  
Cedar Rapids, IA



Do you know that education is our third foot? It seems like we cannot walk without education. I am a student in a community college. I graduated in business law in Togo and currently am taking English classes. In the following paragraphs, I will explain what education means to me. I will also explain how education is beyond studying classes at school and then the value of pursuing an education to me.

As far as I'm concerned, education is the only way to success. This can result in achieving knowledge, skills, attitude or earning a degree. For me education is the only way helping us discover who we really are and what we can do with our brains. I do not think that a person with a great education will be unwanted. With

education we can change the world. Education is an investment we can make because we all know it always provides benefits. This is my example: today I can read, write, and speak French and English. It can't be accomplished without education. For me education makes us go through our destiny. Education helps us know about everything in the world, such as news and culture of others. Therefore, we are not limited and think that the world is just the place we are living. But is education beyond studying classes at school?

For me, most of the time, many things we learned are not from school or attending classes. "Education is what remains after one has forgotten everything he learned in school," said Albert Einstein.

Education is life itself; I mean our daily life is education for us. From school we learned how to resolve specific problems, maybe by using books or research at library, through our professor's instructions in order to pass a class. But where are we gaining the basic education? Our parents teach us, like, "Do not do that, don't touch this because it's hot." We also learn from our society, the place where we grew up. We cannot ignore the importance of religion of each person. Our home, society, and religious education teaches us how to love, to be social, to behave, to respect, to understand each other fluently.

In my country, elders always say that studying classes at school is good, but do not ignore the education you've got home. For example, how to cook and to keep the house clean are learned from our parents. We also learn through our daily experiences such as problems, challenges, mistakes and activities. Personally, for example, I learned how to use a machine to forge metal back in Togo from a friend who had this skill. Then I will add the way we learned our native language. I can speak Ewe, a language from the south of Togo and Kabye, a northern language. I learned all of them at home with my parents, even though they were not spoken at school. Some people in this world had not attended classes at school, but their ability to think and

creativity made them successful. One of my brothers can fix every electronic material such as phones and computers. He is also good at mechanics by repairing cars, even though he didn't learn it at school.

However, pursuing school education will be valuable to me. For me there is no education without value. One of the best ways to have a good career is to attend school, earn a degree then graduate. For me education is a connection that brings us to greatness. So, pursuing education will help me realize my qualities and potential as human. We build our life through education. With education, I will be able to make a critique without fear. Pursuing education will give me opportunities to achieve my goals, to be useful to my society and to the world with my knowledge. I will change my life by pursuing my education. Obviously, I will stand for law. I would like to be a legal adviser working at court, and for that I need to pursue my education.

To conclude, education is important in each human's life. We learn not only from school but also from our experiences every day. Through education, we increase our knowledge and skills, and it's a lifelong learning. We become what we study, we build our life and enjoy our hard work that we put into our studies by getting a good job. "What sculpture is to a block of

marble, education is to a human soul,” said Joseph

Addison.

## **Adult ESL Student Essay Renad Almadhi 2nd place (will receive a plaque)**

Sponsoring Teacher: Liza Armstrong  
University of Missouri-Center for English Language Learning  
Intensive English Program

## **Adult ESL Student Essay Tugce Parlak 3rd place (will receive a plaque)**

Sponsoring Teacher: Liza Armstrong  
University of Missouri-Center for English Language Learning  
Intensive English Program





Advancing Excellence in  
English Language Teaching

## Policy Recommendations for the 116<sup>th</sup> U.S. Congress *June 2020*

**TESOL International Association** (TESOL) is the trusted global authority for knowledge and expertise in English language teaching. With over 10,000 members, TESOL fosters the exchange of ideas to advance the expertise of those teaching English while supporting equity, diversity, and multilingualism. Issues and policy areas TESOL strongly supports include:

- *The creation of dedicated funding streams* that will help address the impacts of COVID-19 on PreK-12, post-secondary, and adult English learners and teachers.
- *Sufficient and effective funding* for federal education programs serving all English learners and newcomers, from birth through adult education.
- *Improved professional development and career pathways* for existing and future English language teachers to gain the skills required to meet the needs of the country's diverse English learner population of over 5 million K- 12 students.
- *Fair immigration policies* that do not discriminate or favor individuals based on their country of origin, English language skills, education level, race, religion, or sexual orientation and seek to promote welcoming environments within schools and communities.

**To support these priorities, TESOL asks the 116<sup>th</sup> Congress to act on the following issues:**

### **I. Emergency COVID-19 Funding Relief for English Learners at All Levels of Education**

Pass the HEROES Act in the Senate (H.R. 6800) that will provide \$100 billion to PK-12 and adult education, as well as post-secondary education institutions who are facing severe funding shortfalls due to the pandemic. As school districts, adult education programs, and institutions of higher education are struggling to provide equipment, access, and training for online learning, the funding in this bill will help support English learners at all levels of education across the country.

### **II. PK-12 Education & Teacher Preparation**

- Reject the president's proposals to cut \$5.6 billion from U.S. Department of Education and combine 29 separate funding streams of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) in the FY21 federal budget.
- Pass the Reaching English Learners Act (H.R. 1153, S. 545), which addresses the nation's critical shortage of English language teachers by providing grants for the training of future teachers of English learners.
- Pass the Supporting Providers of English Language Learners (SPELL) Act (H.R. 4389), which increases student loan forgiveness amounts for English language teachers. This bill also designates English language teachers as valued educators by putting them on the same level as math and science teachers, who are currently eligible for increased student debt forgiveness amounts.
- Fund Title III ESSA at \$985 million for FY 2021. Title III provides supplemental funding for the instruction of English learners, and has never received full funding, despite both inflation and the population of eligible students having increased.

# Policy Recommendations for the 116<sup>th</sup> U.S. Congress

## June 2020, Continued

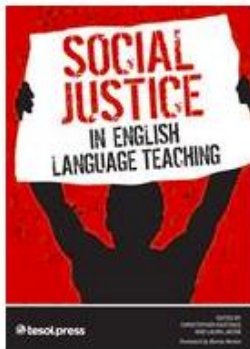
### III. Adult Education

• Fund Title II of the *Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act* (WIOA) at \$693 million for FY 2021. Title II of WIOA funds adult and family literacy programs across the country, improving the English language proficiency skills that many immigrant families depend upon to become successful members of their communities.

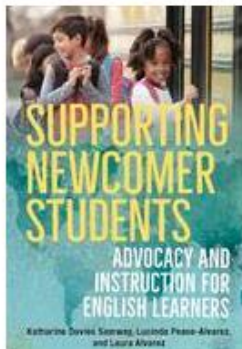
### IV. Immigration Reform

• Pass the *American Dream and Promise Act of 2019* (H.R. 6) and *Dream Act of 2019* (S.874), legislation that provides pathways to citizenship for DACA recipients and other undocumented immigrants who arrived to the United States as children or young adults.

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Social Justice in English Language Teaching



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Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages

# Advocating Through Uncertainty and Trauma

## By Adrienne Johnson



**How does one approach advocacy in a time where the term “unprecedented” is no longer unprecedented?**

Everything is new, everything is uncertain, and the needs are so great that it is hard to know where to begin. As I have

worked to support teachers over these past few months, who are, in turn, trying to support students who have faded into the abyss of hastily prepared distance education programs, one fact is clear: Educators across our region (and nation) are facing the dauntless task of identifying solutions for a system that, in many ways, already struggled to provide equal educational opportunities for all.

I have never been so proud in my life to be a professional, life-long educator because there is no “magic” that switched schools to an online delivery model overnight, only the skill, creativity, determination, and intelligence of the world’s best problem solvers. This is not to say that all our efforts have been successful. Reflective to a fault, educators will be the first to list the many ways in which this shift to online instruction has failed to meet the needs of their students. But let’s be fair. The models that were delivered this spring occurred with little to no training and zero preparation time. With training, support from experienced distance educators, and some creative thinking, I have personally witnessed numerous examples of phenomenal distance learning lessons. These supports take time to develop, often require funding, and certainly require input from the affected teachers and students.

Even as schools debate whether or not to open in-person this fall, the funding required to provide for a healthy, effective learning environment are staggering, and not all schools have access to equal funding. School district leaders, teachers, and students are best equipped to make decisions that will support a safe, effective learning environment, and yet the ability to make these decisions is being limited by those who have little to no practical classroom experience. Another

danger of the current times is that, with “everything” happening, the voices of those who lack power in our society are not heard, or even actively silenced. THIS is where the advocacy starts – with using our voices to amplify the issues that affect our profession, our students, and our students’ families. Thus, ask yourself – *what are your colleagues, your students, and your families experiencing right now?*

***Which of these issues may non-educators in your community not know about or misunderstand? How can you educate others about these issues?***

It is important to acknowledge, in these challenging times, that the level of trauma being inflicted on our society is great. We worry about our students who may never respond to our countless emails, texts, and phone calls. We worry about our colleagues, some of whom we know have pre-existing conditions and are scared to enter a potentially life-threatening environment. We worry for our friends, family, and ourselves. There is so much outside of our control that it may be hard to find the energy and strength required to support others, even as we know the need is great. Thus, give yourself permission to take care of yourself first. You cannot pour from an empty bucket. Address any trauma that you personally are facing, and offer grace to others who are likely facing their own hidden traumas and struggles.

As you find yourself ready to care for others, start by carefully examining your own frame of reference for the world. As trauma increases, so does stress. In a stressful state, we are more likely to react to disagreements emotionally, even defensively, forgetting that we have a “superpower” which is the ability to educate and support even the most difficult individual in our class using critical thinking and accurate, convincing information. Just as we prepare for our lessons, we must be sure to prepare for these potentially volatile conversations by reading primary sources that discuss different perspectives (i.e. if we wish to learn about the immigrant experience, we watch a documentary produced by and starring individuals who are immigrants, or if we are trying to understand the lived

experience of a person of color, we select resources authored by a person of color).

We must eliminate false narratives that perpetuate systemic inequalities by centering our students' strengths in conversations and being thoughtful about how we explain our students' struggles – *do we attribute students' struggles to the student, or do we acknowledge how those same struggles would not be as much of a barrier for other students who, historically, have more privilege in our society?*

Finally, do not underestimate the power of our own voices and experiences. Recently, my daughter engaged me in a version of the “why” game about who my “boss” was, and who their boss was, and their boss, and so on. Given that I am employed at a public institution, we eventually reached the level of the President of the United States, members of Congress, etc. She was shocked when we reached this highest level of society and my response to “who is their boss” was: “you,” “me,” and all voters. We do have power to create change, but our voices have to be loud enough. Whether through voting in every single election, calling our elected officials (do not forget our locally elected officials), speaking out on platforms where we have followers, or simply ensuring that our friends and family (who are also voters) know and understand the issues that affect us and our students, we are amplifying our voices in a time of trauma and uncertainty when it is most needed for the most vulnerable among us.

Most importantly, do not assume ‘someone else’ will advocate for your or your students. Our voices are stronger together. I can assure you that if you are not speaking up to share your perspective, someone else is, but their perspective may only be the loudest in the room because the room is otherwise silent.

**A few issues worth advocating for, and TESOL international legislative priorities, include:**

- **Changing** the recent modifications to the Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) that severely limit international students' ability to continue their education safely if universities move to online instruction in the Fall 2020 semester.
- **Funding for**
  - K-12 English learners (ELs) (Title III, Every Student Succeeds Act)
  - adult ELs (Title II, Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act)
  - supplemental aid for K-12 ELs in any future COVID-19 relief funding package passed by Congress.
- **Passing**
  - the American Dream and Promise Act by the United States Senate, which would ensure a path to permanent citizenship for Dreamers.
  - Passage of the Reaching English Learners Act, which would provide additional funding for the training of future TESOL educators at the K-12 level.

If these issues affect you, your colleagues, your students, and/or their families, there are tools for learning more and/or amplifying your voice available on the MIDTESOL website, as well as at the TESOL Advocacy Action Center: <https://www.tesol.org/advance-the-field/tesol-advocacy-action-center>



Best of luck preparing for the new school year – your efforts and passion are making a difference in our world, and for that, we are grateful!





## Members-At-Large State News

### State Update: Missouri by Elizabeth Holloway



MISSOURI

I wrote in October 2019 of the sense of isolation that I experienced upon returning to Missouri Valley College after the dynamic MIDTESOL annual conference in Omaha. At that time, I wrote about the difficulties of keeping connected to other TESOL professionals or staying current in my field. Little did I realize how the condition of isolation would deepen and become institutionalized just six months later. Nor did any of us realize how exhausting and challenging the changes in our educational practices brought on by COVID 19 would be. By now, the need to write, talk, and think about the effects of COVID 19 on teaching English to our many different constituents may seem either obvious, or maybe many are weary of the whole thing! With an eye to fall 2020, I feel that MIDTESOLers in Missouri are not writing, talking, or brainstorming *enough* with each other. Deprived of the more personal modes of communication and the stimulation of the live TESOL convention, it is easier than ever to not be engaged. Within our colleges and universities, COVID-19 required most of us to go 100% online mid-March, which included ESL, IEP, EAP, and TESOL graduate programs. It presented major technological and logistical challenges to teachers, administrators, and learners. For the immediate future, this will continue. Furthermore, future challenges are exacerbated by uncertainty.

Institutions are planning and implementing course delivery changes and safety plans to cope with returning students' safety, but many have not yet provided us with a clear path forward. Many of them have not asked for English teachers' input as they plan. Travel restrictions and economic pressures caused by the virus are expected to depress international enrollment. In March 2020, International enrollment accounted for 5-6% of college enrollment, statewide; some percentage of which needed English Language support or instruction. What will fall bring? Our colleagues teaching and supporting K-12 ELLs faced many (if not more) of the same technological and logistical challenges. Stay-at-home students lost the exposure to English they were afforded during the school day. Active communication channels with parents were disrupted. Among young English-speaking students, the likelihood that they lost ground academically during spring 2020 is high. [For our ELLs, it is higher.](#)

As in higher education, elementary and secondary schools face uncertainty for the fall, too. School districts are working on plans to reopen schools in an environment of limited hard information and advice. It is an overworked but true phrase, "the situation is fluid," and just about everything is "unprecedented". I have been unable to find much direction for teachers that is specific to English language instruction. Despite our difficulties, I have talked to many teachers who expressed moments of joy in the disrupted spring of 2020. Some of my students turned into better online students than they had ever been in my face-to-face class. All of my students, wherever they were, truly persisted; some produced surprising and outstanding work. Even online, they displayed their ability to "pull together" as we moved through those 8 weeks. Through all this, I realized how important communication was in combating isolation. I learned along with my students how to maximize technology to maintain our presence as a class.

We need each other and organizations like MIDTESOL now more than ever. Isolation can breed indifference, and now is not the time for that. MIDTESOL provides our Missouri members with opportunities to interact and grow as TESOL professionals. Our current Missouri membership is 85 individuals. If you know of others who would like to be less isolated and join in our community of professionals, please refer them to me. I also invite you to contact me with any news, concerns, or achievements that you would like to see reported, pursued, or congratulated in my reports to the board, or to be published in *MIDTESOL Matters*. My email address is [hollowaye@moval.edu](mailto:hollowaye@moval.edu).

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## Members-At-Large State News

### State Update: Nebraska Kaylene Powell



Greetings and all the best to our members during an ongoing time of challenge and changing opportunities!



NEBRASKA

I have some good news from the state front during the past winter months. Nebraska now has the ability to offer the Seal of Biliteracy to qualified high school students. See more information starting with the following web posts: [NEW NEBRASKA SEAL OF BILITERACY TO HONOR STUDENTS PROFICIENT IN MULTIPLE LANGUAGES](#) and [Nebraska Seal of Biliteracy](#).

Moving on to more pressing recent events, my spring semester took an unexpected turn in higher education. (And I know I am not the only one in my state who experienced small or large changes.) We at Bellevue University were finishing our first week of in-person class meetings for spring course when our president sent word that we would take a week to transition those courses online and then pick up again in the third week of the quarter. Thus, I found myself teaching whole classes, mid-stream, in real time on Zoom. Yes, there were bumps in the road. But in the end, my students had a mostly-successful finishing of all their requirements. Still, it was not an easy time!

Can anyone else relate? I know from various reports passed around that ELL educators across my state had to deal with a variety of teaching and administrative challenges in all sorts of resourceful and stressful ways. I do hope that each of you is able to take some time to meaningfully recharge during these summer months. Remember to take good care of yourself!

Thanks to those NE members who submitted proposals for presentations at our upcoming annual conference by the submission deadline. I am proud of and thankful for our NE members, no matter whether or not they present, but I am particularly thankful for those who are wanting to try and present, especially during such an unusual year.

I sent out an email recently to our state members and will be sending out a few more in the months ahead. Please watch for them and remember that you can always reach out to me at [kaylene.powell@bellevue.edu](mailto:kaylene.powell@bellevue.edu) with any questions or concerns you have, or to share your own stories and recent teaching experiences with me and our wider membership.

Are you a NE member who would like to contribute to the MIDTESOL blog, or do you have a suggestion for a topic you would like to see me cover on our MIDTESOL blog? If so, in either case, please email me and let me know! I would also love to hear if there are any topics you would like to hear me or another professional in the field give a webinar on in the months ahead.

## Program Administrators Interest Section (PAIS) Updates

**Program Administrators Interest Section (PAIS)** wants to hear from you!

If you are in charge of a K-12, Adult Basic Education Program, Intensive English Program at a 2 or 4-year college, or a Teacher Education/ESL Endorsement or Certification Program at a 2 or 4-year program, this group is for you.



**We have 3 ways to communicate with members:**



- **Facebook PAIS Group:** <https://www.facebook.com/groups/MIDTESOLPAIS>



- **Google Classroom:** Send your Gmail address to the Gmail below to join.  
Class Code: 4befrzg



- **Coffee Hour:** We will meet on Zoom every fourth Tuesday at 4:00-4:30 p.m.  
Upcoming dates: 6/23/20, 7/28/20, 8/25/20, 9/22/20, 10/27/20

**Survey:** Please take a survey to help us know how to better serve you in these uncertain times. [Survey Link Click Here](#)



If you have questions, please contact Michelle Schulze, PAIS Chair, at [mschulze@grandview.edu](mailto:mschulze@grandview.edu) or [mcschulze1@gmail.com](mailto:mcschulze1@gmail.com), or 816-517-1364 (call or text).

## Intensive English Program Interest Section (IEP) Updates

**Wow--2020 is certainly proving to be one of the most challenging for us working in IEPs or other English language programs! For the MIDTESOL IEP IS, here are a few sources to keep you up-to-date about what's happening within our industry.**



English USA, TESOL International, and UCIEP released a [joint statement](#) opposing ICE Guidance on International English Language Program Students for Fall 2020 if you haven't already had a chance to read it. I also encourage you to visit the **IEP Interest Section under MyTESOL**, which has some great discussion boards currently on issues such as this with which IEPs are dealing and is a good place to post your own questions, situations, and suggestions in order to engage with others going through the same challenges.



The *Chronicle of Higher Education* has a few interesting articles that those of you in IEPs may be interested in reading, including "[The Cruelty of ICE's Guidance for International Students](#)" and "[A New Policy Would Upend International Enrollments. Here Are Which Colleges Could Be Most Affected](#)"

If you are planning on attending the **Virtual TESOL Convention** this week, I would particularly like to suggest the featured session, "**Turbulent Times: The Future of USA Post-Secondary English Programs,**" which will take place at 7:00am on Thursday, July 16th. A panel of program leaders in the industry will be analyzing current challenges for English language programs in higher education as well as discuss possible solutions as we move forward together.

To finish, I hope to leave you all with a note of encouragement, compassion, and positivity. We have a strong and supportive network, both regionally and internationally, and we will get through this all together. What we come out with may not look like it has for us in the past, but whatever we end up creating in order to both adapt to and confront our challenges will come from a place of intention and passion for our international students and their English language education. Hang in there!

Crystal Bock Thiessen  
Intensive English Program Chairperson



# Top Social Media Picks!



**AGENDA LIVE 4/28 PEEK NOW**

## How to give ELLs a boost during online learning

Educators have to provide ELLs' parents with clear information about the shift to online instruction

By: [Matt Zalaznick](#) | April 21, 2020

This is a nice read about Millard Public Schools in Omaha, Nebraska about supporting the parents of ELLs during this transition. If you have other ideas or questions about this topic, comment below! To read the full article, see the link in comments.

[https://districtadministration.com/ell-esl-equity-english-language-learners-online-classes-learning/?fbclid=IwAR2D9dnp\\_7pJJOHs7RFYkhZUIzGs3LcuD6s3E239MIHD3d4UFeZCSQ](https://districtadministration.com/ell-esl-equity-english-language-learners-online-classes-learning/?fbclid=IwAR2D9dnp_7pJJOHs7RFYkhZUIzGs3LcuD6s3E239MIHD3d4UFeZCSQ)

Liked by [tckirkville](#) and 8 others

Dear [\[insert staffer first name\]](#),

My name is [\[XX\]](#) and I am a constituent of [Senator/Representative \[insert last name\]](#) from [\[insert hometown and company/college/university affiliation if appropriate\]](#). I hope this message finds you and your family well.

I write today to urge the [Senator/Representative](#) to dissuade the White House from issuing any order that would, even temporarily, restrict non-immigrant visas. An order that disrupts the ability of international students to stay in the U.S. after graduation for Optional Practical Training (OPT) and prevents international scholars from teaching and conducting research at U.S. higher education institutions will only further damage our economy, the financial health of U.S. colleges and universities, and global competitiveness in attracting the world's best and brightest students and scholars.

Consider these findings that show OPT is beneficial not just for international students, but also for U.S. employers and other Americans:

- According to a March 2019 Niskanen Center [report](#), experiential learning opportunities like OPT lead to increased innovation and higher average earnings, without costing U.S. workers their jobs or decreasing U.S. worker wages.
- Further, a March 2019 National Foundation for American Policy [study](#) focused on STEM enrollment found no evidence that OPT

Templates for writing your representatives about OPT training can be found in our link in Bio.

Thank you for posting this!

Anyone from [#kansas](#) want to work together on emailing our state delegation?

Liked by [elvirapeacock](#) and 13 others

**MIDTESOL @MIDTESOL**

## Congratulations to [@MissouriSandT](#) on their 10-year CEA reaccreditation of their Intensive English Program!

4:15 PM · Apr 28, 2020 · [Twitter Web App](#)

1 Retweet 6 Likes

**MIDTESOL @MIDTESOL**

## Congratulations to [@SCC\\_StCharlesCC](#) on the initial 5 year CEA Accreditation of their English Language Institute!

4:16 PM · Apr 28, 2020 · [Twitter Web App](#)

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1 Retweet 10 Likes

**MIDTESOL** May 12 · [@MIDTESOL](#)

LANGUAGEMAGAZINE.COM

## Stephen Krashen's Seven Tips for Teaching Language During Covid-19 - Language Magazine

**MIDTESOL @MIDTESOL** · Apr 11

[#MIDTESOLer Farrah Littlepage](#) presenting about [#MOOCs](#) for [#ELT](#) based on her recent [#ELFellows](#) role. [@ELPrograms](#) [#BELPaF](#) Symposium [@TESOL\\_Assn](#)

### Presenter Background

- English Language Fellow at US Embassy Vientiane and Lao Ministry of Education and Sports
- Teacher trainer at teacher trainer centers, universities, and secondary schools throughout Laos
- Nominated and coached Lao English teachers in passing and completing facilitated American English E-Teacher courses
- MOOC Camp Facilitator for self-paced American English E-Teacher course at American Center That Dam
- Completed online courses for degree coursework and for professional development
- Listening/Speaking Curriculum and Content Coordinator at University of Missouri

1 Retweet 3 Likes

**MIDTESOL** Published by WordPress (?) · May 1 · [@MIDTESOL](#)

HELLO! How are you? I miss you! I hope you and your family are doing well. I am so sad that school is closed and we can't meet together right now. I will be so excited to see you when we get back to school! If you want, you can write me back and tell me how you are and what you have been up to. Love, Mrs. Crank

When you write me back, just put your letter in this envelope and put it in your mailbox! Love, Mrs. Crank

HECHINGERREPORT.ORG

## Teachers use high and low-tech means to reach English Language Learners during coronavirus crisis



# MIDTESOL Member Profile

## Farrah Littlepage

*MIDTESOL member Farrah Littlepage recently answered a few questions about her career as an ELL professional.*

### Current position & time in position

ESL Lecturer, University of Missouri, 7 years

### Previous experiences

- English Language Fellow/Teacher Trainer, U.S. Department of State (EFL Continuing Education)
- ESL Instructor, Columbia Public Schools (Adult Education)
- Adjunct ESL Instructor, Columbia College (Tertiary Education)
- Summer Montessori Lead Teacher, Columbia Public Schools (Early Childhood)
- English Teacher, Columbia Public Schools (Grades 10 and 12)

### Education/training

- M.Ed. Curriculum & Instruction, focus in TESOL
- B.A. in Secondary English Education
- ESL, English, Spanish, and Adult Educ. End.

**Years as MIDTESOL (TESOL) member:** 7 years

**Interest Section(s):** IEP

### Fun Memory

In summer 2018, I co-taught a two-week camp for a few dozen visiting students from China. On cookie-baking day, I put students in groups and gave each person a role in the baking process. The students took their roles quite seriously and had animated conversations. There were sighs of relief when I announced they could halve the amount of sugar, as we all agreed that American desserts are too sweet! Some groups designed enormous cookies, with meticulously molded images and stylish fonts. While the cookies were baking, the students crowded around the oven windows. Their eyes widened as the dough rose. When we finally pulled the two gigantic cookies out of the oven, there were cheers all around. I had baked cookies many times with children and adults, but never had I seen such excitement! At the end of the camp, students ranked baking cookies as their favorite activity, over hip hop dancing and a downtown scavenger hunt. Many said they had never

baked or cooked anything in their lives, and that the experience made them feel proud. I am happy that my university gave me the opportunity to teach American culture in a non-traditional way. Light-hearted learning activities can be so meaningful for students—and for teachers, too!

### How did you become interested in working with ELLs?

Growing up, I made many international friends through my family and school, and I loved to learn about their languages and cultures. Since working with an international population was appealing to me, and because I studied English education as an undergraduate, ESL was a natural choice for me.

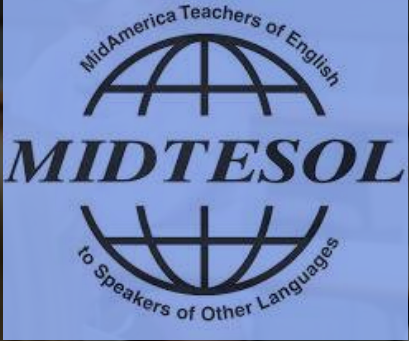
### What do you want people outside of the ELL field to know about your students?

My students have so much to offer in the workplace. Any language difficulties they may have are often eclipsed by their determination, adaptability, empathy, and broad perspectives. Many of them have valuable work and education experiences from their home countries in addition to the education they have received in the U.S..

### What advice do you have for teachers new to working with ELLs?

Develop an interest in the variety of educational cultures around the world. When students first arrive, they may not be aware of aspects of U.S. cultural expectations related to plagiarism, teacher-student relationships, homework, or free speech. If you are aware of the differences in educational culture students may encounter, you can respond with more empathy and communicate more clearly when you are helping ELs to be successful in your classes.

**Why are you a member of MIDTESOL?** To grow and learn, teachers need a community. I have given many conference presentations in the past few years, but my first opportunity to present was at a MidTESOL conference. I appreciate the ways MidTESOL has furthered my career, provided networking opportunities, and inspired new professional interests.



# 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 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*