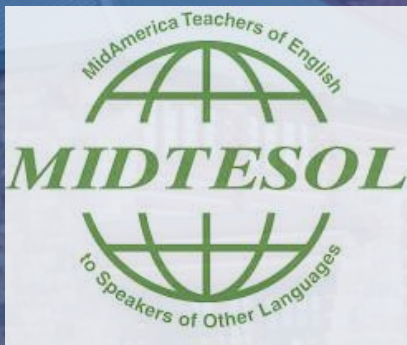


Summer 2021

MIDTESOL Matters

*The Mid-America
TESOL Affiliate Newsletter*



*The Archway
Kearney, Nebraska*

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Advocacy for ELLs Through Experience

"I never knew exactly what my students did when they were with the other teachers; nor was I sure whether they knew what they were doing when they were with me. This is where my journey into advocacy began."

Elizabeth Ault

Secondary ELL Teacher & Co-Teacher
Shawnee Mission Public Schools
Overland Park, KS

MIDTESOL Matters

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Follow Us!



MIDTESOL on Twitter: Follow us [Twitter.com/MIDTESOL](https://twitter.com/MIDTESOL)



MIDTESOL on Facebook: Like us [Facebook.com/MIDTESOL](https://facebook.com/MIDTESOL)



MIDTESOL on Instagram: Like us [Instagram.com/MIDTESOL](https://instagram.com/MIDTESOL)

A Message from the President

Kelly McClendon
MIDTESOL President

Washburn University
Intensive English
Program Coordinator
Topeka, Kansas



Dear MIDTESOL members,

I hope you are enjoying the summer and are able to do some things you couldn't do last summer. Don't forget to take some time for self-care this summer after a crazy year in all aspects of our lives. MIDTESOL is looking forward to the annual conference this year on October 22-23, 2021. The conference will be virtual this year, but this time, our wonderful conference committee has had many months to prepare and invite some amazing speakers. Please check out the conference page. There are price points for members, non-members, students, and members of other TESOL affiliates. And please look out for a chance to apply for an award that will pay your registration fees. MIDTESOL gives awards to outstanding proposals for members and student members and also through our Interest Sections. Continue to watch MIDTESOL social media for special announcements leading up to the conference. I have heard there are many giveaways and opportunities for networking, professional development, and advocacy within our field for our students.

I would also like to encourage all of you who are thinking about more involvement in our field for this new year of teaching to consider participating in the MIDTESOL Board. We have several positions that will be open starting in October at conference time. Feel free to email me at kellymcclendon@midtesol.org or Thu Tran, our immediate Past President, at thutran@midtesol.org if you have any questions or are interested.

Kelly McClendon
#MIDTESOL2021 President

Connect with MIDTESOL on social media



REGISTER NOW!



MIDTESOL
2021

Paradigm Shift in ESL
Education:
Forging an Educational
Framework
for a
Post-Pandemic World

Virtual Conference
REGISTER NOW
October 22-23

Join the MIDTESOL Team! Open Positions for 2021

Conference Chair 2023

Progresses to current chair after being elected as future Conference Chair; voting member

Unique Responsibilities

- Submit current conference information to MIDTESOL Matters editor(s) for each quarterly edition
- Submit conference report to board prior to winter board meeting
- Oversee all aspects of conference preparation
 - Call and attend conference committee meetings
 - Manage all logistics related to venue and accommodations
 - Appoint Registration and Volunteer coordinators
 - Coordinate with Program Chair to create/print conference program
 - Coordinate with Ed Tech IS Chair on setting up EdTech Bazaar
 - Coordinate with Communications Committee on conference promotion including sharing details of conference rates, speakers, etc. in a timely fashion
- Submit current conference information to MIDTESOL Matters editor(s) for each quarterly edition
- Submit conference report to board prior to winter board meeting

General Responsibilities

- **Attend Board meetings 3 times a year**
 - Submit board member report prior to each board meeting via the MIDTESOL Gmail
- **Drive**
 - Attend fall conference
 - Attend 2-3 officer meetings via Zoom each year
 - Attend one spring IS meeting, if held
 - Represent the Association at events and with other organizations at the request of the
- **President**
 - Submit 1-2 weekly features for the MIDTESOL website
 - At end of term, update Job Description and Orientation materials for next President

Program Chair 2023

Executive appointment; non-voting member

Unique Responsibilities

- Submit "Save-the Date" and any other pertinent information to MIDTESOL Matters editors
- Plan and develop the conference program
 - Includes forming a sub-committee made up of IS Chairs (and others as needed) to review proposals
 - Make final decisions on acceptance/rejection of proposals
 - Communicate with proposal submitters (acknowledgement of receipt; acceptance/rejection decision)
 - Coordinate with Current Chair on assigning rooms/times for presentations
 - Coordinate with Current Chair on setting up/managing pre-conference workshops
 - Coordinate with Current Chair on setting up/managing extra events such as interest section meetings
 - Coordinate with Current Chair on creation of conference program
- Attend conference committee meetings
- Assume current chair duties at end of term

General Responsibilities

- **Attend Board meetings 3 times a year**
- Submit board member report prior to each board meeting via the MIDTESOL Gmail
- **Drive**
 - Attend fall conference
 - Attend 2-3 officer meetings via Zoom each year
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- **President**
 - Submit 1-2 weekly features for the MIDTESOL website
 - At end of term, update Job Description and Orientation materials for next President

Member-at-Large Missouri and Kansas

The Members at Large shall represent the geographic areas of MIDTESOL: Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, and Nebraska. They shall be responsible for promoting membership and helping to ensure membership involvement in the Association. They will assist the Executive Board, as requested, in planning and facilitating MIDTESOL events in their geographic areas, such as mini-conferences or workshops, either as separate events or in cooperation with other organizations. They shall serve as members of the Nominating Committee.

Secretary

The Secretary shall record the minutes of the Annual Business Meeting, all meetings of the general membership, and all Executive Board meetings, and shall mail such minutes to all Executive Board members on a timely basis. Minutes shall be provided to any MIDTESOL member, upon request in writing. She/He shall conduct the correspondence of the Association, as requested by the President.

Director of the Communications Committee

Education Technology IS Chair

- Communicate with the board through various electronic formats (e.g., teleconferences, shared Google documents, and social networks)
- Organize and attend the interest section meetings at the next two MIDTESOL Conferences
- Attend the annual winter and summer board meetings or send a representative
- Attend 2-3 officer meetings via Zoom each year
- Hold elections for a Chair Elect and other positions as necessary
- Maintain a communication platform (e.g. listserv, social media, etc.)
- Work closely with the Chair Elect to train for the Chair position
- Submit IS information to quarterly editions of MIDTESOL Matters
- Evaluate proposal submissions to the annual conference
- Review article submissions for the proceedings journal
- Submit 1-2 weekly features for the MIDTESOL website
- At end of term, update Job Description and Orientation materials for next Chair

Unique Responsibilities

- Serve as Chair of the Communications Committee
- Act as General Editor for all MIDTESOL publications
- Appoint Communications Committee editors with board approval
- Coordinate communication and collaboration among all MIDTESOL editors and publications
- Assist MIDTESOL editors with the various publications as needed

General Responsibilities

- Attend board meetings 3 times a year to plan and implement vision
- Submit board member report prior to each board meeting via the MIDTESOL Gmail Drive
- Attend monthly officer meetings via Zoom
- Attend TESOL and attend the Editor's workshop
- Attend fall conference
- Attend 1 spring IS meeting, if held
- Represent Association at events and with other organizations at request of president
- Submit 1-2 weekly features for the MIDTESOL website
- At end of term, update Job Description and Orientation materials for next Director

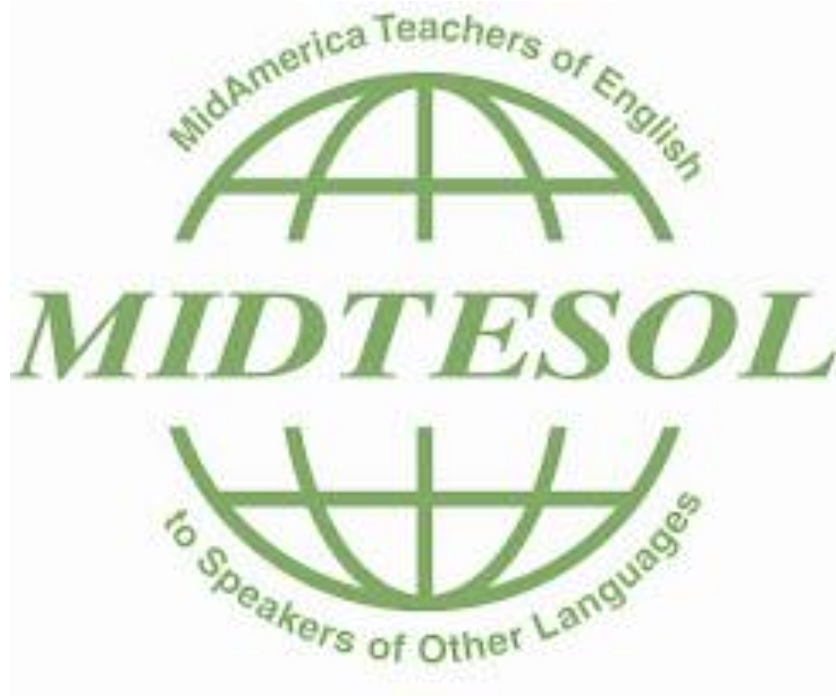
Editor, MIDTESOL Journal

Unique Responsibilities

- Prepare submission information for fall conference presenters and disseminate that information in coordination with emails from the Conference Program Chair
- Make submission information available on the Affiliate website
- Solicit readers for the peer review panel based on interest section area
- Receive submissions from presenters
- Prepare submissions and reviewer information for the review panel and disseminate to that panel
- Interact with reviewers and authors during the editing process for articles that need revision
- Prepare the final copy of the proceedings for digital publication
- Disseminate the proceedings to the membership

General Responsibilities

- Attend board meetings 3 times a year to plan and implement vision
- Attend 1-2 officer meetings via Zoom each year
- Attend TESOL when possible and go to the Editor's workshop
- Attend fall conference
- Represent Association at events and with other organizations at request of president
- needs a description written
- Collaborate with other MIDTESOL Editors as needed and requested by the Communications Chair



Advocacy for English Language Learners Through Experience

By Elizabeth Ramirez Ault



I began my teaching career in 2011 as a traveling English as a Second Language teacher. I was assigned to be a traveling teacher

from the public-school district to the parochial schools in the Kansas

City, KS, area. In the parochial schools, I was the only

designated teacher to serve English language

learners (ELLs) through a complicated schedule of classes

and pull-out groups. I understood my job as

supporting students with developing their English language

skills while other teachers taught our ELLs

other courses. I never knew exactly what my students did

when they were with the other teachers; nor

was I sure whether other teachers knew what students

were doing when they were with me.

This is where my journey into advocacy began. Students

labeled as ELLs were then “my students” and my

responsibility. As a new teacher, I felt I had lots of content

knowledge but little knowledge about how to best

advocate for the students currently enrolled in my courses and the best programming for my students once they graduate.

Advocating for my current students first started with the recognition that ESL students are everyone’s students and in everyone’s classes; they are not just my charges.

Students enrolled in any educational system belong to all

faculty and staff. From administration to support staff, all

need to understand the process by which students are

enrolled and how to communicate with families. I continue

to work to embed SIOP© (Sheltered Instruction

Observation Protocol) strategies and knowledge of

language development in every professional development

opportunity. Developing an understanding of language

objectives can help all students access content regardless

of English abilities. Making information available in the

languages that my students’ families do understand is also

helpful. Advocating for the student involves more than their

school experience; it involves their communities. I also had

to keep up with state level changes and

developments with regards to English language learners; this is usually where I have more questions than answers. The majority of my time has been teaching and working with students who are at the end of their K-12 journey. Many exit ESL courses and programming; others need continued support in English. I know that universities, colleges, and community colleges have strong and supportive programs for students with various linguistic levels. I have made connections with local institutions and have asked for post-graduation programming specifically for English language learners and their families. Working with school counselors and administrators about issues specific to English language learners and their families supports students once they leave high school because I also know that families and students are sometimes at odds as to what will happen after graduation. I have also made connections through consulates so students who are returning to their home countries know what they need to do have credits and graduation accepted. Through these experiences and frustrations, I have seen that I needed to fully understand the scope of issues affecting the ESL populations in the schools I am working in. Advocacy starts locally and moves its way up through classrooms to school districts to departments of

education, and at the national level. There are specific issues that MIDTESOL and TESOL advocate for that support the learning of students and development of staff at each of these levels. Meeting with teachers, staff, and directors who share their experiences and work together to advocate for the best environment for our culturally and linguistically diverse students, there is always more to learn. My ability to advocate comes from quality information, research, and being connected with other educators.

Elizabeth Ault is the Secondary ELL Teacher and Co-Teacher for Shawnee Mission Public Schools (Overland Park, KS). Elizabeth is a candidate for Ph. D. in Educational Policy from the University of Kansas, an M.S. Ed. in Curriculum and Instruction with an emphasis in TESOL from the University of Kansas. She has taught English as a Second or Another Language in a variety of 6-12 contexts: sheltered, co-teaching, and direct language instruction. She is active in advocacy and policy issues that affect ESOL students and their families. When not working, Elizabeth enjoys traveling, working out, being a wife and mother, and learning.

TESOL Advocacy and Policy Summit Recap

Ashley Hagy



When the opportunity to participate in the TESOL Advocacy and Policy Summit approached this year, I was eager to participate, but I had no idea what to expect given that it was a virtual event. Prior to the summit, Dr. DJ Kaiser reached out to me since I was one of three participants from our state. He introduced me to Dr. Adrienne Johnson, a veteran advocate for English language learners. The guidance that TESOL provided during the summit was informative, practical, and empowering. If I had been on my own, however, I would have missed

the advocacy day as I was unaware of the scheduling process to meet with representatives. Adrienne and DJ reached out to several representatives before the summit on behalf of our group, and Adrienne even made time after teaching an evening class to meet with me at 8:00 pm the night before our meeting with Senator Roy Blunt's office! Elizabeth Ault, another advocacy veteran from MIDTESOL, joined us for this meeting. From their examples, I learned to be concise and to balance data with personal stories.

My biggest takeaway from this experience has been the importance of relationships—with both those who share my advocacy concerns as well as with those whom I fear might disagree with me. Building relationships with others through TESOL has helped me improve my advocacy skills, foster a sense of community, and network within the field. Advocacy is not a one and done event; playing the long game and building relationships with individuals in government encourages them to listen to us—not just as constituents but as people, too. I look forward to participating in more advocacy efforts, and I am grateful for the mentorship made possible through this event!

Ashley has taught ESOL for 10 years in Thailand, Vietnam, and the United States and is completing an M.Ed. in TESOL this year. Currently, she is employed as the curriculum developer and trainer for the Refugee Career Pathways program at the International Institute of St. Louis.

New Ways to Advocate by Adrienne Johnson



As with so many areas of life, the world of advocacy is both the same and changed, post-pandemic. From June 21-23, 2021, TESOL International gathered advocates for two and a half days of advocacy training and action. As with previous years, the attendees received up-to-date legislative updates and inspiration from leaders from across the field. Unlike many of the previous years, the annual TESOL Advocacy Summit was virtual for the second time since 2020 and included numerous participants from all over the world. This international audience benefitted from an increased emphasis on diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts in the TESOL field and were able to reach out to their elected officials through virtual meetings. The new, virtual format increased accessibility to the conference by lowering costs associated with travel while maintaining powerful messages and inspiration. This intermixing of old and new is a reminder of the progress that can be made through collective advocacy, and even through some of the most difficult battles.

Every year, TESOL International publishes legislative policy recommendations for Congress. Many of the TESOL-related legislative initiatives remain unchanged from 2020, and even 2019. In the area of PK-12 Education and Teacher Preparation, there are multiple bills related to providing grants (Reaching English Learners Act) and loan forgiveness (Supporting Providers of English Language Learners) to teachers of multilingual learners. There is also a new bill (Bilingual Education Seal and Teaching – BEST - Act) that encourages federal grant programs to help states implement the Seal of Biliteracy. Many of TESOL's legislative priorities are also directed toward ensuring that Congress maintains, and increases, funding for adult education through Title II's Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act- and encouraging Congress to pass education reform through the American Dream and Promise Act of 2021. More information can be found at TESOL's Advocacy Action Center (<https://www.tesol.org/advance-the-field/tesol-advocacy-action-center>). On the third day of the TESOL Advocacy Summit, June 23rd, participants were encouraged to participate

in the TESOL Day of Action. TESOL advocates from around the globe met with elected officials either in-person or via video conferencing. TESOL advocates were also encouraged to use the TESOL Advocacy Action Center's easy-to-use tools to identify and send messages to elected representatives.

Attendees from across Missouri and Kansas were able to use these tools to schedule a meeting with Senator Roy Blunt's (MO) office virtually. Importantly, this experience opened new possibilities for future MIDTESOL advocacy across the four-state region. MIDTESOL members – You can contact your elected representatives in Washington, D.C. and ask to schedule a virtual meeting with them from the comfort of your home-state! For those who are not ready to schedule a meeting with their elected official, here are some other ideas to strengthen and add to your advocacy toolbox:

1. Learn more about legislative issues affecting multilingual learners, immigrants, and language

professionals by visiting the TESOL Advocacy Action Center or following MIDTESOL on social media (@MIDTESOL)

2. Send a message to your elected representatives, sharing your perspectives, stories, and concerns. If they have acted in ways that support the field – send them a thank you!
3. Speak with colleagues, friends, and family, helping to inform them and grow understanding of the field from your local community.
4. Pay attention to local legislative efforts. This is where many of the changes occur that will most directly impact you and your students.
5. Vote – especially in local elections. Always remember that your voice matters, and your vote does make a difference.

[Click here to learn more!](#)



TESOL Advocacy Action Center





Members-At-Large State News

State Update: Iowa by Cindra Porter

The end of the academic year in Iowa brought sighs of relief to many educators across both K-12 and higher education settings. Educators, students, and their families navigated through a challenging year that presented unique considerations related to accessing education in the midst of a world pandemic. As we look to the 2021-2022 academic year, here are some notes of interest for Iowa educators. Language Assessment Spring of 2021 saw participants recruited for the Collaborative for the Alternate Assessment of English Language Proficiency (CAAELP) a four-year (2019–2023) project supported by UCLA’s National Center for Research on Evaluation, Standards, and Student Testing (CRESST). In collaboration with ten states, CAAELP is creating a new, research-based alternate assessment (Alt ELPA) for K–12 students who are English learners with the most significant cognitive disabilities.

IOWA

The ELPA Future Kindergarten Screener was adjusted after voiced concerns that the screener was over-identifying students for Title III support. Future Kindergarten Scoring Rules: The 3333 domain profile to indicate Proficiency will be in effect for the August 3rd opening of the Dynamic Screener. The Individual Student Reports (ISRs) will be reflective of this change. The general Kindergarten Screener will remain a 4444 domain profile to indicate Proficiency. The regular Kindergarten Screener will open January 15. This is a change for SY 2020-1-22. Previously, it had opened the first school day in December. Language Teacher Education Higher Education institutions in Iowa were eligible to apply for the federal National Professional Development Program. This funding is targeted for professional development activities to improve classroom instruction for English learners, and assist educational personnel working with these students to meet high standards. Announcement of award recipients is anticipated late summer or early fall of 2021.

Upcoming Fall Conferences

- The **Iowa World Language Association** will hold a virtual conference on October 1 & 2, 2021. Conference link: <http://www.iwla.net/>
- The **MwALT conference** will be held in person in Ames, Iowa on October 9th, 2021. The plenary speaker, Elvis Wagner, of Temple University, will speak on “Technology and Testing: The Future is Here (Whether We Like it or Not). Conference link: <http://mwalt.msu.edu/>
- The **MIDTESOL conference** will be held October 22-23, 2021 utilizing a virtual conference format. The Conference title is “Paradigm Shift in ELT Education: Forging an Educational Framework for a Post-Pandemic World.” To find out more about the conference and register, please click here: <https://midtesol.org/past-conferences/midtesol-conference-2021/> .

Recent Iowa Legislation that Impacts Education

HF 605 - ELL Tiered Weighting was signed by the Governor April 30, 2021. This legislation divides students in K-12 education with limited English proficiency into two categories for purposes of generating ELL supplemental weighting. Link to legislation: <https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=89&ba=HF%20605>

HF 802 - “Providing Requirements to Racism or Sexism Training and Diversity and Inclusion Efforts by Governmental Agencies and Entities, School Districts, and Public Postsecondary Institutions” was signed by the Governor June 30, 2021. Link to Legislation: <https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ba=HF%20802&ga=89>

While this legislation does not explicitly address issues of English language education, the guidelines within this law may impact the ways in which language and culture are discussed in language classrooms and professional development opportunities as well as the content delivered at state conferences, or by guest speakers. Higher Education and K-12 Schools are currently analyzing this legislation to better inform how the state’s new guidance will impact teaching and learning actions in affected educational institutions.

Preparing for a New Academic Year

Being new to this role as Iowa Member-at-Large, I enthusiastically welcome the opportunity to hear from Iowa educators. Please email me at cindraporter@midtesol.org. I would love to share your news, updates, and celebrations from the state of Iowa!

Third Annual BELPAF Symposium Black English Language Professionals and Friends

The third annual BELPAF symposium was held recently. This year, Black English Language Professionals and Friends (BELPAF) partnered with ACTION TESOL Caribbean (ATC) for the virtual event. The theme was *Creating and Sustaining Vibrant ELT Communities Across the Globe*. Topics included "Bad at English:" The White Listener and Students' Skills Perception by JPB Gerald, Mutually Adaptive Learning Through Podcasting by Yasmeen Coaxum, On Linguistic Imperialism: Countering Anti-Blackness in Language Teacher Preparation by Tasha Austin, and plenaries by Dr. Okon Effiong and Dr. S. Joel Warrican.

Both BELPAF and ATC support the growth of TESOL professionals of color and elevate the needs of ELs of color through diverse collaborative and educational activities. And this symposium is one of them! So you are invited to support colleagues, develop professionally, raise awareness on a current topic, or give visibility to the English's of the Caribbean and English's around the globe, either as a presenter or a participant.



#MIDTESOL21 Awards

Application Announcement

MIDTESOL wishes to celebrate extraordinary service to our organization. The **Distinguished Service Award** honors an individual's dedication to and leadership in MIDTESOL. **The selected recipient will be awarded a lifetime membership and recognition at this year's MIDTESOL Conference.** Nominations may be made only by organizational members of MIDTESOL. No current member of the MIDTESOL Board is eligible for nomination. Include the following items in the nominating dossier (combined into one continuous document arranged in the order listed below):

1. A nominating letter explaining your rationale for the choice of this individual, verifying, too, that s/he meets the eligibility requirement
2. An up-to-date curriculum vitae of the candidate
3. An account of any MIDTESOL Awards received (on the part of the nominee) in the past

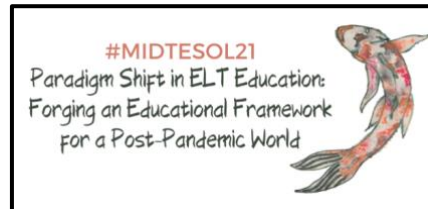
Submit nomination dossier to Lindsey Simanowitz, lindsey.e.simanowitz@gmail.com, MIDTESOL Awards Chair, by Friday, September 24, 2021. The subject line of your email should read "MIDTESOL 2021: Distinguished Service Award." MIDTESOL offers two travel awards for assistance attending [#MIDTESOL21](https://www.midtesol.org/2021). Please read the information below carefully before applying.

The Interest Section Travel Awards

Up to twenty (20) MIDTESOL members from various interest sections will be awarded a check in the amount of **\$75** to cover registration costs for the [MIDTESOL 2021 Conference](https://www.midtesol.org/2021) online October 22-23.

The six 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 ESL profession but receive little or no funding from their employers for expenses to participate in the conference.

To enter, please submit the following in writing:

- Name, Position, Employer(s)
- IS section applying for
- Statement verifying that little or no funding is received for professional development from employers
- Statement indicating whether you have previously been awarded any travel awards from MIDTESOL
- Statement verifying that you are a current member of MIDTESOL
- Statement verifying that you're willing to volunteer a few hours at the conference
- 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 will be sent to Lindsey Simanowitz, Awards Chair, at lindsey.e.simanowitz@gmail.com. The subject line of your email should read "**#MIDTESOL21: IS Travel Award**" **Deadline is Friday, August 20, 2021.** The Awards Committee and IS Interest Chairs will judge entries. Winners will be contacted by September 4, 2021.

Presenter Travel Awards

If you are notified of acceptance to present at [#MIDTESOL21](#), you are encouraged to apply for a Travel Award to help fund expenses. Up to six (6) Travel Awards of **\$75** each will be granted.

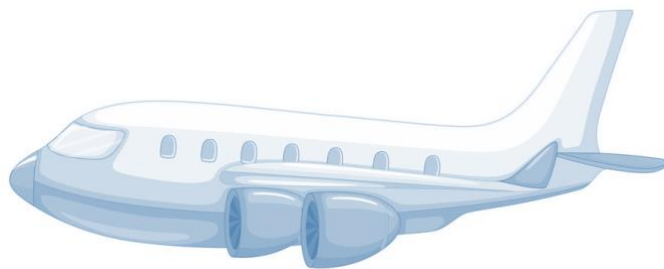
To apply, the following items must be submitted to Lindsey Simanowitz, Awards Chair, at lindsey.e.simanowitz@gmail.com by **August 20, 2021**. The subject line of your email should read “**#MIDTESOL21: Presenter Travel Award Submission.**”

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 conference costs;
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 September 10. 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.



K-12 Essay Winners Junction City High School

Dairaliza Abreu Nunez
\$100

Grace Crespo Torres
\$50

Reymarc Diaz Diaz
\$25

Sponsoring Teachers: Debra Stevens & Judy Sanner

Winning essay by Dairaliza Abreu Nunez

“Mandatory online classes for students in the United States starting today.” This sentence, including me, has changed the lives of millions and thousands of people in the US. Learning online and life changing completely has being one of the thing’s many students, teachers, and many others had to face. Having to adjust to a new routine and having to adapt to a new learning environment has not being easy. This pandemic has changed us from the way we communicate to how we understand expressions behind a mask. Having to overcome all those challenges, also has taught me a lot of things, and have made me look at life differently than how I used to. COVID-19 has been one of the major difficulties we as humans have to face, and like many others, it has guided me to look at life in a different perspective. It has made me realize the importance of being able to communicate with

my friends and family without having to turn on a computer. It made me aware of how we sometimes took for granted the freedom we had of doing simple things that without realizing it made us smile and happy. As we look back and remember how simple it was to go to school or a basketball game and have that connection with the people we love and care about, to being able to ask a question to your teachers without having to go on a ‘breakout room’ or being able to make jokes and laugh with your friends at the lunch table; made us realize how simple life is and how this things have this beautiful meaning to us that will stay with us forever. Those simple things were the ones that without thinking too much I would say made us happy. Our lives have transformed completely and now we see ourselves facing and having to be friends with technology, without this constant reminder from the people most close

to us and having to consider not having that permanent support from our love ones. Making the situation even harder to conquer, I know is hard! but without this reminder I've learned to be more patient with myself and to be more conscious of the people around me, even if is through a computer.

Having this hope constantly going up and down for things to change and looking up for the future that seen to be so far and hard to reach. I learned that change does not happen if action is not taken, and that 'this' future we wait and want so much is the one we are living today. I learned to make every second of my life worth and valuable to remember. Making yourself conscious of simple things

may be hard for you but do you think is worthy to blame yourself for not making any changes and making this challenge remarkable? Are you being a way of help or change to the world? Time is the most valuable thing we have and waiting for the change in the 'future' is not the any help. So, having to learn to be way from my love ones have been hard but I am making time and the change I want to see, are you?

by Dairaliza Abreu Nunez from Junction City High School, Junction City, KS



Best Adult ESL Essay Winners

First Place

Jongnam Kim
Center for English Language
Learning / Intensive English Program,
University of Missouri, Columbia, MO

Second Place

Nhi Thao Thi Nguyen
Divine Word College

Third Place

Hansu Jung
Center for English Language Learning
/ Intensive English Program,
University of Missouri, Columbia, MO

Winning essay by Jongnam Kim My Home Becomes Classroom

Last spring, I experienced what I never had experienced since I was born. At that time, my husband and I were in classes in the university, and my three sons were in middle school. Sudden breakdown resulting from COVID-19 led us to Zoom class, so I allowed my children to use their own rooms, and my husband and I shared the living room during Zoom class. My position, located at a table near the kitchen, was the worst because my children would pass there whenever they needed to drink milk or eat a snack. Sometimes, they showed up on my Zoom screen, and I could hear their voice via Zoom audio. There were not only my children but also small problems like unstable internet system, so I was uncomfortable and tense until the semester ended. However, I also experienced benefits of the virtual class. I believe while learning virtually has advantages in terms of accessibilities, it has drawbacks in terms of learning effects. Significant advantages of virtual

class are accessibilities. First, we just need to access internet, so we can omit preparation and process for going out. We are less busy in the morning because we do not have to dress well or wear make-up. Because of not driving, we can save time and fuel cost, and we can be free from driving pressure.

As a result, we can save time, money, and efforts to travel to school. Also, virtual class does not limit places to learn. We can participate in class even from another country. For example, my friend's daughter, a Korean overseas student in New York University, went back to Korea and participated in virtual class during COVID-19. A family of my community went to Wyoming last fall and stayed for a week while taking virtual online classes. After finishing classes in the morning, they traveled around Yellowstone National Park in the afternoon. A final advantage of virtual class is we can join in classes despite a certain situation.

Three months ago, in January, as it was snowing heavy early in the morning, my university decided to operate virtual classes the day. For all of sudden lockdown, the university was able to have virtual classes instead of cancelling classes for a snow day, for professors and students were already trained well at virtual learning thanks to COVID-19. Of course, virtual class was great asset during the COVID-19 pandemic.

On the other hand, virtual class has disadvantages in terms of learning effects due to deprivation of concentration, communication, and learning tools. First, most students might experience disturbances such as internet system errors and distracting home environments. Sometimes, I had trouble connecting stably on the internet during classes and I would hear noises from students' home via Zoom audio. These factors got me not to focus on class. In addition, it is difficult for students to communicate actively with instructors; thus, students might have a hard time understanding concepts, and they could lose interest and motivation for learning. Lack of communication among students could also bring about losing fun. The last disadvantage is the environment of virtual class is likely to be vulnerable. Because students have to watch small screens for a long time, their eyes may be tired and get worse. I think paper materials could

make students give attention to class, understand concepts, and memorize content more easily than screens. Sound materials like audio or video during listening class also is bad quality, so students may be stressed.

In conclusion, COVID-19 pandemic made us attempt new learning methods, and people might imagine using these new learning methods more in the future. These methods provide opportunities to learn easily regardless of places and situation and new attempts also present us economic benefits, time, and conveniences. However, virtual class has negative aspects in respect to learning effects on account of lack of immersion, enthusiasm, and limited education environment. With advanced tech skills, virtual class may be common in the future and lead to good grade reports, but it probably will not able to fill vibrant atmosphere and will have limits to building relationships with students and teachers.

by Jongnam Kim, Center for English Language Learning / Intensive English Program, University of Missouri, Columbia, MO

Member Profile

Shaeley Santiago

Current Position: My current position is English Learner Coordinator at Ames Community School District (ACSD). I've been in this role about four years, but I've worked at ACSD for 18 years. I was an EL teacher at Ames High School for over a decade before transitioning into several teacher leadership positions.

Previous Experiences: I was an ESL teacher at Perry Middle School in Perry, Iowa for 3 years before taking a job in Ames.

Education: I have a Master's in TESL/Applied Linguistics from Iowa State University.

Years as MIDTESOL (TESOL) member: 10+ years. I was a student member of MIDTESOL for a few years. Then my membership lapsed for a while until Suzanne van der Valk recruited me to be on the MIDTESOL board.

Interest Section(s): K-12 & EdTech

Favorite MIDTESOL Memory: I was in charge of ordering the MIDTESOL Instagram cutout (see photo). When I went to pick up the sign as I was leaving for the conference in Kansas City, I realized the sign was bigger than I'd expected. It was so big in fact that I wasn't sure it would fit in my car! As it turned out, I was able to put it sideways in the backseat and work one end carefully up into the back window of my car. I was so relieved that it fit in my car!



How did you become interested in working with ELs?

I grew up in a small town in Central Kansas, so I had very limited exposure to people from other cultures. However, I was interested in languages other than English and in international travel. When I went to college in Texas, I realized I could capitalize on those interests by working with English learners. It wasn't until we moved to Ames, Iowa, that I was able to get the training I needed to earn my ESL endorsement. Today I feel so fortunate and blessed to be serving ELs and their families.

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

ELs are an amazing and widely diverse group of students. Their knowledge and experiences often look very different from other students, but that's what makes them so special! Take the opportunity to get to know an English learner personally. I bet you'll be surprised by what you find out, and I hope you'll be motivated to advocate for the student based on what you learn.

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

Find out about their linguistic and cultural background. There are some great tools out there such as Frankfurt International School's [Language Differences](#) page. Students and their families are also an invaluable source of information.

Why are you a member of MIDTESOL?

I'm a MIDTESOL member because I value opportunities to learn and grow professionally. It's also important to me to be connected to a community of individuals who are dedicated to improving the field.

Anything else you'd like to add?

This is my last edition of *MIDTESOL Matters* as the chair of the Communications Committee. I'd like to express my gratitude and appreciation for the opportunity to serve this organization. It's hard to quantify how much it has enriched my life, particularly through the friendships I've made over the years with other MIDTESOL members, conference attendees, and board members.

Top Social Media Picks!



Adrienne Johnson
@TeachLearnAct

#TESOLADV2021 A great reminder from Amanda Bergson-Shilcock...@MIDTESOL Teachers - I KNOW you all have powerful stories to share! Sharing those stories is a powerful form of advocacy!

6:39 PM · Jun 21, 2021 · Twitter for iPhone

Nat'l Bilingual/Multilingual Learner Advocacy Month celebrates & advocates for #bilingual learners in our schools. #OELA has trio of free toolkits to help parents, Ts, & admin support #MLLs. Explore now: ncela.ed.gov #languagediversity #MultilingualAdvocacy #ELLChat pic.twitter.com/saT8TeVt4U

MIDTESOL
June 30 · 🌐

This can be done online or in a classroom on a hard copy.

EDUTOPIA.ORG

Exploring Perceptions About Identity Through Self-Portraits
When students learn about each other's identities, it helps them...

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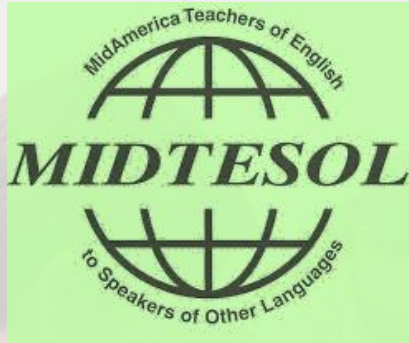
midtesol Last night's MIDTESOL social was a hit! Thanks to Kaylene, our VP, for hosting it and for all who attended! See you at a #TESOL2021 session soon! Be sure to send us photos of you attending Tesol so that we can highlight you here!

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MARCH 25



About our Organization

Contact us at
www.midtesol.org

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

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

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



Our Mission

The mission of **Mid-America Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages** is to foster excellence in English language learning in Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, and Nebraska to people whose native language is a language other than English while respectful 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*