"Serving for a Better World": Selected Proceedings of the 2012 Michigan Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages Conference

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“Serving for a Better World”

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October 12-13, 2012

Editorial Team
James M. Perren
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Trisha Dowling

2013
Serving for a Better World

Selected Proceedings of the
Michigan Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages Conference
Madonna University Main Campus, Livonia, Michigan, October 12-13

Editors:
James M. Perren, Dinah Ouano Perren & Trisha Dowling

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Preface

On October 12-13, 2012, The Michigan Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (MITESOL) met on the campus of Madonna University in Livonia, Michigan, for its annual fall conference. The conference, chaired by President elect Andrew Domzalski, offered numerous talks, workshops, and poster sessions, as well as a Friday evening reception, Saturday luncheon and business meeting, Special Interest Group (SIG) meetings, and publisher exhibits.

Special guests for the conference were the keynote speakers. Dr. Angelika Kraemer (Michigan State University) was the featured speaker for Friday evening, delivering a session on engaging foreign language service-learning activities for undergraduates with K-12 students titled, Engaging Students in and Preparing Them for K-12 Service-Learning Projects. Dr. Adrian J. Wurr (The University of Tulsa) presented the Saturday afternoon keynote plenary address about service-learning as a solution to critical societal issues and its benefit in TESOL in gaining literacy skills titled, Learning Service and Service-Learning in Turbulent Times.

As previously offered in years past, MITESOL is continuing the service of publishing a selection of papers from its conferences. This particular edition of the conference proceedings contains nine articles, organized into four sections: (1) Plenary Presentations, (2) Issue Papers, (3) Research Papers and (4) Teaching Techniques and Materials Development.

The first section of this volume is the Plenary Presentation. We are pleased to include the conference’s featured speaker’s paper in this section. In the article titled, Learning Service and Service-Learning in Turbulent Times, Dr. Adrian J. Wurr discusses characteristics of successful service-learning programs and the value that they bring to both students and community partners.

The second section has two Issue Papers. The first article in this section, by Christen M. Pearson and Janet Navarro, titled, Bullying, ELLs, and the Additional Confound of Disabilities: What are the Problems and What Can be Done About Them?, discusses the vulnerability of ESL learners as targets for bullying and signs that teachers can look for in order to be proactive about this issue. The second article is, Are Newly Immigrated Students Who We Think They Are as English Language Learners?, by Aiman W. Mueller. This article examines the linguistic identities of newly immigrated ELLs by framing questions important to addressing ELL needs, as well as correlative questions pertinent to pedagogy and research.

One article is presented in this year’s Research Papers section by Stephanie Casey and Zuzana Tomaš. This paper is titled, Challenges and Opportunities in Teaching Content to Secondary English Language Learners: A Focus on Mathematics, and discusses the needs of K-12 English Language Learners learning mathematics and provides instruction and materials to improve current practices.

The final section of this volume is Teaching Techniques and Materials Development. Presented first is the article by Jingjing Wei, titled, Using iPad Applications to Teach ESL, which provides iPad applications as sources for ESL instruction and materials to help motivate students. The second article is by Kirtland Eastwood, Lauryn Gallo, and Jessica Piggot. The title is, Free, Effective eTools for Teaching Writing, and discusses web-based teaching resources that allow students to actively engage in the writing process in a meaningful way. María Isabel García and
Miguel Fernández are the authors of the third article in this section, titled, Improving Second Language Learners Self-Esteem through Writing. This article presents an overview of seven different strategies that can be used to help students improve their writing of paragraphs and essays and develop a healthy sense of self-esteem. Each strategy is based on the reinforcement of socio-emotional skills. The fourth article is, It’s Okay to Have Fun, by Jolene Jaquays and Sara Okello. These two authors discuss enjoyable activities that are a regular part of the classroom experience that promote a lower affective filter and higher language acquisition. The final article in this section is titled, Using Wikis in the ESL Classroom, by Kristin Jatkowski-Homuth and Allison Piippo. This article discusses the pedagogical benefits of using wikis in the ESL classroom, provides brief instructions for creating a class wiki, and gives suggestions for how a wiki can be used in the classroom.

As with previous volumes, the papers have been printed in the final form in which they were submitted, often following requested revisions by the editors. Only minor editing has taken place by the editors before printing of the volume. Also as before, copyright and responsibility of the contents of all papers reside with the individual authors. Therefore, all questions, requests for reprints, and permission to reproduce should be directed to the individual authors.

We would like to express our gratitude to the many people involved in completing this project. The authors contributed considerably as presenters, as well as by converting their talks into manuscripts. Each editor has taken on a significant responsibility in refining each manuscript for print. Dinah Ouano Perren again generously gave her time to mentor authors during the writing process and assisted substantially during the copy-editing and proofreading phases. Trisha Dowling was highly involved in reviewing articles and completing several copy-editing tasks that facilitated meeting critical deadlines. James Perren completed numerous tasks associated with this project, including mentoring authors and communicating with the editors and MITESOL community members. After completing three volumes of this publication, James Perren is stepping down from the Lead Editor position. He would like to kindly remind the MITESOL readership that the MITESOL Conference Proceedings are now conveniently available on the Eastern Michigan University Digital Commons website located here:

http://commons.emich.edu/mitesol/

We sincerely hope that you enjoy reading the various papers offered in this volume.

James M. Perren (Eastern Michigan University)
Dinah Ouano Perren (Eastern Michigan University)
Trisha Dowling (Eastern Michigan University)
The Editors, September, 2013
Learning Service and Service-Learning in Turbulent Times

Adrian J. Wurr
Plenary Speaker

“Serving for a Better World”
Selected Proceedings of the 2012
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www.mitesol.org

Editors:
James M. Perren, Dinah Ouano Perren, Trisha Dowling
Learning Service and Service-Learning in Turbulent Times
Adrian J. Wurr
The University of Tulsa

Abstract
Times are tough. Recovery from the worst recession in 80 years is too slow. While a coalescence of political, social, and economic pressures can push people and institutions to consider disengaging from their communities, in this talk I will argue for the opposite: Service can and should be part of the solution to the most pressing problems in society today. Presenting snapshots of service projects involving English Language Learners, I will also suggest that TESOL educators and their students can gain critical civic literacy skills by inverting the term service-learning and considering what it means to learn service.

Recession as Context for Service-Learning

The drum roll of bad news on the economy is discouraging for many. Americans have suffered a record decline in wealth in recent years as home values tumbled, according to the Federal Reserve. Between 2007 and 2010, the median family’s net worth dropped 38.8%, the biggest drop in net worth since the Fed started tracking this metric in 1989. The national unemployment rate is 8.1%, down over 1% in the last year, but still high. Here in Michigan the unemployment rate is 9.4%. California, Rhode Island, and Nevada have double digit rates. And these figures do not include the million or so “discouraged workers” who looked for a job recently and gave up because they couldn’t find one. Most of us know someone who has been negatively affected by the economic downturn. Some of you may have seen the confusing list of institutional affiliations in my biography of the conference Web site. This is because I unexpectedly lost my job recently too; I know the personal and social trauma unemployment can create.

If the economic news weren’t bad enough, other bad news from around the world looms on the horizon: global warming, war, endemic hunger and poverty, and deteriorating health care that costs more and reaches fewer. The list of issues in need of immediate attention keeps growing and can seem overwhelming at times. Without knowing how to help, this can lead to apathy and despair in individuals, and cause institutions to disengage from the communities they are meant to serve. Cutbacks in government assistance and social programs might suggest service is optional, an extra-curricular activity undertaken when time and resources allow. However, the opposite is actually true, as community needs have only increased since the economic downturn, making the services our students provide that much more valuable (Fitzgerald, Bruns, Sonka, Furco, & Swanson, 2012).

Service-learning can and should be part of the solution to the most pressing problems in the world today. Students today have remarkably high levels of personal agency (Wurr, 2011). They want to help, but need tools to act on their good intentions. Service-learning helps turn apathy into empowerment for students.

TESOL teachers are an important part of the solution to these problems since non-native English speakers (NNS) now form the majority of people in the world today. To paraphrase Paulo Freire’s notion of critical pedagogy, he suggests that teachers are as powerful as they see themselves to be. By the way, how many of you know who coined the phrase quoted at the top of the screen, “If you’re not part of the solution, you’re part of the problem”? Eldridge Cleaver is
often credited with coining the phrase, but it was actually Charles Rosner, a renowned advertiser and marketer who wrote it for VISTA as a recruitment slogan in 1967. VISTA stands for Volunteers in Service to America and is the oldest branch of the AmeriCorps family. It remains true to its original mission of reducing poverty in America today, so it is appropriate to honor that mission as we consider ways to engage students and communities.

How do we help students acquire civic literacy skills? If we invert “service learning” to “learning service,” we emphasize the learning in service-learning while recognizing that community service and volunteerism may be new concepts for many ELLs. To help students learn these skills, we need to build their schema on service. When we learn service, we view service as “living text,” encouraging a student-centered, ethnographic approach to research and writing, and the community as a source of knowledge and a place for learning much like a printed book or the library. Indeed, pairing printed and living texts in community-based research can provide a powerful source for learning through the dissonance created by the theory and praxis often found in “counter-texts” (Dubinsky, Welch, & Wurr, 2012; Wurr, 2007).

“Learning service” also suggests the need to scaffold service-learning activities for ELLs, matching task complexity with learner proficiencies and abilities. As a teacher, I have become more aware of the need to scaffold service-learning experiences as more and more students from American high schools come to college with significant prior volunteer experiences, while international students are often encountering community service for the first time in my classroom. As an administrator, I appreciate the value of sequencing assignments and courses in such a way so that skills build over time, so that some courses open to all engage students in limited one-day group service projects while more advanced capstone courses might engage students in a semester-long project that they analyze from multiple disciplinary lenses, for example.

“Learning service” suggests the need to scaffold service-learning activities for ELLs and match task complexity with learner proficiencies and abilities. Mary Kirlin (2003) identifies the underlying skills necessary for civic engagement. For example, monitoring public events and issues requires students to understand distinctions between three sectors of society: public, nonprofit, and private; understand context for events and issues (e.g., what happened and why); and have the capacity to acquire and thoughtfully review the news by reading the local newspaper. Asking students to deliberate about public policy issues requires them to think critically about the issues and understand them from multiple perspectives. Interacting with other citizens to promote personal and common interests requires the ability to understand democratic society and collective decision making as the norm; articulate individual perspectives and interests; work with others to define common objectives; create and follow a work plan to accomplish a goal. Influencing policy decisions on public issues necessitates identifying decision makers and institutions and understanding appropriate vehicles for influencing decisions. In each example, teachers need to identify separate goals for content learning and service.

**Models for “Learning Service”**

Several theoretical models provide additional guidance on ways for students to learn service. The diversity of service types allows a better fit for diverse learners than a “one-size-fits-all” approach. Edward Zlotkowski (1998) describes three levels of reflection -- the social, personal, and discipline-specific dimensions to service -- that can be explored usefully in reflection activities. On one level, students can consider the social dimensions of service by

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1 I am indebted to Marilynne Boyle-Baise (2007) for pointing out the pedagogical utility of this linguistic trick.
investigating social systems and issues, in looking at the macro-level causes of homelessness, for example. The interaction of the individual in society is also worth investigating, so students can explore their own personal values and beliefs in relation to service. Finally, students can also explore discipline-specific issues raised by their service project. Exploiting the technical dimensions of service makes the course a better course by providing students with hands-on applications of course concepts.

It is worth noting in passing that the U.S. Department of State’s Foreign Language exam follows a very similar progression from simple to more complex topics. In interviews, a candidate might initially be asked about their personal interests and hobbies before being asked about current issues and events in the news that related to the target language and culture. Finally, interviewers might ask about a candidate’s major and how his or her educational background has prepared him or her for the job.

Tom Dean’s (1999) description of the different kinds of writing that can accompany various service projects remains one of the most practical and useful models in the field today. His dissertation hangs on just three prepositions, describing projects in which students write about, for, or with community partners. Drawing on John Dewey’s notion that experience is the best teacher, writing about service produces academic texts such as reports and reflective essays. This contrasts with projects in which students write for community partners by producing technical documents such as Web sites, three-panel brochures, public service announcements, or in more advanced courses, grant applications. Writing for community partners draws on Freirean notions of critical literacy by using language to promote social change. Finally, students can engage in collaborative writing projects or oral history projects with community partners, while drawing on Lev Vygotsky’s theories of social interactionism in the process.

Dan Butin (2006) offers another service-learning typology that tracks well with historical developments in applied linguistics. Applied to service-learning in TESOL, Butin’s technical dimension would emphasize student learning outcomes, while the cultural dimension would emphasize multiculturalism and civic literacy more. If teachers adopt Butin’s post-structuralist view of service-learning, they would emphasize social change and the inherent power dynamics between server and served. The fourth view of service-learning Butin offers is one TESOL practitioners have not readily accepted in the past, a post-modern/post-structuralist view that emphasizes positionality and self-awareness. In her discussion of Butin’s typology, Marilynn Boyle-Baise (2007) notes how the categories illustrate that service-learning is not homogenous service. It is undertaken by different people for different purposes (and by the same people for different purposes at different times).

One final model for civic engagement worth considering is the Social Change Wheel: Models of Community Involvement developed by Minnesota Campus Compact (1996/2011). The social change wheel outlines a dozen different forms of community involvement – from direct action service projects such as serving food at a soup kitchen to indirect service projects that build capacity through advocacy (e.g., speaking to community groups about homelessness) and community building (e.g., planting a community garden or organizing a block party). Political activities run the same continuum of direct to indirect actions in the model. Organizing voter registration drives or participating in a Take-Back-the-Night march are examples of more direct political actions while practicing socially responsible behaviors such as taking public transit or assisting with community economic development projects such as completing an asset map or offering job skills workshops are examples of indirect political actions. As the introduction to the
model on YouTube notes, “Achieving social change requires a variety of complimentary strategies” (Minnesota Campus Compact, 2011).

For educators, I believe The Social Change Wheel serves as a reminder that there are many different ways to serve one’s community; some may be more appropriate or viable at different times in one’s life, and so the more students are made aware of the options, the better they will be able to remain engaged with their communities over time. And for TESOL educators, the Social Change Wheel reminds us that diverse learners benefit from diverse service options. There is no “one-size-fits-all” approach to serving for a better world.

If these theoretical models were not enough to inspire you to consider ways of incorporating service-learning into the courses you teach and the programs you administer, then let me share with you some examples of different types of service-learning projects involving English Language Learners that appear in the emerging professional literature on the subject. We’ll start with examples of K-12 and university collaborations, then move on to community colleges and higher education in the U.S. and abroad. My goal in reviewing these case studies with you is to illustrate the rich diversity in service-learning projects as well as the diversity of the ELL populations with which we work.

Teacher Education has always been well represented in the service-learning literature. Typically, university pre-service teachers tutor K-12 and adult ELLs (Hutchinson, 2011; Miller & Gonzalez, 2009; Moore, in press). In doing so, pre-service teachers gain experience with ELLs, a population many fear due to their lack of TESOL knowledge. For example, Jesse Moore’s forthcoming study charts a shift in TESOL students’ perceptions of English language learners as the TESOL students move from identifying ELLs as an “other” with whom they would have “encounters” in the discrete spaces of ESL classrooms to seeing ELLs as potential students in their future content classes. With this familiarity came a sense of advocacy; as one student notes, “Because of the service-learning aspect, I believe I will not only be a better and more aware teacher and citizen, but a stronger advocate for ELLs in the future!”

Integrating service-learning into pre-service education courses tends to have a strong impact on the career choices of Education majors. As far back as the 1980s, students were telling researchers at Portland State University that participating in service-learning projects in their Education courses confirmed or challenged their decision to be teachers as they learned first-hand what it means to interact with the public on a daily basis (B. Holland, personal communication, April 14, 2011). This ultimately led the researchers to devote an entire section of the student learning outcomes survey they developed to probing the impact of service-learning on career development (Driscoll, Holland, Gelmon, & Kerrigan, 1996; Gelmon, Holland, Driscoll, Spring, & Kerrigan, 2001). More recently, Miller and Gonzalez (2009) investigated the impact of participating in domestic or international service-learning (ISL) on pre-service teachers’ career commitment, understanding of ELL issues, and knowledge of local community. They found positive outcomes for both groups on all dimensions, but slightly stronger (“Extremely positive” rather than “Positive”) outcomes for ISL participants, who also noted an increased interest in working with ELLs in the future. “[R]esults indicated larger gain scores regarding interest in working with ELLs for international than domestic service learning participants. In this context, the international service experience appeared to have an enhancement, rather than questioning, effect on participant attitudes” (Miller & Gonzalez, 2009, p.6).

At the community college level, ELLs provide needed services to non-profit organizations while learning about language and culture (Bippus, 2011; Seltzer, 1998; Steinke, 2009). Sharon Bippus’ (2011) dissertation presents a multiple-case study of six adult ESOL students who
Students gained communicative competence while developing confidence in themselves. Although the participants were nervous about working in the community initially, they overcame their anxiety by using various strategies. They realized they do have the ability to communicate successfully with English speakers in the ‘real world,’ and have valuable skills that they can offer the community. Additional benefits to the students included increasing their knowledge of American culture and history, developing a higher level of motivation, and forming connections to target community members. (Bippus, 2011, pp. iii-iv)

The photos shown here come from ESL classes Mollie Steinke has been teaching at Laramie County Community College for four years now (M. H. Steinke, personal communication, October 5, 2012).

In the first picture, a student from Kenya reads to 2nd graders at St. Laurence School. The smile on his face shows that he is enjoying reading a folktale from his country to the students.

In the next picture, students from Nepal, South Korea, and Saudi Arabia share stories and writing with residents at the Laramie Care Center and learn about nuclear families in America and the challenges they often face in providing adequate eldercare.
The last picture shows two students from South Korea and Saudi Arabia relaxing in pristine wilderness after cleaning trash at Curt Gowdy State Park. Think about the lessons these students learn about the role wilderness and open spaces play in the American psyche as they spend the day restoring the natural beauty to a park in the shadows of Yellowstone National Park. These are lessons and memories a textbook cannot adequately capture.

International service-learning and study abroad programs that include service components are among the fastest growing areas in service-learning today. These programs include American students volunteering in foreign countries as part of an educational program, international students volunteering in the United States while participating in study abroad programs, and English as a Foreign Language students traveling to other foreign countries to serve and learn, and using English as a global language to communicate in multilingual settings.

The first program described here involves international students in service-learning projects in a study abroad program in the United States. The University of Idaho’s Central American Youth Ambassador (CAYA) program is one a several educational exchange programs sponsored by the U.S. Department of State to bring aspiring youth leaders from around the world to study in American while participating in civic engagement and leadership programs. The goal of these programs is to create change agents who will have a positive impact on their communities while also fostering positive relations with future foreign leaders. The CAYA program at the University of Idaho included 18 Central American youth in two separate year-long programs of study in Idaho. The first six months of the program was devoted to intensive English language lessons for the students at a neighboring college while living with American families in the community.

The second half of the students’ year studying abroad was devoted to specialized training in social entrepreneurship, leadership, and civic engagement. Custom university classes and community-based field experiences focused on sustainable agricultural practices since the University and the students’ hometowns are in agrarian settings. For example, one course taught by an education graduate focused on climate change and environmental systems. Students researched the topic online, attended guest lectures by university and community experts, and volunteered on a local farm that promotes sustainable agriculture. The students also visited local nurseries and community gardens to better understand sustainable agriculture supply chains, and volunteered with the largest environmental non-profit in the area, The Palouse-Clearwater Environmental Institute, helping with tree planting and wetland restoration projects. In the summer, CAYA students assisted with lessons at the University of Idaho’s McCall Outdoor Science School, which provides hands-on environmental science lessons to thousands of K-12 students across the state every year. Most MOSS teachers are AmeriCorps members and graduate students. These AmeriCorps members complete graduate coursework in education and/or environmental sustainability while volunteering full-time in the summer and part-time during the school year. CAYA students also participated in a variety of cultural events, including serving as guest DJs on a local radio station where they mixed music with historical and cultural essays on their home towns. They also performed traditional dances at local schools and civic organizations. In all, the two cohorts of students completed a combined total of 5,680 hours of community
service over the two years in which the program operated. The pictures shown in this portion of my PowerPoint were created by CAYA students as part of the final reflection on their experience.

Michigan’s very own James Perren (2007) provides an excellent description of an ISL project in the Philippines. Students and staff from American and Japanese universities worked with other international volunteers for Habitat for Humanity. Together they worked with local citizens to build affordable housing. Perren notes how the multilingual setting encouraged intercultural communication across all modalities. English, Japanese, Tagalog, and other languages were used and mixed by speakers of varying proficiency for different purposes. As Auerbach notes in her 2002 TESOL book on Community Partnerships, language education often becomes peripheral to other community-defined goals in situations like this (p. 3).

The final case study I’d like to share with you today involves English as a Foreign Language students in Vietnam who volunteer at local schools and community organizations. The project started when I was serving as a Fulbright Scholar at the university. I was asked to teach a lesson on American Literature, which I know nothing about, and so suggested a lesson on folklore instead. We studied many different Cinderella stories, including one from Vietnam called Tam and Can, and compared how the characters, plot, setting, and other literary devices varied across cultures and time. Inherent to most Cinderella stories is the idea of poor down-trodden individuals escaping their life of misery with the help of a wealthy benefactor.

When implementing service-learning overseas, it is useful to connect the methodology to local legends, beliefs, and practices. So as an extension activity, I challenged students to consider ways “to help others in your community.” The students responded with many examples of philanthropy in Vietnamese folklore, philosophy, and history. One popular story describes the love between the people in a country. Metaphor is used to explain that just as different types of pumpkin raised on the same vine share all things, so too must humans share and love each other (Greces, McCord, Nguyen, & Wurr, 2009). The pictures on this slide (of various military leaders and conquests) illustrate “the long lasting fighting for the liberty.” At first I was a little uneasy about this example, but when you consider how Vietnam has suffered one foreign occupation after another for much of its history, and consider the extensive civil service projects the military performs annually as part of the “Green Summer” campaigns with Youth Communist Party members across the country, it makes more sense. Another traditional saying is illustrated in the pictures on this slide, showing how new leaves cover older ones so they can survive together, just as the younger Red Crescent volunteer is helping the elderly woman in the picture on the right.

The students at the university brainstormed ways they could make a difference in the community, and decided to form two groups that would lead projects at a local orphanage, SOS Children’s Village HaiPhong. One group made crafts and raised money for other gifts to give the children as prizes in traditional games they led as part of the national holiday, Children’s Day. Over 120 students, faculty, and staff from the university participated in this event, which served as an ice breaker and built trust between the university and orphanage that allowed for the successful implementation of the second group’s project: teaching English to K-12 students at the orphanage school every Saturday and Sunday. This continues today, and has spread to other universities and non-profit organizations. The pictures here show the range of sites and projects the students are involved in: tutoring children in a local fishing village, celebrating Christmas with residents at an HIV Hospice, and building low-income housing in a rural village.

Thus, what began as a simple unit on folklore and literature morphed into a limited partnership between a single university and community partner and eventually expanded to a collaborative venture with all universities in the city working in service with the
community partner under the umbrella group, Tinh Than SOS. The group continues to use traditional arts and literature in the form of folklore, fables, and song to teach the importance of helping others and working for the common good. (Dubinsky, Welch, & Wurr, 2012, p. 177)

So what can we learn from these examples? Some key characteristics of successful programs become clear. Firstly, provide structured opportunities for reflection. This is central to all effective service-learning programs, and is often said to be symbolically represented by the hyphen linking service to learning in “service-learning.” Next, value all stakeholders in partnership. In TESOL, this suggests valuing and inviting the use of learners’ first languages, as well as involving community partners in program and course planning (e.g., curriculum content, schedule). Thirdly, clearly define roles and expected outcomes. Success demands well-defined partnerships: When roles are clear and each partner contributes from its unique strengths, a multi-sector collaboration can reap dramatic results. Fourthly, encourage and honor local ownership, which is key to replication and sustainability. This point and the last, to incorporate culturally familiar content and genres, are both evident in the case study Ngyuen (2009) and I describe in Vietnam (Dubinsky et al., 2012). Student leaders drive the school clubs, which recruit volunteers to help out on various projects, and the use of Vietnamese folklore, fables, and song embed these projects in local history, culture, and values.

I’d like to conclude as Auerbach (2002) did in the collection of case studies on service-learning in TESOL that she edited:

What these strategies have in common is that they value the wisdom, knowledge, cultural practices, and creativity of community members. They focus on meaningful interactions and on supporting participants in addressing issues that they themselves have identified. [Language] acquisition flourishes through exchange, dialogue, and meaningful usage rather than attention to isolated skills.” (p. 10)

Author Note

Adrian Wurr is the Assistant Dean, Academic English Programs University of Tulsa. Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Adrian Wurr at this email address: (adrian-wurr@utulsa.edu).
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Bullying, ELLs, and the Additional Confound of Disabilities:
What Are the Problems, and What Can Be Done About Them?

Christen M. Pearson
Janet Navarro

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Bullying, ELLs, and the Additional Confound of Disabilities: What Are the Problems, and What Can Be Done About Them? 1

Christen M. Pearson
Janet Navarro
Grand Valley State University

Abstract

Bullying has a long history of being problematic in the school setting with incidence figures ranging as high as 86%. The ESL learner who has a concomitant special need is at increased risk, due to both disability and cultural difference. While schools have attempted to decrease the incidence of bullying through modifying the school environment, initiating peer support groups, and focusing on individual training in social skills and assertiveness, results have often proven ineffective, due, at least in part, to many misconceptions. Because this issue is crucially important for all teachers of ESL students to be aware of so they can proactively advocate for their students, this article provides an overview of bullying characteristics, discusses cross-cultural characteristics that can trigger bullying, explores reasons that those with disabilities miss critical social cues, considers common misperceptions, and offers suggestions for intervention programs as teachers seek to serve for a better world.

Introduction: The Problem

Bullying has a long history of being problematic in the school setting; however, it has received heightened attention following the Columbine massacre in 1999. Since then, incidence figures in general have ranged from 6.3-41.4% (Crothers, Kolbert, & Barker, 2006), ranging as high as 86% in some populations (Pelon, 2011). English Language Learners (ELLs) with a concomitant disability may fall within the higher incidence categories due to exhibiting multiple differences, as will be seen later in this article.

Attempted interventions for the problem of bullying have included modifying the school environment/climate, initiating peer support groups, and focusing on individual training in social skills and assertiveness (Espalage & Swearer, 2011; Mah, 2009; Rose 2011), though results have been mixed with many programs showing a lack of effectiveness (Rodkin, 2012; Schurman, 2009). Additional confounds to successful intervention include the following: many teachers do not feel there is a problem and/or are unaware of what is actually occurring; those who are aware do not see it in their own children; many misperceptions surround this issue; and any perceived difference can trigger an incidence of bullying. These perceptions of multiple differences cause the ELL learner with an underlying language learning disability or other special need to be at higher risk of being bullied, yet there are few, if any, studies on this population, even though ELLs are a rapidly increasing population already at risk of being marginalized due to language and cultural differences in general.

Therefore, all teachers of ELL students need 1) to be aware of all aspects of bullying, and 2) to be proactive in both supporting students while at the same time decreasing their risk of being bullied. But why is this so important? Vaillancourt, Hymal, and McDougall (2011) have stated
“bullying and related experiences such as peer rejection and ostracism interfere with that which is instinctively human – the quest to find a social place within the peer group and to fulfill a fundamental need to belong” (p. 24). Without this sense of acceptance and belonging, receptiveness to learning will not be optimized. So, in order to address the above needs of teachers, so that they, in turn, can support their students, the following section will provide an overview of bullying characteristics at multiple levels; discuss how cross-cultural differences can exacerbate the risk for being bullied; and explore reasons that those challenged by disabilities, including the ELL special education learner, miss crucial social cues.

Bullying 101

When discussing bullying, there are multiple layers that involve the individual, peers, the classroom, and the school-home-community partnership (Espelage & Swearer, 2011). In a very brief overview of a complex problem, at the individual level, those who are bullied may exhibit a difference in gender, personality (e.g., involving self-esteem, anxiety, depression, and stress-related illness), weight, disability, and sexual orientation, along with cultural and/or language differences. At the peer level, issues of dominance and victimization play prominent roles, with the incidence of problems increasing when students move from the primary to secondary school setting. The classroom level involves teacher attitudes and expectations regarding socialized gender roles in the classroom. Finally, at the interface of school, home, and community, views on bullying, prevention, intervention, and on personality come to the forefront. Expectations regarding the degree of social support that should be given by the family, the school, and the community-at-large should also be considered as part of the solution. Scholarship about warning signs that bullying may be taking place has been discussed by Olweus (1993) who was the first to conduct a systematic study of the phenomena in the 1970’s. These warning signs include: damaged clothing and/or belongings, physical/bodily damage, lack of friends, fears of typical school activities, loss of interest in school or change in grades, change in emotional states and/or increased anxiety, frequent physical complaints (e.g., headaches, stomachaches), sleep problems, and loss of appetite, among others.

With an awareness of the layers of the problem and specific warning signs, the next question becomes: why are ELLs, especially those with underlying disabilities, at increased risk? Since bullies tend to be drawn to perceived differences, cross-cultural differences exhibited by ELLs may be a first trigger. These differences include the following: speech (e.g., rhythm, stress, tempo, interval of silence); directness vs. indirectness; formality vs. informality; facial expressions, including eye contact or lack thereof; body language and gestures; spatial orientation (as an indicator of dominance, extroversion, and such); movement; clothing; courtesy cues (e.g., politeness rituals); and cultural norms and cultural expectations. For those unfamiliar with differing cultural characteristics and belief systems, Lynch and Hanson (2011) provide in-depth discussions of ten groups, including those with African-American, Asian, South Asian, and Middle-Eastern roots.

A second trigger for ELLs being the target of bullying occurs when the ELLs have an additional difference, that of disability. That is, differences due to culture and language (including pragmatics), plus characteristics of specific disabilities and other differences, equals an increased risk of being bullied. Mah (2009) and Rose (2011) have much to offer about the interface of ELLs and special education. They point out that the more anxious one is about differences and vulnerabilities, the more this attracts predatory bullies. This results in a cycle: those with special education status are twice as likely as those in the general education population to be bullied –
and the reverse – they are twice as likely, in turn, to become bully-like. However, in the general education population, those who are bullied tend to become bullies themselves over time, whereas in the special education population, those who are bullied tend to become more aggressive, exhibiting fighting behavior, yet not initiating actual bullying. That is, they become more aggressive, but not the aggressor (defensive reacting vs. initiating bullying). For these latter special education students, being bullied causes frustration, which leads to resentment, which then leads to aggression and fighting.

The situation is more complex, though, than is evidenced above, with additional interaction of the following: class placement (inclusive setting vs. self-contained classroom), visibility of the difference/disability, and the specific characteristics of the difference/disability (Rose, 2011). Additionally, lack of age appropriate social skills – either delay or precociousness – in individual students can lead to a lack of close relationships, a misreading of non-verbal communication, and a misinterpretation of non-threatening cues. These are all issues for ELLs in general, but they can increase exponentially depending upon some special education areas.

**Missing Crucial Social Cues**

What, then, are some reasons for missing and/or misinterpreting these social cues? According to Mah (2009), four main areas can contribute to this problem. The first involves cross-cultural differences, for example, how to make a polite refusal. What are the cultural norms of the first language (L1) culture and what are the norms of the second language (L2) culture for this speech act? Further, what are the cultural expectations of each culture? Since the area of pragmatics is seldom explicitly taught, it can take considerable time for differences in speech acts (e.g., refusals, apologies, requests) to be acquired. With each learner coming from different norms and with different expectations, breakdowns in communication can occur. These pragmatic failures are often more devastating than grammatical mistakes as many – both teachers and students – do not realize that cross-cultural differences in pragmatics exist. A second area that causes problems with social cues is that of overstimulation and/or stress. This area is typically experienced even by normal ELLs who are simply trying to survive in an academic setting with or without age-appropriate academic language or prior educational experiences. Sensory overload can occur due to the hum of fluorescent lights, new sights and sounds, even floating dust. Additionally, family problems, lack of sleep, and chronic illness can all lead to stress which takes away the mental processing space needed to correctly interpret social cues.

Anxiety is another area that contributes to a breakdown in social cue interpretation. (As a note, fear is specific, whereas anxiety is non-specific/generalized.) Once again, a different problem, in this case anxiety, takes away the mental processing space needed to focus on differences in social cues between cultures. As is known from second language acquisition theory, in order for input to become intake, features that need to be learned first need to be noticed, then processed (VanPatten, 2007). When students are anxious, they are less able to attend to key points in lessons by teachers or social cues on the playground by peers. Anxiety also causes hypersensitivity and hyper-alertness, though not necessarily to social cues (Mah, 2009). This, then, leads to being overly-cautious and overly-negative, which, in turn, can lead to failure and the anxiety-failure cycle (Mah, p. 58). Finally, there is the possibility of an actual social information processing deficit and/or pragmatic language disorder, either alone or secondary to another type of disorder, as a cause of missing and/or misinterpreting social cues (Roseberry-Mckibbin, 2007). The first three areas noted above weave into a complex problem for ELLs,
even without any type of special education need. For those with an underlying disorder, the problem becomes even more complex. It is to these problems, that we now turn.

Special Education Areas with an Affected Language Component – Two Examples

Several disorders that fall under special education have characteristics that put such learners at greater risk of being bullied. One of these is Asperger Syndrome. This disorder is sometimes placed within the autism spectrum; however, those with Asperger’s typically have normal to above normal intelligence. Along with this, though, is a problem with pragmatics – how to use language. Because of this, expectations are often not met, thus setting the student with Asperger’s up for being bullied. Characteristics of Asperger Syndrome include: lack of eye contact, self-soothing behaviors (e.g., rocking), lack of turn-taking skills (i.e., the “give and take” of conversation), an intent focus on specialized topics, lack of comprehension of humor/jokes (which results in a literal rather than non-literal interpretation), verbosity, poor social skills in general, clumsy body language, and unusual body alignment/physical awkwardness (Mah, 2009). These characteristics often result in a student with Asperger Syndrome being a loner and thus an easy target for bullies. With so many characteristics that make such a student different, as well as the problem with pragmatics that causes misinterpreted social cues from both directions, the situation can easily seem overwhelming. Now, if the additional layers of a second language and cross-cultural differences are included, it is easy to understand why this special education population would be at significant risk for bullying.

Another type of special education population, one that is rarely considered such, is that of the gifted and talented (GT). These students are also at greater risk of being bullied due to the following characteristics: a perception of arrogance and entitlement; a sense of superiority or bragging behavior; an appearance of aloofness, defiance, and disrespect; seemingly evasive answers due to “responding to nuances or perspectives unanticipated by [the] listener” (Mah, 2009, p. 50-51); a lack of awareness that others’ perspectives do not match their own; an aura of bossiness as they instruct others in how to complete tasks; a discourse style that appears intimidating and dominating; the perception of having a negative attitude due to frequent use of ridicule and sarcasm; and a tendency to talk about themselves with undue frequency (Mah, 2009). Again, it can be seen that these characteristics will set these students apart as being different; and again, once the additional layer of cultural and linguistic diversity (CLD) is woven in, these students also are at increased risk of bullying.

Asperger’s Syndrome and GT are just two special populations that are at risk; those with cognitive impairments, behavior disorders, and learning disabilities also are prime targets. And as the degree of difference expands to include cultural and linguistic diversity, the risk increases further. It should be noted, as well, that the misreading and misinterpretation of social cues goes in both directions: those with disorders, along with CLD students, do not understand why they are being targeted as they are not able to process or fully understand the linguistic and cultural expectations, while bullies do not understand an operating system beyond their own. The question for teachers becomes: what needs to be explicitly and repeatedly taught in order to help CLD learners and special populations become less noticeable to bullies? In other words, how can characteristics of these groups be “dampened down” or “muffled” so as to draw less attention? Though a challenging task, it becomes incumbent upon teachers and other education personnel to work with all populations of students, in multiple ways, in order to decrease the incidence of bullying. Yet teachers often make the situation worse.
Misperceptions: Teachers as Contributors to the Problem of Bullying

Teachers often contribute to the problem, albeit unknowingly, due to their erroneous beliefs about bullying and victimization. Espelage and Swearer (2004) detail the following bullying myths:

- “Bullying is just a normal part of childhood. ”
- “Bullying is child’s play. ”
- “Name-calling, spreading rumors, or purposefully embarrassing a student is simply kids being kids. ”
- “Children will outgrow bullying. ”
- “Only boys bully. ”
- “Bullying happens on the way to and from school, not during the school day. ”
- “Some children are just born rough. ”
- “Some kids ask to be bullied. They act in unusual ways that attract the bully. ”
- “Bullies help kids who seem weaker by pushing them to learn to stand up for themselves. ”
- “Aggressive behaviors of bullies are related to school frustrations.”

(Espelage & Swearer, 2004, pp. 309, 315, 317)

As noted, the above are all myths, yet they remain prevalent in teachers’ perceptions and in schools. In contrast, reality is that children need to be socialized in appropriate behavior. That although the number of bullies decreases over time, the incidence and severity of bullying increases; that bullying leads to isolation and rejection which can have long-term severe consequences including suicide; that bullying is on-going throughout the day, though increases when the presence of adults is not felt; that bullying is a socially learned behavior; that bullying is a power issue that must be solved by teachers; and that blaming the victim is not appropriate (Espelage & Swearer, 2004). That being said, how does one go about shifting views from myth to reality? Or are these misperceptions even prevalent in one’s own school? A further question is whether, due to political correctness, educators indicate they understand the reality, but, in fact, continue to hold the misperceptions as truth. This becomes a much more difficult situation for the schools to deal with, not only on a more global level, but also for those individuals being bullied, as it appears on the surface they are being supported when they are not – a situation, in a way, of being doubly bullied. Therefore, it is crucially important to find out teachers’ true beliefs about bullying, as well as the administrative stand, as these will determine what kind of intervention plan can be implemented.

Just as there are misperceptions on bullying, there are misperceptions regarding intervention strategies as well. Here, again, Espelage and Swearer (2004) offer the most common myths.

- “Teachers ‘can’t’ intervene in bullying situations because they lack adequate training and skills. ”
- “Intervening will only add ‘fuel to the fire’ and result in continued or increased bullying. ”
- “It is best to ignore bullying incidents. ”
- “Teachers cannot change the way children are treated at home. ”
- “If the teachers do not see bullying as it takes place, there’s nothing they can do about the behavior, because they cannot be sure it really happened. ”
- “There isn’t enough time during the school day to address bullying incidents or to introduce issues related to bullying into the curriculum. ”
“Teachers want to help their students and hope that students will talk to them, but they really don’t want to create a situation where everyone is tattling on each other.”

“Bullying is not a problem in a particular class or school.”

(Espelage & Swearer, 2004, pp. 309, 315, 317)

As was seen above, reality is often much different than myth. It takes effort to acquire training and skills, but it can – and must – be done. If bullies find that their behavior does not have consequences, they will continue or even increase it; further, without consequences, there is the tacit statement that their behavior is condoned and accepted which also sends an additional message to those being bullied that teachers do not care about them (Espelage & Swearer, 2004). In addition to lack of training, lack of time to deal with bullying is another concern of teachers. The questions must be asked, however, of how much time does it take to teach a learner who is not in an emotional state, due to fear, that is conducive to learning; how much time does it take to deal with incidences of bullying as they occur; and how much time does it take to help the bully catch up if removed from the classroom for a period of time? Would not this time be better spent in prevention strategies to begin with?

Regarding the fourth myth listed above, it may be true that teachers do not have influence over what occurs in the home, but they do have control over what occurs in their classroom and at school. Since bullying is a socially learned behavior, it follows that other ways of behaving in different contexts (home vs. school) can also be learned. So, what kinds of proactive preventative programs are possible and what kinds of learning across contexts are realistic?

**Intervention**

Intervention programs that have been discussed in the literature include curricular modifications and/or additions in the regular classroom (Breakstone, Dreblatt, & Dreblatt, 2009), school-wide student leadership training, peer mentoring, and experiential learning through social theater (Sullivan, Cleary, & Sullivan, 2004). At the level of the individual, scaffolding of pragmatics, awareness training, teaching of coping mechanisms and character development have been explored (Mah, 2009; Orpinas & Horne, 2006). These one-on-one teacher-student approaches may be most appropriate for those with disabilities. Note, though, that some schools have taken what is termed the **No Blame Approach**, which appears to consider bullies as being victims themselves due to various life circumstances. Coyne (2011), however, has cautioned against this approach because, for most bullies, the desire for power is stronger than feelings of empathy. In fact, “[t]here is no research to support the notion that bullies express their low self-esteem through aggression. Bullies generally have good self-esteem and are confident and comfortable with their actions” (Coyne, p. 11). Therefore, a carefully designed program, across individual and school levels, that includes a sequence of consequences may be more appropriate.

Attendees at the MITESOL 2012 conference had many ideas for how to improve upon current anti-bullying strategies and programs. Their suggestions fell into four general areas: training sessions, time issues, direction of perspective, and social justice. Under training, participants suggested anti-bullying workshops for children as well as parents, that include discussion of what the word **bully** actually means, thus providing a label for previously unlabeled behavior at home. This would serve the purpose of drawing attention to early patterns of behavior that later evolve into bullying, including verbal bullying. Concern was also expressed that many teachers, though they have had previous training, may need retraining. Participants were concerned about teachers who roll their eyes at students, who refer to ELLs as “those kids,” and
who exhibit an *us vs. them* mentality, all of which sends the implicit message that it is acceptable to be disrespectful and to bully verbally. Tangentially related to this area, there was a suggestion that the school’s D.A.R.E. officer be visible on social media used by students as well as be present at evening events.

Participants also offered suggestions for how to address teachers’ concerns that they do not have enough time to teach respectful behavior. Ideas included the adage of “a stitch in time saves nine,” stressing that if the problem is not addressed while it is small, it will grow into a much larger – and time-consuming – problem. Therefore, explicit lessons on respect must be a priority. One suggestion was to devise content lessons that incorporate an anti-bully or pro-respect theme. If carefully implemented, such lessons would actually be a time-saver if bullying decreases. It was further stressed that ignoring bullying as a time-saving strategy actually increases the amount of bullying that occurs, thus *increasing* the amount of time needed to deal with the problem and decreasing time for content instruction.

The third area involved approaching the problem from a different perspective, namely, supporting positive behaviors rather than focusing on negative behavior. One participant suggested rewarding students for positive behavior by using a token/ticket system that could be used in the school store. The *Be Nice* program that has been implemented in Grandville, Michigan, was mentioned. This is a program where several teams per grade compete for the “Nicest” award. Several participants shared ideas for social contracts: individual social contracts that all students in a class sign stating that they will respect self, peers, and teacher; group contracts that are posted on the classroom wall with signatures by all; and posters displayed throughout the school, created and signed by students, that have a positive message. One participant noted that using the word *fair* rather than *equal* on contracts and posters sends the message that each person receives what they *need* which might not necessarily be the same as others. Another participant shared that saying the “contract caught ya” (i.e., caught being nice) became a positive experience, rather than being caught doing something unacceptable. In these ways, the focus shifts to what is appropriate and respectful, something that all students can strive for, rather than a focus on what is inappropriate that involves only a small portion of the school population.

Finally, participants discussed the idea of a social justice committee at the district level that would provide consistency across all schools in the district. In order for this to be successful, though, it was noted that all teachers must be “on board” with the stated policies, including all support staff and volunteers. Having such a district-wide committee and resulting policies would help ensure that expectations on behavior and consequences were clear and would follow students from grade to grade and school to school. It would also help teachers who might teach different grade levels or in different schools at different times within the district, such as school ESL specialists and speech-language pathologists.

As these ideas are pulled together, the following questions remain: What might feasibly be done to combat the bullying problem in the short term? What might a one-year, 5-year, and 10-year plan look like? And what might a school-wide anti-bullying program – one that specifically addresses the ESL population, most notably the ESL learner with a concomitant disability – ideally look like?

As noted in the introduction, many programs have been found to be ineffective, perhaps due to lack of comprehensiveness, lack of follow-through, or lack of teacher training. What becomes most apparent when viewing the existing literature is that a multifaceted approach, one that includes a shift in perspective, is needed if there is any hope for lasting change.
One example of an intentionally implemented school-wide approach representing a shift away from an anti-bullying perspective toward a model of acceptance can be found in an approach that emerged at Spartan Village Elementary School in East Lansing, Michigan, in the years before it was closed due to district downsizing. Having undergone several transformations over the years, this public school was known for educating local families as well as a large international population, primarily the children of Michigan State University students who lived in university housing and nearby apartments. In 2003, before the school was closed, colorful full-sized flags from nearly 40 countries hung in alphabetical order around the school, welcoming students and visitors alike. Along with native English speakers from the United States, the nearly 275 students from these 40 countries spoke approximately 30 different first languages. Two full-time ELL teachers and a full-time paraprofessional worked with the many students learning English as a second or third language. Needless to say, the linguistic diversity was rich. Additionally, the children represented a wide range of racial, ethnic, cultural, religious, and socio-economic backgrounds, as well as a host of different learning needs.

Spartan Village, established in the 1950’s, was a school with a long tradition of welcoming all students into a learning community. One veteran teacher recalled watching children of different ethnicities and races playing at recess, wishing she could capture their joy on film and use it to teach others what the world should be like. At the school, it was generally felt that children do not see the politics or the biases that adults have, but base friendships upon the quality of the character of their classmates. Teachers often noted that in such a diverse setting, equal does not necessarily mean the same, and that it is more important to provide each child with what s/he, as an individual, needs to learn and grow.

It was upon this long-standing cultural norm of acceptance that a more systematic, proactive approach was codified and implemented in the fall of 2000. After a school-wide election, the cheetah was voted to be the school’s mascot. A second grade teacher, then incorporating the just-held election as part of a unit on elections in a democracy, realized that, in Swahili, the word for cheetah is *chui* (pronounced “choo-e” or /čui/). She and her class named the newly selected mascot *Chui* and ultimately wrote what might be called an anti-bullying program with school-wide intention and support around this new mascot. Chui became an acronym standing for Care, Help, Unite, Invite. A simple song, sung to the tune of *Row, Row, Row Your Boat*, became an outline for attitudinal and behavioral objectives in a way that was accessible to children, both conceptually and in terms of concrete actions which could be enacted.

**Care, Help, Unite, Invite**  
**This is Chui’s Code**  
**Spartan Village kids are great**  
**Cuz, this is what we know.**

**Care for your friends at school**  
**Help someone each day**  
**Unite to meet the goals we set**  
**Invite someone to play.**

This simple song gave teachers a way to discuss, describe, and redirect children when necessary, and, most importantly, model expectations for appropriate behaviors with children and with each other. The words provided a template for a proactive positive approach toward anti-bullying without having to talk about the negative behaviors. It is worth stressing the point that
this worked because the words were accessible to children who both already knew and were learning English. They focused on inclusive behaviors that could be noted and enacted. While respect is often used in anti-bullying rhetoric, respect is an abstract concept and less accessible for elementary-aged students. Further, ideas of respect are grounded in cultural norms that mean different things in different communities. Everyone, though, can ultimately understand what it means to help someone each day or invite someone to play.

With the advent of the mascot and the song, what had been a general attitude or norm became a codified approach to acceptance that included teacher modeling and accessible positive behavioral standards that could be discussed and elaborated upon. According to one teacher, what emerged was students caring about each other, respecting each other, and trying to ease the learning difficulties of their classmates.

When the school closed, teachers and parents wrote guidelines for an annual award and grant administered by the East Lansing Education Foundation. The SV G.L.O.B.A.L. Award captures what is at its heart: a shift away from the anti-bullying perspective and toward a model of education that is focused not just on the mere acceptance of all children and their families, but rather a full embrace of everyone who comes through the door of the schoolhouse by providing sound instruction with a focus on proactive, systematic, and intentional recognition of differences in positive ways.

The annual award and grant were developed around the acronym SV G.L.O.B.A.L. (see Appendix A for the full criteria of this award):

- Global Vision of Education
- Learning Community
- Opportunities for Authentic Engagement
- Believing We Can Make a Difference in the World
- Accepting and Accommodating All Children and Families
- Looking to Understand & Meet the Learning Needs of Each Child

Conclusion

This paper began by discussing the incidence of bullying, characteristics of bullying, common triggers for bullying, and reasons teachers need to be aware of the complexity of this phenomenon. Causes for missing critical social cues were then explored, including the problems that culturally and linguistically diverse students experience, as well as the challenges faced by those students with special needs that impact the language realm. From there, common misperceptions regarding both bullying and intervention were discussed before moving on to intervention implementation. Ideas garnered from conference participants who are Michigan educators were shared, along with a description of an exceptional program from the East Lansing area.

The question remains, though, of where do we need to go from here? As specialists in TESOL, we need to begin a broader discussion of how all of this relates to our specific field, especially the situation of the ELL learner with other concomitant challenges. We also need to broaden our discussion to the post-secondary level, where bullying continues to reign, not only student against student, but also student against faculty. And finally, we need to continue to develop comprehensive programs that 1) support the entire school population, 2) address specific subgroups of students who are at greater risk, and 3) specifically work with individuals who are chronic victims and/or perpetrators (Rose, 2011).
Bullying of students, especially those marginalized in some way (ELLs, special needs, cultural differences), is a crucial issue in our service for a better world. It is the hope of the authors that this paper will be a first step in a much-needed discussion on this important issue.

1This paper is the merging of two talks on bullying that were given at the MITESOL 2011 and MITESOL 2012 conferences at Western Michigan University and Madonna University, respectively. The first presentation detailed the problem of bullying in relation to ELLs with disabilities. An extension of the talk to include possible intervention strategies was requested, which then became the second presentation the following year.

2The following attendees from the 2012 session are gratefully acknowledged for their comments and ideas on possible intervention strategies: Erika Beckett (Wellspring Preparatory High Schools); Glenn Campbell (Pontiac Academy for Excellence); Marie Endres (Grand River Preparatory High School); Maricruz Gutierrez (Grand River Preparatory High School); Shannon Hadley (Novi High School); Amanda Kanaan (Achieve Charter Academy); Andrea Kohls (Novi Middle School); Adriana Ortega (Starkweather Elementary School); James Perren (Eastern Michigan University); Ildi Porter-Szucs (Cambridge Michigan Language Assessments); Tera Schwartz (Lake Orion Community Schools).

3D.A.R.E. stands for Drug Abuse Resistance Education, an international cooperative education program between school systems and law enforcement. The goals are to prevent use of illegal drugs, decrease gang involvement, and reduce violent behavior. Further information can be found at www.dare.com.

4The first author is indebted to James Perren for emphasizing the need to address student bullying of faculty at the university level, a serious problem of which this author has personal experience.

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References


Appendix A

SV G.L.O.B.A.L. Award Criteria

Global Vision of Education
Examples might include work in which the nominee:

- Prepares children to fully participate in a diverse, global society,
- Sees the learning environment through the eyes of all students, or
- Creates learning activities that do not overtly, or in subtle ways, discriminate.

Learning Community
Examples might include work in which the nominee:

- Collaborates with colleagues,
- Supports the innovative ideas of colleagues, or
- Is a model of cultural competency in a school or district-wide setting.

Opportunities for Authentic Engagement
Examples might include work in which the nominee creates opportunities where:

- Schoolwork and knowledge reflect the real world,
- Understands that treating all children equally does not mean treating them the same, and/or
- Demonstrates that learning happens in places other than the classroom.

Believing We Can Make A Difference in the World
Examples might include work in which the nominee:

- Welcomes challenges and opportunities to grow, or

Accepting and Accommodating All Children and Their Families
Examples might include work in which the nominee

- Seeks and makes use of parental input,
- Actively welcomes every family into the life of the classroom and school community, and fosters both participation and opportunities for growth, or
- Is an active advocate for all children and families.

Looking for New Ways to Understand and Meet the Needs of Each Child
Examples might include work in which the nominee:

- Sees children through a lens of strength and possibility,
• Engages with children in ways that highlight individual differences and welcome them as learning opportunities, or
• Utilizes ongoing authentic assessments to learn as much as possible about each child and uses that data to accommodate that child.
Are Newly Immigrated Students Who We Think They Are as English Language Learners?

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Are Newly Immigrated Students Who We Think They Are as English Language Learners?

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Abstract

Immigrant students generally had exposure to English as a foreign language (EFL). Educators know this and more about the backgrounds of their English language learners (ELLs), but those backgrounds are becoming increasingly complicated. From the 15th century until its decline in the 20th, the British Empire brought English to Africa, the Middle East, and India, as well as North America and Australia. However, globalism is spreading English, its lingua franca, further and deeper. Many historically EFL locales are beginning to resemble typical themes in English as a second language (ESL). Thus, current realities of the language’s global presence prompt review of the historical definitions of ESL and EFL. Such an examination leads to questions about the backgrounds and linguistic identities of newly immigrated ELL’s. This paper lists and frames such questions, important to addressing ELL needs, as well as correlative questions pertinent to pedagogy and research.

Introduction

Before English language learners (ELLs) immigrate to English dominant areas like the United States, they first encounter English as a foreign language (EFL). For example, depending on age, such students having had some classes in English grammar in their home countries might be expected. Additionally, perhaps they have seen English television or spoken limited English with foreigners or multi-linguals. Increasingly, however, the level of prior contact with English is far greater than these descriptions. In Singapore, for instance, Vaish (2007) found English predominates nearly all the homes of native speakers of Indian languages, while English is spoken exclusively in almost a quarter. Such EFL locales increasingly resemble those associated with English as a second language (ESL) for multiple reasons that have impacted incoming ELLs: Central to globalization, English penetrates more language communities and produces more pidgins than any other language (Zughoul, 2003). In 2008, David Harrison asserted at least half the world's 7000 languages were endangered, estimating the average rate of loss at one per two weeks (as cited in Belluz, 2010). Thus, the literature signals the sort of native language attrition and incomplete acquisition taking place among ELLs, as discussed by Montrul (2008), is happening even before arrival in classically English dominant countries (Çubukçu, 2010; Otsuka, 2007; Simpson, Caffrey, & McConvell, 2009). This paper reviews historical concepts of the ESL and EFL contexts, and then provides evidence in support of a revised view of EFL. In doing so, important questions are raised about the identities of newly immigrated ELLs pertinent to ESL pedagogy, future research, and addressing ELL needs in the classroom.

Historical Definitions of ESL and EFL—Polarization

Perhaps the most ubiquitous and agreed characteristic that has been continuously attributed to ESL, especially as it relates to pedagogy, is that it is spoken in an English dominant
area. Historically, that has meant mainly North America, Britain, and Australia (NABA). Due to the dominance of English in the ESL environment and its necessity for full integration in school, work, and general society, it is not unexpected that second language speakers have high motivation to learn the language. A typical pedagogical response is to place a high importance on English and to provide scaffolding to aid the acquisition process. ESL instructors are typically native English speakers and classrooms are either populated predominantly with native speakers or heterogeneously populated specifically with second language speakers (bilingual or pullout). Home or heritage languages are sometimes supported (as with bilingual education), but first language attrition is expected and common (Montrul, 2008).

EFL is historically conceptualized as opposite or contrary to ESL in several key ways. Firstly, EFL is English spoken as a non-native language anywhere other than NABA (or certain former British colonies)—locations where one or more languages other than English are dominant. Thus, teaching EFL neither expects benefit from frequent student use of English outside the classroom, nor views English as a threat relative to first language attrition. Motivation is generally regarded as lower and linked with goals less essential than societal integration, primary and secondary education, and basic employment (as with ESL). Rather, EFL students are commonly understood to study English as a step toward higher education, employment in international job markets, or travel, or they may take English classes as part of their general educations as would, for example, an American student studying French. Instructors are often native English speakers, but non-native speakers teach EFL more commonly than they do ESL. Limited vocabulary, poor literacy, and pidgin-like speech are expected among EFL students. Further assumptions that might be made about EFL students include that they possess stronger proficiency in their native languages than English, prefer their home languages, and remain generally ignorant of Western culture.

Revised View of EFL

Despite polar definitions of ESL and EFL, global realities and evidence presented in the literature suggest traits historically attributed to ESL are emerging in a growing number of EFL locales. Arguably, some EFL environments could even be recategorized as ESL. Further changes to EFL are due to a switch from colonialism to globalism as its vehicle. Altogether, such changes necessitate a refreshed conceptualization of EFL.

Native Language vs. English

First language loss among young immigrants to NABA is relatively uncontroversial. Despite limited success of heritage language maintenance efforts, attrition is typically accepted as a symptom inherent to the relocation process. The reverse expectation, that a person who grew up and remained in his or her non-NABA home country would achieve and sustain full acquisition of a first language other than English, is even more expected and uncontroversial. The line these assumptions draw between ESL and EFL, however, is fading.

Even at the time of Hansen’s (1999) study of Japanese, the obvious cause of attrition has been competition (an imbalance in daily use or an imbalance in status) between multiple languages. Montrul (2008) attributes attrition and incomplete acquisition to the same causes in the ESL context—providing evidence those causes are in effect in EFL as well. While attrition is the loss of ability in one language due to competition from another language, Montrul (2008) defines and contextualizes incomplete acquisition as the case where language competition begins during the initial acquisition process, interrupting or impeding acquisition before a critical period.
sometime near adolescence. With study of first language attrition in the ESL environment now well into its third decade (Shmid & ebrary, Inc., 2004), Montrul (2008) is leading a shift in literature toward differentiating incomplete acquisition from attrition proper, whereas Schmid and Kopke (2007) find the two have usually been inappropriately subsumed.

Considering attrition a given, it is not difficult to imagine a young immigrant to the UK or the US never fully acquiring his or her home language. Indeed, in one example Montrul (2008) found the error rate across several studies of German adults under attrition to be less than 2% while a youth represented in the same studies produced 8% errors (evidence of incomplete acquisition) and later produced twice as many errors (evidence of attrition). To clarify, Montrul’s survey of existing studies showed an exceedingly limited potential for post-adolescent (i.e., post-critical period) attrition of a fully acquired language under competition from a second. If adult German immigrants only made less than 2% errors, then the child’s 8% errors cannot be fully attributed to attrition. Montrul’s highly plausible explanation is that the girl had not completely learned all aspects of the German language, her subsequent increase to the 16% error rate further signifying the likelihood that potential for attrition is much greater among pre-adolescents.

The sort of competition in the ESL environment that produces attrition and stunts acquisition of first languages among individuals is the domination or favoring of English over a first language in schools, media, government, business, social settings, and the home. But how different is that competition in EFL? Mysers-Scotton conceptualized communal language loss as early as 1988, finding attrition occurs when communal code switching begins more heavily incorporating the first language into the matrix second language as opposed to the reverse, eventuating the replacement of the first language by the second, stating this happens due to immigration and “takeover . . . by a foreign power” (p. 300). While globalism may not exactly be a “takeover,” from government to media and from school to home, English is encroaching on global first languages. For instance, English media is viewed and often favored globally via the Internet (Çubukçu, 2010; Vaish, 2007). The age at which EFL is a subject in foreign schools is continually decreasing, sometimes to the point of sociopolitical contention (Enever, 2007; Manzo & Zehr, 2006). Meanwhile, in reference to higher education, Barnard (2010) predicts local languages excluded from the science community and curriculum will stagnate while field-dominant languages (e.g., English) will lexically accommodate to academic developments. English is also a language of prestige in the governmental, social, and other arenas (Çubukçu, 2010). While Ghana’s government, for example, sponsors nine of the dozens of languages spoken within its borders, the country’s official language is English. Not entirely without its logic, the Ghanian case also demonstrates a leftover effect of British colonialism on many African countries. The effect, however, carries over into a sociocultural setting where knowing or seeming to know even a few words of English gives a person status not otherwise possible, a situation reflected even in the English-centric Ghanian hip-hop scene. Even in the home setting, considered in the ESL setting as the last resort of a heritage language, English is placing heavy pressure on first language use in some countries. In Singapore, for example, Vaish (2007) found almost a quarter of native speakers of Indian languages exclusively speak English in the home, while the language predominates among the remainder. English is increasingly present as a competitor with first languages across the linguistic landscapes of dozens of countries.

Though studies have been looking at English attrition outside NABA for some time (e.g. Asgari & Mustapha, 2010; Hansen, 1999), this author finds no present studies that precisely quantify or describe attrition and incomplete acquisition of global first languages due to EFL.
Nonetheless, attrition as defined and studied in ESL-oriented literature situates well with the clearly observed communal loss of global languages and language competition taking place in many EFL locales. Specialist in the area, David Harrison, asserted that at least half the world’s 7000 languages were endangered, estimating the average rate of loss at one per two weeks (as cited in Belluz, 2010). Central to globalization, English penetrates more language communities than any other language, also producing more pidgins than any other (Zughoul, 2003). Çubukçu (2010) summarizes the situation as one which puts learners “in danger of losing their first languages” (p. 98). Realizing this is the case, and assuming Montrul’s (2008) distinction between attrition and incomplete acquisition holds true in EFL, the possible language repertoires and acquisition dynamics among ELL’s broadens considerably in contrast to the assumption the first language will be strong and completely acquired.

Motivation

Necessities of integration remain consistently strong motivators for immigrants to learn English, but the driving force in many EFL locals is quickly reaching a similar level. For example, accompanying Çubukçu’s (2010) description of the “devaluation of local knowledge and cultures” (p. 98), Otsuka (2007) attributes losses in Tongan to a push to “conform to the Western development model that is associated with English as a socioeconomically privileged language” (p. 446). As mentioned in the previous section of this paper, English is a favored choice in government and education. Fully updated textbooks are not even available in languages other than English for science courses in higher education (Al-Jarf, 2008), so it only follows that Saudi Arabia and Poland are just two examples of dozens of countries moving the age at which English is taught as a subject downward, often beginning now in early primary school (Enever, 2007; Manzo & Zehr, 2006). Meanwhile, support for native languages is decreasing. Australia, for instance, has done away with bilingual education for indigenous languages (Simpson, Caffrey, & McConvell, 2009). Behind the move toward English in education, of course, is the dominance of English in leading job markets. Together with educational and economic viability, the status of English socially and in media is all part of a greater picture before the eyes of the world. Indeed, the “desire to integrate with the host community” Opitz (2004) identified within the ESL community has gained a parallel in EFL: Each nation of the world is hosted within the new paradigm of globalization, the language of which is English.

World Englishes

Though not mentioned earlier, another assumption regarding EFL is that the English spoken will be in close accord with British or American English. English as it is spoken in NABA, if that is one English, is not the only English, nor has it been for some time. Most famous among world Englishes, Indian English, has been actively developed and spoken since British colonialism in the country. However, Vaish’s (2007) description of English in Singapore signals the sort of cultural and linguistic infusion indicative of a new English there as well. For the purpose of this paper, the sort of “developmental world Englishes” discussed, for instance, by Bolton, Graddol, and Meierkord (2011) could be the product of any environment outside NABA where English has penetrated deeply enough and long enough to develop as a complete language (as opposed to pidgins) with a number of features consistently distinct from English as it is spoken within NABA.
Who are Newly Immigrated EFL Students? New Possibilities

While the historical definition of EFL is not obsolete in that it may often hold true, the revised view—highlighted above across language competition effects, motivation, and diversity of world Englishes—dictates an expansion of possibilities. In turn, this arising complication in EFL prompts new considerations about the identities of newly immigrated ELL’s:

- May have significant or even high proficiency in one or more dialects of English
- May view English as superior to native or heritage language(s) (culturally, politically, economically)
- May have incomplete or attrited native language
- May have grown up learning English in what resembles more of a typical ESL environment than an EFL environment
- An ELL’s English proficiency may appear as that of a second language speaker, yet the student claims English as a first language
- May speak native language better but have more academic experience in English, or vice versa

Pertinent to general approach in the classroom, the above possibilities and more translate to a complex set of questions about the identity and languages of any given new ELL student, as represented in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1. The Individual: Who is Your New ELL Student? Permutations to Infinity

Important Pedagogical and Research Questions

Once linguistic identity is considered via an expanded set of questions like the one above, the corresponding trends in EFL raise a myriad of other pedagogical research questions only partially answered in the literature thus far.
• One language is instrumental in learning a second (Cummins, 2007, 2008, 2009; Al-Harbi, 2010). What are the implications of changes in EFL on the value of a student’s first language in acquisition of a second?

• Regarding heritage or native language maintenance, as with bilingual education: If the first language was not learned in the first place, then how can it be maintained?

• What are the differences in advantages between an ELL conceived as a stereotype of the historical definitions of EFL and ESL versus a variously conceived ELL newly immigrated using a revised view of EFL?

• Harken back to error analysis, a speculative determination of why someone made a “mistake” or if it is even a mistake at all. Imagine, as well, English dialects and world Englishes. Could an ELL’s foreign English dialect interfere with his or her host country English?

• Considering the level to which English is used at early ages in many EFL locales, are first or second language strategies best to address language issues?

• What can be done with adolescents who have not fully acquired any language? Or younger ELL’s who have only low proficiency in both their first and second language?

• What does it mean if a child has not fully acquired any first language by adolescence?

**Conclusion**

The historical views of ESL and EFL at least partially describe most newly immigrated ELL’s. However, relying solely on those historical views to understand such students leads to assumptions increasingly narrow compared to the broad and varied EFL landscape these students now come from. The type of language competition present in English dominant NABA is emerging in more EFL locales, such that first language attrition and incomplete acquisition are ever more possible even in EFL settings. Further, the variety of Englishes ELLs learn prior to immigration, as well as greater variance in prior acquisition of and desire to learn English, prompt a wider range of questions about who individual ELLs are relative to pedagogy and appropriate educational choices. Prime considerations revolve around the importance of a first language in learning a second, possible differentials in literacy versus spoken language for English or a first language, and the possibility that apparent errors are correct in an English that differs from that of NABA. While an ESL student is submerged in a NABA host community, so too are EFL students submerged in a globalized community which also broadly favors English. Thus, knowing the EFL context ELLs come from is a primary means to knowing those students and asking the right questions to fulfill their needs.

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Challenges and Opportunities in Teaching Content to Secondary English Language Learners: A Focus on Mathematics

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Challenges and Opportunities in Teaching Content to Secondary English Language Learners: A Focus on Mathematics

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Abstract

This paper focuses on the needs of K-12 English Language Learners (ELLs) when learning mathematics by discussing a research-based professional development project for mathematics teachers of ELLs in a Michigan high school. The paper examines the rationale for and nature of the developed instructional activities and materials designed to enhance the current instructional practices. The implications for mathematics teachers, school administrators, mathematics teacher educators, and English as a Second Language (ESL) professionals working with content-area teachers conclude the paper.

Introduction

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (2002), the Common Core State Standards Initiative, (2010) and other recent educational reform efforts have required that all students achieve high academic standards in core subject areas including mathematics. The 2009 National Assessment of Education Progress results showed that this is not the reality for adolescent English Language Learners (ELLs): 72 percent of eighth-graders identified as ELLs scored below the basic level in mathematics (United States Department of Education, 2011).

Traditionally, mathematics has been viewed as a universal language which relies upon common symbols for all of its work. However, in order to engage in successful problem solving, mathematics students have to understand specialized vocabulary, be able to parse complex sentence structures, and have strong listening and reading skills. Not surprisingly, given the increased language demands, students whose first language is not English have been impacted the most by the recent shift toward more language-intensive mathematics. Nationally, the rapidly growing ELL student population has been shown to receive lower grades in mathematics, be considered less capable by mathematics teachers, and drop out of school more frequently (Moss & Puma, 1995; Ruiz-de-Velasco & Fix, 2000). Yet, little research has investigated how to maximize instructional gains for ELLs in areas such as mathematics and science (Genesee et al., 2005). The project described in this paper was designed to address an area of great need, facilitating secondary ELLs’ improvement in their mathematics achievement, through the creation of a teacher development program focused on helping mathematics teachers better address the needs of ELLs in their classroom.

Achievement Improvement in Mathematics among English Language Learners (AIM-ELLs) Project

The AIM-ELLs project was the result of collaboration between the two authors—an English as a Second Language (ESL)/Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) specialist and a Mathematics Education professor. We received a grant from our
institution that provided us with release time to conduct observations of mathematics classes in a local high school and subsequently, based on the findings from the observations and the recommendations from research, develop a series of professional development workshops targeting the identified instructional needs of ELLs in these classes.

The project consisted of three phases. The initial phase of the project involved establishing positive working relationships with the mathematics teachers at the local high school with whom we were partnering and collecting pre-intervention data. We attended departmental meetings and collected data from the teachers via survey and class observations. The next phase of the project consisted of using the survey and observational data and current research findings to create and administer the professional development program. Of the six mathematics teachers who enrolled in the program, three attended all of the professional development workshops. (Due to staffing changes two teachers no longer taught at the participating school and therefore did not participate. One teacher was unable to meet after school due to other commitments.) In addition to the mathematics teachers, one ESL specialist at the school attended the workshops. Her presence proved to be particularly valuable in that she was able to provide important insights about the specific ELL-related issues at the particular school and offer opinions on her own effort in helping to support content-area teachers whose classes included ELLs. The final phase of the project consisted of the program evaluation, including the teachers’ assessment of the effectiveness of the workshops and post-workshop observations and individualized debriefing sessions.

**Stage 1: Data collection and needs analysis**

For the purpose of observations, we adapted the Sheltered Instruction Observational Protocol (Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2000). Our specific adaptations were driven by our perceived needs to 1) simplify the document in order to increase our inter-rater reliability; and 2) focus on those aspects of instruction deemed as particularly pertinent to mathematics learning and most conducive to being addressed during the relatively short duration of our professional development program. The adapted observation rubric is presented in Appendix A. During the observations, we each completed our own rubric. Subsequently, we compared our scores and evaluative comments until we reached a consensus on our scoring and interpretations.

As mentioned earlier, we also allowed the mathematics teachers participating in the program to provide input regarding what they wanted us to address in the professional development program. Consequently we designed a brief survey which provided the teachers with an opportunity to share their experiences with ELLs and articulate their desires with respect to the upcoming professional development program. Of the five teachers who responded to the survey, four had never undergone training specific to the needs of ELLs and one had some training from her previous job in the Western United States. When asked what they expected from the professional development program, two of the teachers reported that they wanted information about specific issues related to ELLs and all of the teachers wanted to learn practical strategies, activities, or “ways to engage ELLs.”

The next section describes the instructional areas that we identified as meriting interventions in our professional development program. However, we would first like to briefly outline those aspects of the observed mathematics instruction that we viewed as effective. For one, the observations uncovered the teachers’ commitment to offer rigorous content-driven lessons that frequently utilized technology. Additionally, we were able to observe some visual support for the language used during the mathematics lessons which is considered critical in effective content-based teaching of ELLs (Driscoll, Heck, & Malzahn, 2012; Moschkovich,
To illustrate, some of the observed teachers used color or bolding when distinguishing the key vocabulary in a lesson while others had definitions on posters or other visuals readily available in the classroom. Finally, we witnessed extensive teacher modeling of the steps necessary for solving the types of problems addressed in the lessons.

**Stage 2: Development and implementation of the professional development program**

The observations and survey responses described above helped us identify the most optimal workshop format and content, as well as three target areas for improving instruction of ELLs in mathematics classes. With respect to the format of the three workshops, the participating mathematics teachers showed a preference for a combination of the traditional presentation and practice model with opportunities for lesson planning with individualized support and personalized debriefing.

As a result, we developed a series of three workshops. The content of the workshops revolved around three target areas that were identified as the most critical in helping mathematics teachers meet the needs of ELLs. These areas were: 1) increased linguistic support and language use consistency; 2) enhanced opportunities for interaction; and 3) enriched context for concept learning. We delivered this content via PowerPoint presentations, collaborative video-based activities and discussions, lesson plan and instructional activity analyses, teaching demonstrations, and individualized support during lesson planning. In the following sections we describe our observations pertinent to these identified areas and how we addressed them in the professional development program.

**Increased linguistic support and language use consistency**

It is critical that ELLs have opportunities to listen, speak, read, and write using the language of mathematics during mathematics lessons (Moschkovich, 2012). Our observations, however, uncovered mathematics teachers’ instructional tendency to be teacher-centered, exposing students to mathematics primarily by listening to teacher explanations and modeling of steps relevant to the target mathematics concepts. Students were expected to read parts of the textbook at home, but the reality was that very few students appeared to be doing so. Across the board, students had few opportunities to engage in meaningful discussions of mathematics concepts verbally or in writing that went beyond individually producing the small number of problem-specific steps.

Even the listening opportunities, which appeared to be plentiful, may not have been as effective as needed to profit ELLs. The observed teachers spoke quickly, used vocabulary inconsistently, failed to use visual and gestural support effectively, and did not appear to engage in identifying language demands in their lessons prior to teaching. Based on these observations and available research on the importance of appropriate linguistic scaffolding for ELLs (e.g., Driscoll, Heck, & Malzahn, 2012; Moschkovich, 2012), we selected increased language scaffolding as the first important topic in our initial professional development workshop. Specifically, we introduced the teachers to the following three guidelines:

1. Slow down, simplifying, and rephrasing
2. Taking responsibility for helping ELLs learn the language
3. Using gestures and visuals effectively to reinforce content

In discussing the importance of the three processes captured in the first guideline, we emphasized the need for slowing down teachers’ rate of speech, simplifying their language, and
focusing on key new vocabulary especially during the explanations of new concepts. In order to increase the chances of ELLs’ understanding key points in the lesson, we suggested that teachers ask students to rephrase the most important parts of the lesson. We believe that adolescent learners often pay more attention to their peers’ explanations than to those of the teacher, so we find this technique particularly effective not only with ELLs but with first language learners as well.

When addressing the second point—taking responsibility for helping ELLs to learn the language—we began by acknowledging the immense burden of this expectation: Mathematics teachers, like other content-area teachers, are primarily accountable for their students and their institutions to teach mathematics which is what they have been trained to do. Realizing that the scope of our professional development program would not allow us to provide sufficient information and practice in identifying the full range of language demands in mathematics lessons, we chose to focus on two key points. First, we discussed with the participating teachers the importance of anticipating and building into the lessons the vocabulary that would likely be difficult in the selected mathematics problems. For example, during one of the observations a teacher gave students time to start their homework at the end of class. During that time, the teacher was asked repeatedly by individual students for the meaning of “double” and “triple.” During our workshop, we talked about how the teacher could have anticipated this difficulty if attention to vocabulary was part of the planning process and incorporated those terms into the lesson so that students would be prepared when they encountered those terms in the homework problems. We talked about this process as being a natural extension of teachers’ lesson and unit planning and brainstormed ways of keeping track of such key words in the lessons. Secondly, we asked teachers to consider providing graphic organizers including the target vocabulary or asking students to otherwise keep track of the new terms and words through the maintenance of a “mathematics dictionary.” Another strategy we demonstrated to the teachers was providing ELLs sentence stems (beginning of sentences) to help them get started in communicating their mathematical ideas. For example, if the teacher asks the class to respond to the prompt “Which is bigger: two cubed or three squared?” the teacher could provide the following sentence stem to scaffold ELLs responses: “Two cubed is {smaller than, bigger than, the same as} three squared because…”

Finally, we engaged with the participating teachers in discussions of effective gesturing and visuals as additional non-verbal ways of providing linguistic support to ELLs. While we had seen attempts of teachers using gestures and visuals during the observations, they were frequently not effective. For example, one teacher would sit at the back of the classroom next to the projector, and gesture toward the board in the front of the room, trying to explain a concept. Another teacher hung papers with definitions of mathematics terms on a clothesline in the corner of the room, which had the potential to provide excellent visual scaffolding. However, the terms were explained with difficult vocabulary and more new terms, which obscured the meaning of the selected word/term. To illustrate, the paper that defined “alternate interior angles” used the obscure term “transversal” in the definition, weakening the impact this support would have for ELLs.

Along with encouraging teachers to improve the general linguistic support provided to ELLs in their mathematics classes, we also brought to the teachers’ consciousness the issue of consistency in language use. This component emerged from the observations when teachers were repeatedly inconsistent with themselves, the textbook, and the calculator during instruction. Each of these will be explained in turn.
In one class period a teacher used all of the following phrases to mean the sum of the angles of a triangle: whole inside of a triangle, how much whole thing worth, all of it. Not only do these three phrases convey different meanings, none of them make it clear that the teacher was referring to the total of the triangle’s angles. In another instance, during the discussion of a single problem the teacher used the synonymous terms “minus,” “subtract,” and “difference.” For students developing their understanding of the English language, this was likely confusing. We encouraged the teachers to utilize one or two main terms (preferably those utilized in the textbook). Only once ELLs understand these main terms should teachers use additional synonyms, making sure that students understand the connection to the terms that they have already acquired. We emphasized the importance of consistency in the teachers’ use of language, as well as clarity, in our workshops.

Regarding consistency with the textbook, the book contained the statement “\(\sin^{-1}(36)\)” and the teacher would verbalize this as “inverse sine of 36.” The verbal communication of this mathematical notation did not match the written form, which caused confusion during one of the observations. There are also inconsistencies between notation used in textbooks and notation used on graphing calculators, as documented during one observed lesson on combinations. The book notation for a combination was \(\binom{6}{2}\), while the calculator notation was 6C2. Mathematics teachers need to be conscious of such inconsistencies and explicitly address them in their lessons in order to facilitate ELLs’ understanding of these concepts.

**Enhanced opportunities for interaction**

While the participating mathematics teachers’ lack of focus on language was not particularly unexpected, what surprised us most during the observations was the absence of meaningful interaction among peers. A typical lesson involved a teacher-led checking of homework, which was then followed by a teacher-led explanation and modeling of new concepts, and ended with students individually working on problems. We felt that such complete lack of interaction among students not only prevented students from thinking about mathematics concepts at a deeper level, but also obscured opportunities to practice language. The sole focus on individual work was preventing students from negotiating their understanding of mathematical concepts in meaningful speaking or writing activities.

Consequently, we selected three key ideas for the transformation of the classroom into a mathematical discourse community (Willey, 2010). We deem these ideas as relatively easy to implement in mathematics instruction while having a high potential to significantly increase student involvement. These ideas that we advocated for teachers to implement in the context of mathematics lessons were:

1. Integrating comprehension checks and memory boosters
2. Adding student-led modeling
3. Incorporating meaningful pair and group activities

The implementation of the first idea—integrating comprehension checks and memory boosters—simply entails teachers stopping after key parts of their explanations and asking students to demonstrate their understanding of the main points either by summarizing them (e.g., individually or collaboratively and in writing or orally), rephrasing them (e.g., to another student), or answering relevant comprehension questions. This recommendation was a direct result of our observations during which we often witnessed mathematics teachers lecturing for extended periods of time without any comprehension or attention checks. Beyond the increased
opportunities for language development, this idea likely entails cognitive benefits also—breaking down long complex explanations by intercepting them with student-led rephrases can lead to gains in long-term retention of information (van Blankenstein et al., 2009).

Student-led modeling is another idea with the potential of increasing interaction among students and it appeared realistic given that the observed teachers were already relying on so much teacher-led modeling. We presented an activity, adapted from Dodge (2009), where students are provided with a problem solving framework and a challenging mathematical task posed as a word problem. The framework calls for the students to first create a pictorial version of the problem and to document what they know from the problem description as well as what they are trying to find out. Then it calls for students to solve the problem, labeling their answer, and conclude by explaining and justifying their solution. Through the use of this framework, the students can document their work in solving the problem and utilize this as a reference when verbally describing their solution method with others. As with the first idea, we consider student-led modeling as effective beyond language development—even first language students can benefit from articulating their thinking process (Stein, Grover, & Henningsen, 1996).

Finally, our professional development program targeted the need for teachers to implement meaningful collaborative work during mathematics lessons. Too often during our observations we saw teachers asking questions to the whole class, which generally resulted in two outcomes—either a complete silence which then led the teacher to offer the answer, or the same two or three students offering responses. Meaningful collaborative work would instead force students, working in pairs or small groups, to think through questions and problems together, making each partnership accountable for a response. Building on Johnson, Johnson, and Smith (2006), we engaged the teachers in discussions of the conditions necessary for effective collaborative work in mathematics classes, including positive interdependence and individual accountability, and concrete strategies to achieve those conditions. We also included example collaborative activities such as a review activity “Find Someone Who” (See Appendix B). During the second workshop we engaged the teachers in an activity where they analyzed mathematics lesson plans for their language scaffolding and peer interaction. Some of the lesson plans did a better job on these points than others. This analysis and subsequent discussion was very meaningful for all of the participants as it allowed the ideas that we had discussed during the first workshop to be concrete and actualized in the lessons portrayed by the lesson plans. The teachers also created their own lesson plans with our consultation that focused on implementing at least three of the ideas we had presented during the workshop.

Enriched context for concept learning

Problem solving tasks that leverage familiar cultural contexts as well as students’ home and community-based knowledge and experiences have been found especially helpful to ELLs as they learn mathematics (Civil, 2007). During our observations nearly all of the tasks the students were asked to do were “naked,” void of any context, and those few tasks that were set in real world contexts were not set in familiar ones. We observed a lesson on exponential growth that set all word problems in the context of bacteria growth in a petri dish, not a particularly meaningful or familiar context to teenagers. We discussed the importance of a relevant context for the mathematical concepts they were teaching and brainstormed some examples, like changing the context of exponential growth to videos going viral on the Internet.

The context of the learning environment also plays an important role in students’ learning. A meta-analysis study by Sowel (1989) found that students’ mathematics achievement is
increased through the sustained use of manipulatives and that students' attitudes toward mathematics are improved when they have instruction with manipulatives provided by teachers knowledgeable about their use. The use of mathematical tools like manipulatives has been found effective for improving ELLs' achievement in particular (Ramirez & Celedón-Pattichis, 2012). Manipulatives provide a resource for ELLs to engage in mathematics and communicate their understanding of mathematical concepts. Their use can also contribute to developing a community that enhances discourse, much needed by ELLs. We asked the teachers about the manipulatives available at their school and discussed ways to utilize them in their teaching during our workshops, emphasizing how their use makes abstract mathematics more accessible to students and gives ELL students in particular important referential experiences. We also watched and reflected on a video case study regarding the use of manipulatives for teaching mathematics. This provided a shared classroom experience so the teachers could see the points we were making come to life in the classroom. It also gave us a common context to analyze and reflect upon during the workshop and the teachers found it very meaningful.

**Stage 3: Program Evaluation**

*Teachers’ Evaluations*

Using the workshop evaluation surveys as an assessment tool, the program was evaluated very positively. The participants were asked to rate on a 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) scale their level of agreement with 3 statements. Each statement and their average score are reported below.

**Table 1: Workshop Evaluation Numerical Results**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Average score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The workshop was well organized.</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The learning objectives of the workshop were met.</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel confident in my ability to use the new knowledge and/or skills gained in this workshop to improve my instructional effectiveness.</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The written comments provided on the survey also indicated the effectiveness of the program. One mathematics teacher participant wrote: “This was a very useful workshop, I really enjoyed it and learned a lot.” The ELL teacher participant wrote: “I have tools/ideas I can share with mathematics teachers who were not here. I will share at middle school [I work at]”, showing that the work of the program extended beyond the 4 teachers who attended the workshops.

**Post-Program Observations**

Pre- and post-observations provided additional data that the program was effective, with participating teachers applying, to varied levels of effectiveness, what they learned during the professional development program to their classroom practice. For example, one teacher who showed a tendency to speak very quickly during the pre-observations consciously worked on slowing down her speech and was effective at doing so during the class time observed. This teacher also explained the steps of solving a linear equation in a familiar context to teenagers, relationships between boyfriends and girlfriends and their interaction with friends. This was evidence that the teacher purposefully considered what cultural contexts would be relevant to the students and successfully incorporated a relevant context for the learning of an abstract mathematical concept, a point of emphasis in our workshops. Another one of the participating
teachers successfully incorporated vocabulary support as well as manipulatives in his post-workshop observation. During the planning of the lesson he identified key vocabulary terms and wrote definitions for those terms that used simple vocabulary and were accessible to the students in his class. He had those words written on the board at the front of the room at the start of class, then pointed to them whenever he used them during the lesson. He also used a graphing calculator as a manipulative to support his students’ learning of graphing systems of linear equations, an appropriate support to help ELL students engage with the mathematics.

One of the teachers was less successful in implementing the ideas from the workshop. For example, he made an effort to have students work collaboratively by asking them to work together at the same tables. However, the nature of collaboration was not meaningful—students were simply asked to work individually and compare their answers with those of their peers. This task design resulted in a few students completing the task and then letting the others simply copy their answers. The majority of the students appeared distracted, discussing topics unrelated to mathematics. This observation served as a testament to the fact that teacher change is not easy, but rather is a complex process the realization, which is determined by the teacher’s background, previous professional preparation, their own teaching philosophy and beliefs about effective pedagogy, and their understanding and views of the received professional development.

**Discussion and Implications**

The AIM-ELLS project described in this paper provided mathematics teachers teaching ELLs with ideas about how they could support these students’ language development, engage them in collaborative work, and enrich the context within which mathematics lessons occur so as to make their instruction more effective for ELLs. A large and depressing amount of evidence documents that ELLs do not generally share in the bounty offered by these teaching principles. Instead, ELL students sit quietly in mathematics classrooms with little opportunity to engage (Herman & Abedi, 2004). The presented ideas not only have value with respect to the population of ELLs, but also in considering domestic, native speaking students given the discussed benefits of the targeted mathematical terminology, increased involvement, and enriched context benefit all students learning mathematics (Driscoll, Heck, & Malzahn, 2012).

Because the scope of the project only allowed for three professional development workshops, we were unable to engage teachers in several other important topics which we strongly recommend including more comprehensive professional development programs. For example, our focus on language support comprised primarily of the development of specialized vocabulary and did not extend to other important language areas such as grammar, register, organization, and longer mathematical discourse (See Moschkovich, 2007 for a discussion). Also, it is possible that because we emphasized better instructional support for ELLs, we may have reinforced the view of ELLs as deficient and the role of language support as solely remedial. The project left us wanting to explore more about how teachers can draw on the strengths that this student population may be bringing into the mathematics classroom.

This project underscores the importance of content-area teachers developing at least basic expertise in providing effective instructional support for ELLs. Given the commitment needed on the part of teachers to gain such expertise, school administrators must understand the importance of professional development specific to ELL issues and must be willing and able to support it. With respect to the different options for professional development, given our experience as university faculty working closely with mathematics teachers and an ESL teacher, we would also like to argue for the viability of such university-school partnerships as a particularly effective
means for a professional development program. During the workshops and even breaks, we often engaged with the teachers in discussions of various pedagogical ideas, recent trends in research, and conference presentations that they or we have attended. We found ourselves benefiting tremendously from such spontaneous information sharing because it informs our own work with preservice teachers. Simultaneously, we felt that the teachers appreciated being updated on some of the new trends and resources in the field.

Our finding that mathematics teachers are underprepared to deal with the challenges of ELLs also suggests implications for mathematics teacher educators. Given the increasing number of ELLs in public schools, it is critical that this topic is included in mathematics teacher preparation coursework. Methodology courses may be particularly conducive to this topic—preservice teachers can be challenged to adapt the newly acquired strategies and techniques for teaching mathematics to the population of ELLs.

Finally, we hope that this paper may be useful to ESL professionals in public school settings. Oftentimes, these individuals become advocates for ELLs and ultimately support staff for content area teachers who are unsure as to how to address the needs of ELLs in their classes. While administrators often assume that the ESL professionals are well positioned for this role, ESL teachers may feel at a loss as to how to best communicate ELLs’ needs and promote effective instructional strategies to content area teachers—Should they develop workshops? Or just recommend useful resources? Offer to observe the teachers and make suggestions for instruction? To what extent can they be critical of their colleagues’ teaching? Another concern that many ESL professionals have is lacking sufficient background in what strategies may be best suited for the different content areas. For example, as we discovered ourselves during this project, it takes time to develop explicit knowledge of mathematics-specific strategies for ELLs. ESL professionals may need time and resources to build up their own background before they can be expected to provide optimal support for content area teachers.

The adoption of the Common Core State Standards for Mathematics (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2010) by Michigan and forty-four additional states has ushered in an era of higher mathematical standards. It is imperative that work be done to ensure that ELLs are not left behind in the effort to meet these new learning standards. Professional development projects such as AIM-ELLS are a key component to helping mathematics teachers accept responsibility for teaching language and attain the pedagogical knowledge needed to effectively meet ELLs’ needs when learning mathematics.

Authors’ Note

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References


## Appendix A: Observation Rubric for the AIM-ELL Project

**Scoring Key:**

2 points: effective, 1 point: moderately effective, 0 points: ineffective/not present

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Preparation</th>
<th>2/1/0</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Content objective</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language objective</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supplementary materials</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Background Building</th>
<th>2/1/0</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Concepts linked to background experiences</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concepts linked to past learning</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key vocabulary emphasized</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comprehensible Input</th>
<th>2/1/0</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Appropriate Speech</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clear oral explanations and instructions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clear written explanations and instructions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Techniques used (e.g. visuals, body language)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities and Strategies</th>
<th>2/1/0</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Meaningful activities that integrate concepts with language</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students encouraged to use strategies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modeling</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interaction</th>
<th>2/1/0</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>With teacher (e.g. opportunities to elaborate on responses)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With peers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With texts and materials</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sufficient wait time provided</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lesson Delivery</th>
<th>2/1/0</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pacing appropriate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transitions link activities and concepts</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Review/Assessment</th>
<th>2/1/0</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Review of key concepts</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review of key language</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feedback provided throughout the lesson</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment of content and language objectives</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### OVERALL

**Appendix B: Find Someone Who…: A Mathematics Review Activity Example**

(Adapted from Dodge, 2009)
**Find someone who can:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Explain what sampling variability is</th>
<th>Explain whether a 95% confidence interval is thinner, wider, or the same width as a 90% confidence interval from the same data set and why</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>NAME:</strong></td>
<td><strong>NAME:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ANSWER:</strong></td>
<td><strong>ANSWER:</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Explain practical ways to decrease the margin of error in a poll’s results</th>
<th>Tell you the formula for a one-proportion confidence interval</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>NAME:</strong></td>
<td><strong>NAME:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ANSWER:</strong></td>
<td><strong>ANSWER:</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Using iPad applications to teach ESL

Jingjing Wei

“Serving for a Better World”
Selected Proceedings of the 2012
Michigan Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages Conference
Livonia, Michigan, October 12-13, 2012

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Using iPad applications to teach ESL

Jingjing Wei
Eastern Michigan University

Abstract

iPad applications are a newly developed wealth of resources that can be instrumental in second language teaching and learning. This article reports on a material development project for teaching English (e.g. reading and writing) with iPad applications. By incorporating applications into ESL instruction and materials development, students are motivated to learn through animation, visuals, sound, and many more functions provided by new technology.

Introduction

Over the past several years, the mobile computing industry has made vigorous technological advances that have dramatically change the way people communicate. According to the market research firm ComScore, the number of teens with smart phones in the U.S. nearly tripled to 4.8 million (Luna, 2011). Young people today are no longer the people our educational system was designed to teach (Prensky, 2001). This results in an increasing demand on the part of teachers' education. In addition to integrating content knowledge and pedagogy, the notion that today's teacher education needs to include technology is made clear by current TESOL Technology Standards, which focus on how English language teachers, teacher educators, and administrators can and should use technology in and out of the classroom (Healey, Hanson-Smith, Hubbard, Ioannou-Georgiou, Kessler, & Ware, 2011).

While many technologies have found their way into ubiquitous use in our daily lives, they are often overlooked, or even avoided, in the classroom (Kessler, 2012). Educators and researchers have begun to contemplate ways the smaller portable technologies can facilitate English teaching and learning. Increasingly, developers are creating applications for language teaching and learning. There are various applications available for practicing pronunciation skills, developing listening and reading comprehension skills, improving oral and writing competence, and other language learning purposes. Considering the overwhelming amount of applications available, it is time for educators to consider the potential for applications to become an instrumental and integral part of language teaching and learning. By taking advantage of learners' knowledge and skills in applying new technology, teachers can integrate applications into classroom learning.

Criteria for Selecting iPad Applications

In choosing applications for intermediate and advanced ESL classes, the following criteria were utilized in assessing the quality and effectiveness of this material development project. An application should meet the following requirements:

1. **Instructional Usability**: The application should be pedagogically effective and viewed as an improvement to teaching.
Availability: The application loads quickly and does not crash.

Relevance: The use of a particular application coincides with the purpose of the teaching and content is appropriate for the students.

Engagement: The application highly engages students and motivates them to use it.

Individual Learner Differences: The application addresses visual, kinesthetic, intrapersonal, linguistic, interpersonal, musical, or spatial learners.

In developing these criteria, the author referenced an article evaluating applications for learning and teaching (Jonas-Dwyer et al. 2012). Specifically, instructional usability, availability and relevance are principles universal to any technological advancement and carry instrumental values to teaching. The last two criteria were considered in reflection to the theory of Multiple Intelligence (Gardner, 1996), which argues that teaching should tap into students’ different intelligences and interests.

Target iPad Applications
In response to the above criteria, eight applications were selected, in which four of the applications are addressed in this article (see Table 1). For a complete listing of the applications and their websites, please see Appendix A.

Table 1: iPad applications presented in this article

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>iPad applications presented in this article</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Educreations: an interactive whiteboard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Evernote: an electronic notebook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>iThoughtsHD: an outline organizer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Write or Die: a writing productivity application</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sample Instructional Activities
At the 2012 MITESOL Conference in Livonia, Michigan, the author shared the following four examples of activities that teachers can incorporate in different stages of the lesson to teach reading and writing using iPad applications.

Reading Activity 1
Once the instruction of a reading strategy (e.g. making inferences) is given in class, it is very difficult for students to duplicate the nuances of a teacher's instruction or for absent students to make up for the missed lesson. This might result in the loss of interest towards learning in general. By incorporating the iPad application Educreations, students can have easy access to recorded instruction that guides students through an example lesson.

iPad application Educreations
This application involves an interactive whiteboard. It allows the teacher to draw and write on the whiteboard while recording the instruction. Pictures can also be attached for clearer instruction and visual effect. During a pre-reading activity, teachers can introduce the topic by showing pictures and questions through the Educreations application to activate students’ prior knowledge. For example, given the topic is "fads and trends in the 21st century," teachers can attach
pictures of different fads and trends in different countries and organize a lead-in discussion to distinguish the difference between fads and trends. Students are then recognized as the experts of their own culture, which helps motivate students to understand the content. To introduce reading strategies, teachers can apply an interactive and animated way by adding texts, pictures, handwritings and drawings via the recordable whiteboard Educreations. For example, if the target strategy is recognizing the structure of a paragraph, the teachers can start to explain the structure first by using a hamburger picture. Then the teacher can present the picture of the text, underline important sentences, write information down or draw pictures around it to provide additional explanation.

Benefits and Limitations

The whole teaching process would be recorded via this application. The recorded lesson can be exported as video clips. This enables students to watch lessons before and after class. Meanwhile, teachers can use this application to give audio feedback on students' homework. For instance, teachers may insert a photo of students' homework, comment or write on it, circle or explain the specific mistakes as well as providing suggestions for revision. If you record and then need to erase for some reason, it erases all audio and graphics. Meanwhile instead of using markers, teachers need to draw and write on the application using a finger, which might result in unclear drawing and writing.

Reading Activity 2

Extensive reading projects are never easy to carry out and monitor. What might happen at the end of each extensive reading task is that students have not finished the reading, skipped a few chapters, or they simply chose not to read. The complexity of the book can be controlled to the appropriate level and worksheets can be developed to monitor reading. However, extensive reading is always a daunting task and students think they are evaluated through homework. In order to make extensive reading interesting, teachers should design structured activities to walk students through reading and allow them to see their progress over time. The iPad application Evernote is a good choice to meet such purposes.

iPad application: Evernote

Evernote lets teachers or students take notes, capture photos, record voice and then makes these notes completely searchable by simply typing in the tags. The idea of using Evernote as an electronic portfolio tool resulted from the limitations of the author's previous reading project which used only paper copy worksheets throughout the semester. The author asked students to read Black Like Me and fill out one comprehension worksheet each week. After reading, students had an in-class discussion and completed discussion and reflection worksheets. It was apparent that the students were largely motivated to read and they were making progress over time. However, documenting the paperwork of 13 students proved to be troublesome. To fix this problem, the Evernote application can be used creatively as a digital portfolio organizer to carry out extensive reading projects. First, teachers need to set up an Evernote account for each student. Then teachers introduce the concept of a portfolio to students, documenting their work and progress by developing comprehension worksheets to keep track of their reading and understanding of the target book. Students can add pictures of homework, text, sketches, doodles, brainstorming, etc. into their worksheets to enhance the interpretation of their work. In the end,
students would complete and keep an Evernote folder that includes a representative sampling of their homework, pictures and tests.

**Benefits and Limitations**

The structure of Evernote portfolios really fits into any educational, work or artistic endeavor. The reading portfolio activity helps students maintain digital portfolios to keep track of their progress over time. It is especially useful when it comes to parent/teacher conferences. Teachers can be constantly documenting what students are doing and sharing this feedback with parents or individual students. A well planned digital portfolio would serve as a showcase of students' "product". To see real growth needs time. It is likely that teachers might need to store multiple entries of students' work. For each student's account, Evernote allows 100 saved searches. This might not work well if the teacher plans to document students' work in more than one semester.

**Writing Activity 1**

For most students, the hardest part of writing is getting started. Staring at an empty piece of paper or a blank computer screen, they grow frustrated as it seems there is nothing to say. By integrating iPad applications *iThoughtsHD* and *Write or Die*, teachers can provide students with visual mind-map support to facilitate brainstorming process and make use of negative reinforcement to encourage students writing first draft in a timely fashion.

**iPad application *iThoughtsHD***

*iThoughtsHD* is a mind mapping tool which allows students to visually organize their thoughts, ideas and information. During the brainstorming stage, teachers can use the *iThoughtsHD* app to help students present their ideas through visual mind-mapping. For example, teachers can offer a topic and ask students to brainstorm using the app. Students would type in the topic and a bubble-shaped topic will pop up in the middle of the map. Students can continue to add multiple subtopics and all of those would spread out as a relationship of a sibling or child to the main topic. Then teachers can have students export their own mind-map. To make it fun, students can practice personalizing their map by fixing the setup to their preferred color, shape, background, shadow and font before the class period.

**Benefits and Limitations**

It is a nice tool for organizing all the scattered thoughts and ideas visually. Every 30 seconds the map is automatically saved and every 5 minutes a complete 'snapshot copy' of the map is made. This application only allows students to brainstorm and sketch the general ideas using words or phrases. It would be less useful for writing longer stretches of sentences.

**iPad application: *Write or Die***

*Write or Die* is a new kind of writing productivity application that forces students to write by providing consequences for distraction and procrastination. In order to prepare for the lesson, students play with *Write or Die* by choosing its consequences to Kamikaze mode: setting the word goal as 200 and the time goal as 30 minutes, and adjusting the grace period. Teachers then ask students to create a draft based on the outline created by using *iThoughtsHD*. Students can be divided into two competitive teams and each group nominates a team name. The students are then timed in an attempt to complete writing in 30 minutes. In Kamikaze mode, whenever students
stop for too long, the background color will keep changing into bright red and eventually if no
words are typed soon after, the word will unwrite itself. Whoever stops too long will need to
rewrite as words are eaten. At the end of the lesson, teachers count how many students survive the
Kamikaze mode and the group with the most survivors wins.

Benefits and Limitations
The level of punishment can be set according to different requirements. It works better for
students who lack self-discipline to write consistently on their own and therefore need an outside
force to keep them on task. After they finishing writing, the written product can be exported to
Dropbox, Email, Clipboard or Text file. Teachers need to carefully choose the punish mode based
on the complexity level of each task. As beginning level students are more likely to feel frustrated
in timed writing, the teacher should adjust the time goal and word goal to fit students' levels
and change the consequence of Write or Die. Additionally, in order to lower students' writing anxiety,
modify the activity so that students can write about their hobby, dream, ambition, experience or
any topic that excites them.

Limitation and Suggestions for Further Research
Although the author is pleased with the design of this material development project, she is
well aware of its limitations. While reviewing different applications, it is very easy to lose track
(focus?) and look for “fun” applications only. Teachers should be careful to weigh “fun” against
productivity when choosing whether or not to use an application in their classroom. A significant
amount of time was spent trying to knit the target knowledge well with the appropriate
applications. Finding the applications that fit for all criteria and work well for the lesson
objectives proved to be no easy task. With the rapid development of iPad-optimized applications,
there is still plenty of room for further investigation and experimentation of different applications
that target various lesson objectives. In addition to expanding the research base, the material
presented here can be tested in various contexts both within and outside of the university setting.
These applications can also be used in an EFL context with college and adult learners. As iPad
applications are still relatively new products, this project possesses great potential to be used
effectively in a wide variety of contexts to teach English language skills.

Conclusion
Even though people still question whether it is appropriate to use applications (which are
considered to be games) to approach learners, the investigation on the effectiveness of using
applications in teaching continues to grow. There is a wealth of app information to be discovered
and effectively utilized to make learning an enjoyable process. The exploration of appropriate
educational applications holds great potential for language instruction and materials development.

Author Note
Jingjing Wei is affiliated with Eastern Michigan University. Correspondence concerning
this article should be addressed to Jingjing Wei at this email address: (jwei2@emich.edu).
References


Appendix A: List of iPad Applications for Instruction

1) Writing
Chronicle for iPad - A personal journal [On-line]. Available at
iThoughts Mindmapping for the iPhone & iPad [On-line]. Available:
http://www.ithoughts.co.uk/iThoughtsHD/Welcome.html
Write or Die: putting the "prod" in productivity [On-line]. Available at:
http://writeordie.com/#iPad

2) Reading
Educreations Interactive Whiteboard [On-line]. Available at:
NPR News [On-line]. Available at:

3) Listening and Speaking
Johnny ESL [On-line]. Available at:

Note: The Listening and Speaking applications were not addressed in the MITESOL Conference presentation but were added later as valuable resources.
Appendix B: Sample Lesson Plan on Teaching Writing

I. Title  
Last Survivors: Brainstorming and Drafting Along via iPad Apps

II. Levels  
Intermediate and Advanced

III. Aims  
For most students, the hardest part of writing is getting started. Staring at an empty piece of paper or a blank computer screen, they grow frustrated as it seems there is nothing to say. However, once students know how to start, it usually comes naturally and writing starts to flow. By integrating iPad apps, this lesson provides visual mind-map support to facilitate brainstorming process and make use of negative reinforcement to encourage students writing first draft in a timely fashion.

IV. Class Time (70 min)

V. Preparation Time (1 hour)

VI. Resources  
Access to the Internet. iPad. iThoughtsHD app. Write or Die app.

VII. Procedure

Before class: Teachers show students how to use iThoughtsHD and Write or Die iPad apps before class. In order to facilitate clear instruction, teachers give students a handout that explains the feature, function and instruction on how to use these two iPad apps. For iThoughtsHD, students practice personalizing their map by editing color, shape, background, shadow and font before the class period. And in order to prepare for the next lesson, students play with Write or Die by choosing its consequences to Kamikaze mode, setting word goal as 200 and time goal as 30 min, and adjusting grace period.

In session 1, review how to use iThoughtsHD app and then give students a topic and ask them to brainstorm using the app.

I. Review
* Tap on the + symbol (top left toolbar button) and type in the topic. A bubble-shaped topic will pop up in the middle of the map.
* Tap on one of the two "topic creation" toolbar buttons (top right) to create three subtopics of the currently selected topic. Students can type in multiple branches which spread out as a relationship of a sibling or child to the main topic.

II. Apply
* Ask the students to log in to the iThoughtsHD (mind mapping) app.
* Have students work independently to come up with their own mind-map.
* Have students export their own mind-map from iPad to their email.

In session 2, ask students to write a draft based on the outline created in session 1.
* Divide students into two competitive teams and ask students to nominate a name for their team.
* Have students start drafting based on their own outline. The students are then timed in an attempt to complete writing in 30 minutes. In Kamikaze mode, whenever students stop too long, the background color will keep changing into bright red and eventually if no words are typed.
afterwards, the word will unwrite itself. Whoever stops for too long will need to rewrite as the words are eaten.

* Count how many students survive the Kamikaze mode and the group that has the most survivors wins.
* Reward the winning team.
Free, Effective eTools for Teaching Writing

Kirtland Eastwood
Lauryn Gallo
Jessica Piggot

“Serving for a Better World”
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Free, Effective eTools for Teaching Writing

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Abstract
Web-based tools can be excellent sources for teaching writing skills in an interactive way. With the internet available the options are endless, but it can be difficult and time-consuming to locate quality sources to teach the desired skills. This paper discusses the use and applicability of ten free and effective eTools for helping students at various levels to develop their writing proficiency. Included tools address skills for pre-, during, and post-writing that are easy-to-use for both students and teachers. Classroom implementation of these eTools allows students to actively engage in the writing process in a more meaningful way.

Introduction
The use of technology in education and language learning is not a recent trend. With the ever-increasing presence of technology use in daily life, educators must take advantage of the available tools to help students achieve language learning goals and to become informed, critical technology consumers. Many researchers have called for teacher awareness and pedagogical consideration of technology, including Kessler (in Perren et al., 2012) who argues that pedagogy needs “to exploit the potential that technology offers us to represent language in varied ways” (p. 6). Other researchers have also recognized the advantages of using the internet to help English language learners (ELLs) achieve language goals. Warschauer (2002) points out that with the internet as “an essential medium of information exchange”, language teaching must shift toward the use of web-based tools for both retrieving and sharing knowledge (p. 455). The incorporation of web-based tools for teaching writing has been recognized by MacArthur (2009), who encourages the use of word processing, outlining, and concept mapping tools for struggling writers. While the use of technology is not without its difficulties at times, Pan and Zbikowski (1997) state that “new technology has made the writing process easier for writers” (p. 118). Both technology and writing skills are essential for students entering any discipline, and it is therefore irresponsible for language teaching to ignore this relationship.

Many students come into the classroom with extensive familiarity and comfort with various technological tools, while others may still be unfamiliar with most technology. However, Warschauer (1999) found that students are often very aware of the necessity of technology for both effective language learning and developing “information/communication literacies” (as cited in Warschauer, 2002, p. 455). In addition to recognizing the value of technology, many students enjoy its implementation in the classroom. Galy, Downey, and Johnson (2011) completed surveys of adult students that showed they enjoyed learning from online tutorials and eTools (electronic and web-based tools), especially those that captured audio and visual and encouraged student interaction. Since students will be using and encountering technology in countless ways in their lives, teachers should make the most of their learners’ motivation and enthusiasm for using technology for educational purposes.
Teachers must actively seek out information concerning existing tools to serve students’ language learning and other educational needs due to the consistent increase and improvement of technology. Warschauer (2002) argues that teachers should be familiar with current computer assisted language learning (CALL) software and must “have successful strategies for evaluating and adapting the new waves of software that will surely come” (p. 457). As teachers search, find, and evaluate available technology resources, they become familiar with the processes they will require of their students and can ensure that student learning is most effective. Pan and Zbikowski (1997) assert that “fostering greater awareness of the most recent technologies will be worth the effort” (p. 118), and this sentiment is echoed by Warschauer (2000), who writes that the pervasive nature of information and English interaction online requires that pedagogy work toward integrating these communication tools into the language classroom (in Warschauer, 2002, p. 455). To further discuss how technology can improve language learning, this paper highlights ten web-based or software tools teachers can incorporate into curriculum to improve student writing proficiency.

When selecting eTools for this project, it was important that they be free of any cost and easy to use for both students and teachers. The eTools selected target intermediate level ELLs, but can be adapted to a wider range of proficiencies. The final criteria considered while selecting eTools for writing is effectiveness for teaching or improving writing skills. These eTools provide students a hands-on way to develop necessary writing skills while appealing to a variety of learning styles. The selected eTools have been enumerated upon below according to whether they are mainly used during the pre-writing, during writing, and/or post-writing stages of the writing process, although many tools can be used at different stages. An essential goal of this project is for these tools to help guide students and teachers through various aspects of the writing process in new and innovative ways through the use of technology while increasing student engagement and motivation. The eTools can be used for outlining, brainstorming, and organization during the pre-writing stage; paraphrasing, summarizing, and organization during the writing stages; and feedback and peer review during the post-writing stages.

Pre-writing Stages

**Spiderscribe**

Spiderscribe is basic mind-mapping software that allows students and teachers to connect Word documents, pictures, text notes, event dates, and maps to assist in the brainstorming process. This tool allows the user to drop and add new information onto their page, connecting the information to create mind-maps which can be made private, public, or accessible to certain individuals for collaborative purposes. The map can be saved as a file as a JPG or PNG and exported or shared via email.

Intermediate to advanced students can use Spiderscribe to create a writing portfolio by adding Word documents and images throughout the semester. These students and also use Spiderscribe to brainstorm and organize a personal narrative using maps, personal images, and lists to chronologically organize events. The same process can be used to retell historical events. Spiderscribe can also be used to organize and/or brainstorm information for classroom presentations by using the icons to organize and visually represent travel plans, a prospective business, a personal narrative, a utopian society, etc. The Spiderscribe map can be used to present these ideas to fellow students. Beginning to intermediate students can use Spiderscribe to create a picture dictionary using text notes and images. The text notes can be deleted to study for quizzes and exams. These students can also create a picture story by adding images and then write a short
story based on the images. These students can also use maps and images to learn how to give directions and describe basic geological and regional features.

Unfortunately, Spiderscribe may not be ideal for the collaborative process due to password restrictions. Of course, this limitation can be overcome by having a common email and password created by a group for collaborative purposes. Another limitation is that video and sound cannot be added to Spiderscribe mind-maps, which can be overcome somewhat through adding links to YouTube videos or other web pages.

**Stixy**

Stixy is an online bulletin board created by adding text, photos, documents, task lists, stickies, and more. Users can move and add to these widgets to create organization or visual appeal. This tool allows the initial user to add viewers via email invitation, and provides the option of allowing viewers to add to the board and receive bulletin board updates. Teachers can determine the level of access students have to each Stixy-board through security options.

Intermediate to advanced students who have formed writing groups can use a Stixy-board to assign tasks/roles and identify due dates as they collaborate. Group members can also add stickies to discuss various aspects of the writing process. Students with these proficiency levels can also create a Stixy-board during the prewriting stages with various documents, links, images, etc. pertaining to their chosen topic that could be useful in narrowing their topic. These widgets can be moved around on the board to provide further organization and clarity during the writing process. Teachers can also ask students to post content-based material to a classroom Stixy-board as a warm-up activity. Students access this board and respond to the material (either electronically or with pen and paper) for a desired amount of time (3-10 minutes). Meanwhile, beginning to intermediate level students can work in small groups to create a *Stixy-board* with items that will be covered in the next class or unit. To access prior knowledge, students view the board and respond either digitally or with pen and paper to the items on the board. Students can also find links, images and YouTube videos that help them understand certain cultural concepts (football, fashion, holidays, food, etc.). As more information is added to the board, students develop a clear idea concerning the cultural concept.

One limitation of Stixy is that it may send numerous update emails based on the activity level. This limitation can be overcome through changing certain settings in the user’s account. Another limitation is that Stixy does not include video and sound additions to the Stixy-board, which can be overcome somewhat through adding links to YouTube videos or other web pages.

**Wridea**

Wridea (2012) is a tool that promotes creative brainstorming. The structure of this tool provides visually stimulating organization and guidance. Students are able to generate unlimited topics or ideas for their papers. These topics can be color-coded by subject, which is helpful when there is an overlap in subject area where topics can be grouped under a similar heading. Under each heading, the student is able to insert sub-categories, where space is provided to type in notations or thoughts that could be expanded upon in the later development of the paper. Each “Wridea” can be saved under a different title and more than one brainstorming session can be created and worked on simultaneously.

A unique feature of Wridea is found by clicking on the “Idea Rain Session” tab whereas the student can visually see all their “categories” descending in random order down the screen in groups of two or three in their original color-coded design. As the topics “rain” down, the user has
the ability to click on a topic, where it will freeze in place, allowing it to be viewed directly next to another falling topic. In this way, students are able to place their ideas in varying order to generate more developed ideas or organization. As an added feature, all the brainstorming sessions can be accessed and manipulated simultaneously by multiple fellow users. In this way, teachers can assign a group brainstorming session, where students must work together to develop ideas based upon a specific topic and share ideas to develop their future papers.

Wridea is used for generating and organizing thoughts and ideas, but it does not instruct them on how to use the ideas nor how to utilize their ideas to construct a paper. This tool is specifically designed as a pre-writing tool, and thus does not incorporate elements of writing technique and structure within it. Students would need specific instructions on how to create the desired structure of the paper.

**Mind42**

Mind42.com (2012) is used as an organizational tool for creating, storing and sharing ideas. This outlining tool allows students to customize their information and integrate various forms of text and media in one place. The structure of the outline provides the central theme in the middle, and then allows students to create new “mind maps” that branch out in lateral form. The topics and sub-topics can be customized by color and font, which contributes to organization and structure. The tool has the ability to add text, hyper-links, and URL addresses that provide additional information as well as upload images that correspond to the outline topics. This is useful when writing research papers, as the outline can contain links to PDF files or online articles. Each new outline can be saved for later review or editing. Because of the versatility of this tool, it can be utilized by various proficiency levels, from high beginner to advanced.

One feature of Mind42.com is the “sticky note” application, where students can click on the picture of the sticky note, drop it anywhere on the outline, and type a message on it. Sticky notes can be used as reminders for further research, questions, or comments. Each project has the ability to be shared and edited by additional parties, who can be “invited” using their email addresses allowing easy collaboration. Information and maps can be imported and exported as well, enabling teachers to assign group research projects, in which each group member has access to the same outline. Also, this tool provides a way for students to collaborate using live chat, through Google Talk, giving students the ability to talk with each other without having to meet in person. In addition, Mind42.com incorporates a time management guide as a way to help students prioritize their projects on a time line. This tool allows students to appoint priority based upon percentages and a built-in calendar allows due dates to be highlighted. Students are also able to save their map in the “public folder” which allows future students to access their outline for reference material.

Mind42.com has some restrictions related to functionality. The tool itself is a way for students, mainly groups of students, to create ideas and store their resources for the future development of the paper, but it does not critique the actual content the student is generating. The instructor would need to monitor or assess the outlines as they are being created to ensure that it will translate into content that is relevant for the paper. Another slight limitation is that the main hyperlink box is designed to take students to the topic’s corresponding Wikipedia page, which is not the most ideal site for academic research.
During Writing Stages

*Edublogs*

Edublogs is a tool used to engage students through the creation of a class blog that can serve as an effective forum for student discussion and collaboration. Teachers can upload any type of file including PDFs, PPTs, and video. Teachers can either have students create their own blogs to be added to a class site or they can create one blog that enables all students to contribute. Either way, students create their own avatar and are able to have online discussions with fellow classmates. Students can respond to teacher prompts or form an online discussion and improve their digital writing skills while doing so.

Although all class blogs require consistent teacher monitoring, Edublogs has a blacklist that helps reduce this responsibility. The blacklist option allows instructors to add words or phrases that students should exclude from their blog posts. Any posts or comments that contain these words or phrases will be rejected and students will not be able to upload those posts or comments until the words or phrases have been removed. A limitation of Edublogs is the common problem of frequent email updates sent to the creator’s inbox. Edublogs does allow the blog creator to use plug-ins to decide what type of notifications should be sent to their inbox via email.

*readwritethink “Essay Map” & “Persuasion Map”*

The readwritethink “Essay Map” and “Persuasion Map” (2010) are two of many available online tools for outlining writing in a more visually appealing way than the traditional pencil-and-paper format. What is particularly nice about these maps is that they provide an easy-to-use, interactive process for outlining that guides users through each level of their paper, one step at a time. For the “Essay Map” users start with the introduction and are instructed to input key information, the paper topic and main ideas. Then, with the simple click of an arrow, students can go to the next level to input their main ideas and in the third level, they input supporting ideas for each main idea. Finally, in the last level, students are prompted to write notes or sentences to conclude their paper and tell the reader what to take away from their essay. The “Persuasion Map” follows the same format, but prompts are worded for persuasive essays and ask students to consider what point they are arguing, what reasons support this viewpoint, and what examples demonstrate their reasons. At any time in the process students can maneuver throughout the outline to review or edit information. They can also save or email their incomplete maps as RWT files (unassigned or unknown file extensions that can later be opened through the Web tool site). Completed outlines can be saved or shared via email as PDF documents and can be printed out. Users could even enter a name and title and print a blank outline, which still provides an alternative format for more visual learners.

The main use of these tools is during the pre-writing stage when students are outlining their ideas for their papers. However, students can also be asked to use the tool in a consciousness-raising activity in which they use a source paper (from class or one they have found individually) to outline the author’s thesis, main points, and supporting ideas. This type of activity can show learners how an outline can improve the organization and cohesion of a paper, while simultaneously introducing them to a helpful web-based tool they can use for their own outlining. Teachers can ask students to outline their papers using these tools or provide the tools as an alternative to the more formal outlining format with hierarchical alphanumeric or bulleted points. This provides an effective way for teachers to implement technology into lessons in a way that puts students in control of the tool, while also offering options for students’ various learning styles (visual, kinesthetic, etc.). Additionally, because these tools are fairly easy to use and the
language in the prompts is not difficult, they can be used with ELLs in K-12 settings, around grades 9-12, as well as in university settings with high-beginner to advanced learners.

There are some restrictions with the tools that limit their applicability for certain instructional purposes. The main limitation is that the tools are formatted for an essay with no more than three main points, which makes their use difficult for longer papers. In situations where the writing will have more than three main points, students could use the tools as a starting point for outlining to be later expanded upon, or they could use more than one map to incorporate their additional main ideas (simply copying or leaving the information blank for the introduction and conclusion). Another restriction is in the amount of text allowed in the map boxes, which is more limited at the third level (supporting ideas or examples). However, this could actually be an advantage for some learners who struggle with recognizing the purpose of an outline. Sometimes students think that they need to write their outline in complete sentences, since they will ultimately be using the information to write their papers; these students may struggle with learning to write concise notes to identify their ideas as a guide for expansion during later stages of the writing process. This text limitation can help students overcome this tendency by forcing them to restrict their words to only the most pertinent information. Even with these few limitations, the readwritethink “Essay Map” and “Persuasion Map” are excellent eTools for learners to interactively engage in the outlining process in a very visually interesting format.

**Post-writing Stages**

**Paraphrase Self-test**

The “Paraphrase Self-test” (Lewis, 2010) is a very simple, easy-to-use tool that tests the degree of similarity between a “base text” (from a source text) and an individual’s paraphrase of that text. It can be used in the during and post-writing stages when students are writing and revising their paraphrases. Users copy-and-paste or type in the base text in the author’s words into one box on the webpage and then input their paraphrase, written in their own words, into another box. The tool immediately displays any overlapping information between the base text and paraphrase in two different formats. The first format color-codes directly matched words between the two texts, displaying words that were not copied in the base text with strikethrough text (Figure 1) and leaving original words in the paraphrase uncolored and underlined (Figure 2) (The base text in this example is from Brown 1989, p. 66). This is the more visually appealing format and is easier to understand at a quick glance.

![Figure 1. Color-coded base text using Paraphrase Self-test tool.](image1)

![Figure 2. Color-coded paraphrase using Paraphrase Self-test tool.](image2)
The second format is with plain text: the text in the paraphrase that is unmarked is copied from the base text, text with strikethrough appears only in the base text, and text that is underlined is original to the paraphrase (See Figure 3).

Figure 3. Plain-text format using Paraphrase Self-test tool.

This tool allows the user to gauge the success of a paraphrase very quickly by determining if the paraphrase is too closely worded to the source text. Teachers can demonstrate how to use this tool to check for overlapping text between the source text and the paraphrase, and students can be asked to use this tool to check their own paraphrases either in or outside the classroom. For learners who are struggling to understand why their paraphrase is not sufficiently reworded, this tool can provide an instant visual that clearly shows students the amount of copied text, even if the words appear in a different order in their paraphrase. The Paraphrase Self-test can also be used with longer segments of text, such as with a summary of a source text. The color-coded format provides the fastest and easiest means of determining the amount of directly copied text. The simplicity of the tool lends to its applicability at various proficiency levels, from high beginner to advanced.

Based on its purpose, this tool is mainly limited to checking paraphrases and summaries for use of one’s own words. Unfortunately the tool is not designed to determine if a paraphrase is actually adequate and can only identify copied (and not copied) text. The tool cannot recognize synonym use or appropriate diction, so paraphrases or summaries that simply replace words with similar words are not detected. Students must be instructed on all elements of an appropriate paraphrase or summary and should be cautioned that use of the Paraphrase Self-test tool alone does not constitute a successful paraphrase or summary. Rather, its use is one step in the process of writing and revising a paraphrase or summary. Students should use the tool to check their rewording, and even the reordering of the ideas, but must also consider the process of writing the paraphrase and their use of vocabulary. Finally, students should be reminded that it is often acceptable or even necessary for some of the words from a source text to be used in the paraphrase or summary, especially for key content words or terms that have different meanings or uses when reworded. Students should be made aware of the purpose for the Paraphrase Self-test as a quick, easy way to visually identify the degree of rewording in their paraphrases and summaries.

**Jing**

Jing is a tool that is downloadable through TechSmith and can be used to create a screencast (video) that records written and spoken commentary when used with sites like A.nnotate. Users can create an image or video to share on Screencast.com by simply clicking and dragging over the desired content on their screen. Images can be edited with highlighting, frames, text, and arrows. With videos, users can record up to five minutes of audio, pausing during recording when necessary. Videos and images can be saved (and are also stored in Jing history) or shared via Screencast.com. To share a video or image, users simply click a button to share, which directs them to the screencast link that can be copied and pasted into an email.
Coupling written and spoken feedback using Jing is an excellent way to address the needs of learners in the during and post-writing stages. After creating and uploading the video, the creator can email the link to the writer. The writer is able to view all written feedback, while simultaneously listening to spoken comments. Many students like receiving spoken feedback and may feel that they are engaging with their teacher in the writing process more than they would be with written feedback alone. This tool can also help teachers circumvent time-consuming meetings with individual students while still giving high quality and quantity of feedback. Combining the use of Jing with written and visual feedback through a tool like A.nnotate allows students to receive more types of feedback, which addresses a wider range of learning styles (visual, linguistic, auditory). Students can also be asked to use Jing in the peer review process, particularly if the teacher wishes to incorporate some speaking practice into the writing course. This will, of course, require the teacher to demonstrate how students can download and use Jing. Due to the integration of reading and listening skills, this tool is best used with intermediate and advanced learners.

This process, particularly when combining written and spoken feedback, can be relatively time-consuming for the teacher. Teachers can choose to only provide spoken comments using Jing depending on the level of the learners, or they can use Jing and A.nnotate together only on writing assignments for which they want to provide a larger quantity and quality of feedback. Additionally, since the video time limit is five minutes, if the teacher wishes to provide more spoken feedback, s/he will have to create more than one video. In most cases, five minutes is sufficient for providing feedback, and may even be necessary when a teacher has limited time available. Another consideration when using Jing is that students with low listening ability may struggle to understand the spoken feedback. This could be supported with adjusted teacher talk for certain learners, as well as with the integration of written feedback. Students are also able to replay the video as many times as they wish. Despite these limitations, Jing can be a very effective and enjoyable way to improve the writing feedback process for both teachers and learners.

**PaperRater**

PaperRater (2010) is an electronic tool used to help students improve their writing skills by running their paper through a systemized correction process. This tool is specifically designed for the post-writing process, as a useful way to critique the finalized piece of writing. Once the student has written their paper, the content is simply copied and pasted into the rater, and a full evaluation is generated based upon six categories: title checker, spelling, grammar, word choice, style and vocabulary. The categories are labeled with corresponding colors, as Figure 4 illustrates:

![Figure 4](image)

*Figure 4. PaperRater categories.*

The **Title Checker** is the first element, as it simply checks for appropriate capitalization and grammar. The **Spelling** element picks out words that are deemed misspelled which are then highlighted in red, while the **Grammar** check does the same, with correct grammar indicated by green highlights. The **Word Choice** section scores the content based upon “the number and quality of trite or inappropriate words, phrases, and clichés found in your paper” (2010). For this section,
the rater provides a score of below average, average and above average, and provides an explanation for the score given. It is also in this section where the paper is scanned for usage of plagiarized materials. The Style heading will calculate the percentage of certain word choices, like the use of pronouns, auxiliaries, conjunctions and prepositions, to allow the student to see any trends of word types that are used frequently versus infrequently. Finally, the Vocabulary Words category scores the use of effective vocabulary words and, if needed, provides the link to their Vocabulary Builder to help improve this area.

PaperRater allows for students to select the kind of paper they are having assessed as well as the grade level they are writing for, which allows the rater to evaluate based upon the correct criteria. For example, the rater assessment is different for a research paper than a book report and there is also variation depending upon the grade level. This helps the rater perform more accurate evaluations. Because of these customizations, PaperRater is ideal for all proficiency levels. Also, for each grading category, if improvement can be made, the score box includes a Tip Section, which provides students written feedback on ways to improve that particular skill set. At the end of the evaluation, there is a Grade tab, which will give students a final grade on the paper as a whole, along with a detailed explanation on the reasoning behind the grade. Because of the fact that PaperRater provides such feedback for a multitude of areas, this is a useful tool for teachers as a way to have students self-correct their papers before they submit the final product, as a way of peer editing.

Despite the fact that PaperRater does incorporate many areas within writing that would be subject to correction, this tool should not serve as a final correction aide. Students need to understand its limitations, as the final grade that appears at the end of the evaluation does not correlate with the final grade from their instructor. The purpose of this tool is just to provide the student with feedback, in which case additional reviewing of their paper would still be suggested and or required. The PaperRater spelling and grammar check do not always discover all errors and the plagiarism detector is not guaranteed to detect all plagiarized material - just because a plagiarized paper passes through PaperRater undetected does not mean it will pass inspection when reviewed by a peer or an instructor.

**Conclusion**

Writing can be a challenging task for many ELLs who are struggling with the integration of many language skills into one complex process. These eTools are meant to support students’ progress throughout all stages of the writing process while increasing their motivation by learning through technology use. Of course, there is and will continue to be a limitless supply of web-based tools and apps for teaching students to write, but these ten tools offer a great start for the proactive teacher.

**Authors’ Note**

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References


Improving Second Language Learners’ Self-Esteem through Writing

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Improving Second Language Learners’ Self-Esteem through Writing

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Abstract

Having a strong sense of self-worth assures better outcomes for English Language Learners (ELLs), already struggling to catch up with their peers in language and content areas. We, as educators, have an obligation to help our students develop their self-esteem, and teaching writing to ELLs through activities that promote socio-emotional development is one way to achieve that goal. This article presents an overview of seven different strategies that can be used to help students (especially in grades 3-6) improve their writing of paragraphs and essays and develop a healthy sense of self-esteem. Each strategy is based on the reinforcement of socio-emotional skills.

Introduction

The present materials were used as part of a writing program designed for helping English Language Learners (ELLs) learning to write in English while developing socio-emotionally (García Garrido, 2010). The activities target the development of writing while considering the four skills of language. We personally consider that writing cannot be developed in isolation. It benefits from the improvement of the other three language skills. The writing lessons include activities that aim at helping students acquire the learning goals and objectives specified by the state of Illinois in the content area of writing. Furthermore, the writing activities teach writing in content as specified by the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001, which allows students the opportunity to learn English at the same time as they develop academic proficiency in other content areas such as socio-emotional development learning, social studies, music, art, math, science, and literature.

In the present article we are going to focus only on the activities that target socio-emotional growth. The main goal we attempt to achieve through emotional development is helping students improve their self-esteem as well as other skills identified by Gardner (1983) and Goleman (1995), as key components of intrapersonal and interpersonal intelligences. Moreover, when working with ELLs we need to pay special attention to foreign language anxiety. This term was coined by Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986) as an anxiety specific to second language learners. The uniqueness of the language learning process can produce self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings and behaviors caused by anxiety. There is a strong relationship between a high emotional intelligence and a fast process of second language acquisition.

As was observed by García Garrido (2010), aiding students to develop these abilities will endorse them with the required tools to succeed, some of them being a) ‘mental’ strength to realistically acknowledge their strengths and act on their weaknesses so they can clearly set the path for unending growth, b) motivation to push themselves in spite of the circumstances, c) understanding of the immediate society they belong to so they learn to listen, respect and value...
others’ points of view without losing their own personal opinions, and d) self-assurance to believe in the many capabilities they possess so they can ‘authorize’ themselves to accomplish all their goals and dreams, etc.

Below we describe, step-by-step, the goals of each strategy as well as the procedures for how to put them into practice in the classroom.

**Strategy 1. Special Candy**

Through this activity, students will be able to reinforce their self-esteem by personally stating, and hearing from their partners, some of the many good qualities they have. Students will also be able to develop a sense of belonging to a group by realizing they have things in common with the rest of their partners. In the area of writing, they will learn about positive descriptive adjectives versus negative ones (synonyms vs. antonyms). They will also learn how to spell correctly some specific vocabulary learned during this lesson. Their writing skills will be scaffolded by being in a situation that exponentially lowers the affective filter that hinders the linguistic production of second language learners. While being in a positive state of mind, students will put in writing the compliments they received from their peers; this will facilitate the writing process.

We propose the activity to be carried out in the following way. All students will sit down around the carpet. The teacher will give each person several pieces of candy and will place in the center a basket full of candies. The teacher will say something nice about herself/himself and will get a piece of candy from the basket. The teacher will inform students that each compliment equals one piece of candy. The intention is to help students create a visual connection between the candy and a compliment so they give themselves and their partners as many compliments as possible. Teacher will randomly select a stick with the name of one student. The teacher will give a compliment to that student and will explain that the person who gives the compliment and the person who receives the compliment can each get a candy from the basket. The rest of the students can give another compliment to that student. Repetitions are not allowed. As students are talking, the teacher will list all the positive adjectives on chart paper, writing a heading on top of the paper that reads: “This is who we are.” The teacher will then explain to the students that those positive adjectives listed are the words we always want to say to describe our partners and ourselves. Once the teacher has finished modeling the activity and the explanations are clear for everyone, all the students seated on the carpet will take turns, clockwise, to name one thing in their life that they think is special or some talent or ability that they possess. As each person says what they want to say, the other members of the group will give that person a compliment if they think there are other virtues he/she has not mentioned while describing himself/herself. When everybody has shared, students will go back to their seats. The teacher will distribute each group of students multiple copies of a sheet of paper that has two pictures of candy. On the piece of candy that says, “From…is…” students will write something good about themselves; one of the qualities they believe they possess. On the other piece of candy that reads: “From…to…” students will write a compliment to each member of their group. Students will be encouraged to check the spelling of the words as they are listed on the “This is who we are” chart. In order to differentiate this activity, the teacher will provide students with different choices. Choice 1: write a minimum of one self-compliment and one compliment for a partner. Choice 2: create as many compliments as you want for yourself and for your partners. Choice 3: once you have filled out the candies, extend the compliments and put those descriptive adjectives into descriptive paragraphs (about yourself or a partner, your choice). Tape the candies on the top of your paper.
Choice 4: once you have filled out the candies, draw and label yourself or a partner doing what you think he/she is best at. Tape the candies on top of your paper. Choice 5: create a collage with compliments for different peers – no compliment repetition is allowed. When the activity is done, the teacher will invite all students to come back to the carpet and read one of the compliments they wrote or they received from a partner. The teacher will then review the chart with the positive adjectives and will invite students to tell him/her the antonyms of each one of those adjectives. He/she will encourage students to discuss the reasons for saying good things about our partners and ourselves and will collect all the candies and glue them to a big piece of chart paper to create a classroom poster with all of their compliments.

**Strategy 2. I’m Special Nametag**

The socio-emotional goal of this activity is to help students understand they have to respect and love themselves. The linguistic goal is to help students grasping the concept of main idea and supporting details. Students will be able to recognize the importance of key words in a sentence and how listing specific words can be used as a pre-writing tool. Furthermore, students will be able to expand on one idea and provide descriptive details to support their main ideas by creating different sentences that vary not only in length but also in the diverse range of adjectives, nouns and verbs.

The activity will be carried out the following way: The teacher will invite the students to close their eyes and think about one time someone gave them a compliment. He/she will guide their imagination by playing soft music and saying things like, “remember the smile that compliment brought to your face. Feel the same happiness that you felt when you heard those words. Now, think about one time when you were very proud of yourself for something good that you did. You felt you could even touch the clouds. Touch something soft (your sweater, cotton balls the teacher may have brought for this activity, etc.) and experience the same sensation again. Now, bring your hands to your face. Touch your smile. Feel happy again.” Once this guided imagery is completed, the teacher will give each person an index card. The students will write their own name in big letters and “…is special because…” on top of the index card. Right under the heading, they will write three positive attributes they have. At a given signal provided by the teacher, students will raise their hands, walk around the classroom, discuss their ideas, and then move to another partner. Once everybody has had an opportunity to share with a partner, the teacher will invite students to come and sit by the carpet forming a big circle. The teacher will then select one stick with the name of a student. That student will read out loud what he/she has on the index card and the teacher will copy that information on chart paper. Then, using the overhead / blackboard / smart board, the teacher will invite students to talk to a partner and discuss how to use those three key words (each word being the main idea of a sentence) and expand them. As a whole group, the teacher will model (asking students to give him/her ideas) how to write a sentence (or a couple of sentences) that explains that word. Next, students will go back to their places, develop those three ideas and write three complete descriptive paragraphs. In order to differentiate this activity, the teacher will provide students with different choices. Choice 1: write a minimum of three descriptive adjectives using the right spelling and do a drawing that represents its meaning. Choice 2: fill out a Key Idea, Information and Memory Clue (KIM) graphic organizer containing a definition, a drawing and the three words that you have selected. Choice 3: write 3 different complete sentences – 1 for each key word that you have previously selected. Avoid repetition of adjectives, nouns and verbs. Choice 4: write 3 different complete
Strategy 3. The Magic Box

This activity aims at helping students learn how to use social-awareness and interpersonal skills to: establish and maintain positive relationships, recognize individual and group similarities and differences, describe the ways that people are similar and different, describe positive qualities in others, and develop a positive self-image. In the area of writing, students will be able to understand and recognize the importance of listing, verbally and in written form, the main elements that have to be present while describing a person’s character/personality. Furthermore, students will be able to expand on one idea and provide descriptive details to support their main ideas.

The procedure will be: The teacher will construct 5 “magic boxes” (one magic box per group or as many groups as there are in the class). Inside the bottom of each box, the teacher will include a mirror. The teacher will begin the activity by asking the group: “Who do you think is the most special person in the whole world? Think to yourself for 30 seconds. Now, turn to your shoulder partner and share your thoughts with him/her for another 30 seconds (15 seconds for each student). I’m sure when you were talking to your partner you explained why you thought that person was the most special person in the world, right? I didn’t hear all of you talking, so could you please put in writing what you were talking about with your partner.” The teacher will give students 1 minute to write about the most special person in the world. They will have to write the name of that person and write one reason (in the form of a sentence or paragraph) to support their decision. The teacher will model the activity and will write something like: “I think the most special person of the world is Mother Theresa of Calcutta. My reason for choosing her is that she always helped those who were in need.” After allowing the students to individually write their own answers, teacher will say, “I have a magic box with me today, and each of you will have a chance to look inside and discover the most important person in the world. Please, give me all your papers. I am going to place all of them in this box. I’m going to select a paper that I know has the response that applies to all of you. Then, I’ll invite all of you to come and see the paper inside the magic box.” The teacher will tell students they are going to have an opportunity to see inside of the box but they cannot tell anybody who they see until everybody had a chance to look inside of the box. After all the students have had their turns, teacher will ask the group who the most special person was. After each student has had an opportunity to say "me," the teacher will explain that the box is valuable because it shows that each of them is special, and he/she may lead students into a discussion by asking questions of the following type: 1) How does it feel to see that you are the special person? 2) How is it possible for everyone to be the special one? 3) Why can we say we are unique? A discussion about each individual's exceptionality may follow.

Strategy 4. Smile Contest

The teacher will tell students they have to create different smile categories. He/she will suggest, and will write on the overhead (as a way of modeling the activity) different categories such as longest smile, friendliest smile, most teeth missing smile, widest smile, cutest smile, most often seen smile. Students will be working together (in order to create the smile categories) using the cooperative strategy Think Pad Brainstorming. This strategy will be used in the following way: The teacher announces the topic. Each student quickly records as many ideas as possible on small slips of paper (Think time: around 1 minute). All ideas are collected when time is up. As a
group, students will read out loud all the ideas and will select 3 of them (Discussion time: around 2 minutes). Each group will have to come out with 3 different smile categories. A member of the group will write each category on a piece of construction paper. Another member of the group will display the categories along the blackboard. A third member of the group will present their categories to the rest of the class by reading them out loud. All the different groups of the class will repeat this procedure. No categories should be repeated. If a team has a category that is already displayed on the blackboard they will not put it on display. Nevertheless, they will have to show it to the teacher and prove they did it. The teacher will invite everybody in the class to walk around the classroom smiling for a minute. Teacher will use music for timing this walk. When time is up, students will go back to their seats and, as a group, and using the cooperative strategy Talking Chips (Each student has one talking chip. Students place their chip in the center of the team table each time they talk. They can speak in any order, but they cannot speak a second time until all chips are in the center). When all chips have been placed (everyone has spoken), the chips are all collected and anyone in any order can speak again. They will make nominations for each category by writing names on several index cards. On each index card they will write the name of the category and the name of the person they think is the best representative for that type of smile. They will have 2 minutes. Once their deliberation process is over, the fourth member of each group will come to the blackboard and will place the index cards in the right categories. Finally, the teacher will distribute the corresponding Smiling Awards to the winner of each category. The teacher may lead students into a discussion about the benefits of smiling and could introduce the topic by asking questions of the following type 1) How does it feel to see that somebody is smiling at you? 2) How do you feel when you smile? 3) Why is important to try to smile every day?

Strategy 5. Letters to Success

Students will be able to improve their self-esteem by 1) acknowledging all the good things they have through a visual mean to relish their successes 2) experiencing feelings of competence 3) identifying and managing their own emotions 4) mastering skills related to achieving personal and academic goals – learning to focus on chasing their dreams by setting clear, specific, and detailed steps of how to attain short and long term goals. In the area of writing, students will learn how to 1) generate and organize ideas, 2) select specific key vocabulary 3) expand and develop an idea – provide reasons that support a main idea.

We recommend this activity to be carried out the following way: The teacher will provide students with letter size envelopes they will decorate. On different slips of paper, students will be writing about a) 3 things they are proud of b) 3 things they are thankful for and c) 3 dreams they have. When students are finished writing they will share with the rest of the students using the cooperative strategy Individual Stand and Share which is performed the following way: Individuals share either a list or one or two items, each sitting down when his/her items have been shared. When seated, the individuals record the other items shared. Often Individual Stand-N-Share is preceded or followed by a team discussion.

Strategy 6. Positive Road or Road to Success

Students will be able to increase their self-esteem by facing their fears and replacing them with positive thoughts. The writing benefits are the same as those of the previous activity. The activity will be carried out the following way: Inviting students to talk about times when they have said something negative about themselves. Example: “I am not intelligent.” The teacher will
ask students to verbally share with their partners the way they felt at that particular moment. Students will be brainstorming positive thoughts to replace that negative way of thinking. Students will be working together using the cooperative strategy Inside Outside Circle. Students stand in two concentric circles, facing a partner. The inside circle faces out; the outside circle faces in. Students will be taking turns sharing with their partners about one time they said something negative about themselves. Students will also be sharing how they felt in that situation. Partners will be giving them a positive thought they should put in their mind next time they think that way. Example: If partner A says “I don’t think I am good in math” partner B can say something like “You know what they say, practice makes perfect. Maybe you need more time in order to become better at math.” Partners switch roles; the outside circle students ask and listen, then praise or coach. After each student has shared one situation, they rotate to the next partner (the teacher may call rotation numbers, “Rotate three ahead.”) Next, the teacher will give students a drawing that will have a road, a car, several stones and several bridges. At the end of the road there will be a finish line that will read SUCCESS!!! The stones are on their way to success. Each stone is something negative they think about themselves. On each stone they will write “negative thoughts” they have had at one point in their lives. For example: “I am not as intelligent as…” or “I will never be able to get an A in that class because I don’t get it.” The bridges, that are right next to the stones, represent the bridge to success. On top of that bridge they will write the positive thought that overcomes that negative feeling. For example: Yes, I am intelligent. I may not understand it now but, if I try hard, I will be able to GET IT!!! When all the students have finished their “Positive Road or Road to Success” they will share with the rest of their partners using the cooperative strategy Three-Stray. Three team members will be visiting others teams’ table to see their work.

Visiting members will have some time to be at their partners’ tables (1-2 minutes approximately). The teacher will announce when time is up and will ask them to return to their original groups. This can be repeated several times until all the teams have been to all the different groups’ tables. Closing: The teacher will tell students that what they have just done is like real life. They have the choice of 1) crashing their car on the road - this is, putting themselves down by their fears – or 2) going through the bridge, this is, trusting their many capabilities. The stones represent negative self-talk and will prevent them from reaching their final lane, SUCCESS. The bridges, self-confidence, will lead them to reach any goal they may have in life and be truly happy.

Strategy 7. Write an About Me Pamphlet

Students will be able to improve their self-esteem by thinking about their qualities and happy moments. Students will improve their writing skills by identifying key words that have to be used when describing a person and a situation. The teacher will give the following directions to students: Think about all the qualities and happy moments that you have (the teacher will give students around 20 seconds). Next, the teacher will pass out an ‘about me’ pamphlet that students will have to fill out. Students will not write their name on the pamphlet. The teacher will then write a number on each of the pamphlets. Students will copy that number some place on their notebook so they remember which paper is theirs. Here are the student directions: Fold the paper hotdog style. Cut each of the categories so you can open each of them as if they were the pages of a book. You will only cut the line that appears on the front of the pamphlet (where you can read each category). Fill out each of the categories. For example: My best feature (this is what appears on the front of the paper). Open that category. Write what you think is your best feature. For
example: “My hair.” (Note: The teacher will set the timer for 5 minutes for the students to fill out the pamphlet. When the time is up, the teacher will collect all the pamphlets and distribute them randomly around the classroom.) When you get the pamphlet of some of your partners you have to: Read each of the categories one at a time. Once you have read a category, remember you have to read only one at a time, you will write the name of the person you think could have written that. You will write the name of the student on the back of the paper where you see all the numbers. For example: Category 1. My best feature. When you open it, if you happen to open the teacher’s, you could read, “my hair”. Since this is the first category, you will write my name under number one. Therefore, if you think that paper belongs to me (the teacher), you would write Ms. García. Read all the different categories and follow the same procedure. Check if you have written the same name in all the categories. Make your final decision of whom this “Pamphlet about Me” belongs to. Once all the students have written their guesses, they will stand up, read their pamphlets and tell the name of the person they believe that pamphlet belongs to. The teacher will allow students to explain how they figured out the ‘hidden identity’ and will also encourage students to give another compliment to their peers.

Conclusion

ELLs encounter a wide variety of difficulties while trying to master the content knowledge that is to be acquired at different grade levels. They do not only have to learn content, as do their monolingual peers, but they must also learn the language in order to understand what the teacher is presenting in class. Fearing not being able to perfectly express what has been learned while worrying about catching up with monolingual peers (as far as content and language) can have detrimental effects on the socio-emotional development of minority students. Being self-aware and understanding strengths and weaknesses is crucial for all students, but especially for second language learners. As we have seen, we can help our students to improve their self-esteem and their writing skills simultaneous when the appropriate strategy is used. Some of them, as described in this paper, can be very effective in building a sense of confidence, which is one of the skills that many ELLs need to foster.

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It’s Okay to Have Fun

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Abstract

Students in intensive English Language programs are usually immersed in English 20 hours per week which can cause frustration and boredom from the challenge of learning a second language. The inclusion of FUN in the classroom can promote a lower affective filter and higher language acquisition, as well as cater to different learning styles. Multiple forms of input are a successful way for students to understand, practice, and remember the information. We have garnered a plethora of simple activities, techniques, strategies, and methods that provide a change of routine for students of all ages and levels. This assortment includes classroom management techniques, vocabulary reinforcement activities, and task-based games that require minimal preparation time and can be easily implemented on a daily basis. While their impact on time is small, the impact on the overall classroom atmosphere, student rapport, and motivation is huge in making class not only informative, but fun.

Introduction

Typically students in intensive English Language programs are immersed in English around 20 contact hours per week, not including study time. Students can become tired, frustrated, and bored by the challenge of learning a second language. The inclusion of fun in the classroom can be extremely effective. Students like and need to laugh and relax from time-to-time during their arduous studies. Simple, enjoyable activities that are made a regular part of the classroom experience can promote a lower affective filter and higher language acquisition. Multiple forms of input are one of the most successful ways for students to really “get it” or save information to their brain’s “hard drive” or long-term memory. Sometimes it is necessary to close the books and engage students in more active, hands-on activities.

Background

These activities lower students’ affective filter (Krashen, 1982) and target a variety of learning styles (Gardner, 1983, 2006). Krashen (1982) states that “the best methods [for second language acquisition] are therefore the ‘comprehensible input’ in low anxiety situations, containing messages that students really want to hear” (p. 14). Teachers, therefore, should provide a variety of fun activities that appeal to students in order to lower students’ anxiety level. In the early 1980’s, Gardner introduced a variety of learning styles: musical, logical-mathematical, linguistic, spatial, interpersonal, intrapersonal, bodily-kinesthetic, naturalistic, and existential. While these activities provide a break from the routine of daily textbook-driven activities, they also cater to various learning styles.

In addition to learning styles, culture must also be taken into consideration. Foreign language instruction often includes discussion of “Big C” culture and “Little c” culture. “Big C” culture refers to visible forms of culture including things like holidays, art, popular culture, literature, and food; whereas “Little c” refers to the invisible components such as communication.
styles, verbal and non-verbal language, symbols, cultural norms, myths and legends (Bilash, 2011). Based on the “Big C” / “little c” concept of culture, we devised the “Big F” / “little f” concept of fun. Some instructors believe that including fun in the classroom is limited to the “Big F” items such as food, fiestas, films, and field trips. These are useful, but in our opinion, incorporating “little f” activities on a regular basis is just as, if not more, important. “Little f” includes laughter, smiles, a lower affective filter (Krashen), and fun activities such as games.

We have garnered a multitude of these simple activities, techniques, strategies, and methods that provide a change of routine in language classrooms whether the learner is five or fifty-five, beginner or advanced. The various activities can be modified to address the specific skill level and background knowledge of the intended audience. These activities can motivate students and encourage them to be actively engaged in learning as long as they are meaningfully integrated into the lesson. This assortment includes classroom management techniques, vocabulary reinforcement activities, and task-based games.

Many of these simple activities we will be sharing require minimal preparation time and can be easily implemented on a daily basis. Others can supplement and reinforce a traditional curriculum. And while their impact on time is small, the impact on the overall classroom atmosphere, student rapport and interest level is great. In other words, they make class not only informative, but fun and enjoyable.

Objectives

There are numerous goals and objectives in using these engaging activities. Alternative methods of practice and reinforcement can be implemented with the end goal to achieve the following results:

- To lower students’ affective filters
- To promote higher language acquisition
- To provide multiple forms of input
- To appeal to multiple intelligences
- To target learning styles
- To enhance motivation
- To offer a variety of methods to reduce boredom and enliven the classroom setting

Procedures

We have divided our activities into four primary categories: vocabulary, games, music, and classroom management. Each category contains specific activities which can be modified to instruct, review, or support established curriculum within any program. Within each of those categories, reading, writing, listening, speaking, grammar, and culture are incorporated at some level. Some of the activities are well-known games that we have adapted for English language learners.

Vocabulary Activities

Traditional games of Hangman and word search can be created to include vocabulary specific to the given lesson. In addition, crossword puzzles using web sites such as puzzlemaker.com can be modified to be gap activities. Gap activities are those in which partners have different parts of the information needed to complete an activity. For example, in a crossword puzzle, one partner might have the “down” clues, while the other partner has the
“across” clues. The collaboration required in these activities helps to make them more meaningful and constructive.

In addition to games, the use of realia in the classroom can bring vocabulary to life. Realia refers to real items, not imitations that are used in the classroom for educational purposes. For example, during a unit on food vocabulary, the teacher can bring in empty containers such as a milk carton, a bag of chips, an egg carton, a jar of peanut butter, a can of soup, a box of crackers, and other food packaging. Tactile learners can handle the realia for better comprehension and retention. Magazines, catalogs, and store advertisements are other useful examples of realia. These can be used for locating pictures to represent vocabulary, for scavenger hunts to search for specific items or information, for cultural information (such as holidays), or to present a grammar point. For example, students can look for a list of vocabulary items in a store ad to find the price of each item. They can also look for a list of nouns to determine if they are count or non-count or irregular plural.

Not only can scavenger hunts be used with magazines and store ads, they can also be created for Internet searches and live activities. Internet searches can be done to find pictures of vocabulary using Google Images. For example, the teacher can give students a list of methods of transportation and have the students find a picture for each type of transportation. It is advised that the teacher search for the images first as there may be some inappropriate pictures on the website. Another activity is doing photo scavenger hunts during orientation where students have to take pictures with their cell phones of various locations on campus.

A final method to represent vocabulary is using word clouds. Word clouds are visual representations of words using websites such as wordle.net or tagxedo.com (see Appendix A). These word clouds can be used with a preset list of vocabulary (Wordle, Tagxedo). For a writing class, students can copy and paste a portion of a writing assignment and paste it into the cloud generator. The cloud (Wordle) will then visually represent the most frequent ideas or vocabulary.

Another type of cloud, Yippy Cloud Creator, can generate a word cloud bank based on one word. This can be useful for brainstorming related vocabulary on a topic. Word clouds appeal to visual learners and those with spatial intelligence.

Games

The games described in this section can be used to practice any skill: speaking, listening, reading and writing, as well as grammar.

The Dice Game

The Dice Game is good for reviewing vocabulary and/or grammar concepts (see Appendix B). First, draw the dice on the board or put up pictures to represent the six faces of a die. Under each die, write a category of vocabulary or grammar that you have been studying or want to review. For example, you could write: question words, weather expressions, clothes (women’s, men’s, above waist, below waist, and other clothing categories), jewelry, daily activities, food groups, rooms in the house, family members, transportation, colors, professions, school subjects, past participles of irregular verbs, and count/non-count nouns.

Next, divide students into at least two teams. If the class is larger, it can be divided into more teams. Students roll the dice one-at-a-time. The numbers on the dice indicate which numbered categories to which they must provide an example. For each correct answer, the team earns the points of that die category. If a student rolls doubles, s/he gets an additional turn. The teacher can keep a tally of the points on the board so the students can see. The teacher can also
periodically count off how many points teams have earned to review counting by fives. It helps to have each team use a different colored marker.

This game can be adapted for various skill levels. In an intermediate level, the students have to provide the word and spell it correctly. They may look at their notes while at their seats, but once they have rolled the dice, they cannot review their notes. In lower levels, the student whose turn it is has to provide the word, and then his teammates may help with the correct spelling. The teammates may use notes, books, translators, and other available resources.

Flyswatter Game

This is a great way to review vocabulary. Before the game, write a list of vocabulary words (ideally 15-20) on the board or project them on the overhead screen. Divide students into two teams and have one student from each team come to the front. Explain the rules and give each teammate a flyswatter. Provide the definition for a word, and the student who “swats” the correct word receives one point for his/her team. Continue the game until every team member has gone and all the words have been chosen. The winning team receives a prize such as candy.

I’m Going on a Picnic, and I’m gonna take...

This is a fun brain teaser that serves to liven up class and make the students think. This can be used when discussing a topic like food or adapted for other topics. For a food-related topic, start off by saying “I’m going on a picnic, and I’m gonna take… (and then say an item beginning with the same letter as their first name). Then ask the students, “What are you gonna take on the picnic?” If a student says an incorrect item, say, “I’m sorry, but you cannot take that on our picnic.” Give hints such as, “Steve, you can take a salami sandwich on the picnic, but not a tuna sandwich.” Keep going until all or most of the students have figured out the pattern. This can also be used for travel-related topics such as “I’m going on a trip, and I’m gonna pack…,” “I’m going on a trip, and I’m gonna visit… (name of city/country),” or “I’m going on vacation, and I’m gonna...(name of activity).”

Yes/No Game

This is a great game to play if you have extra time at the end of class or you want to practice yes/no questions. Divide the class into teams and explain the rules. Each team will ask a yes/no question. If you respond to their question with a “yes,” the team receives three points, but if you say “no,” the team receives only one point. For example, the students could ask, “Are you a teacher?” Give the students time to brainstorm questions before they start. Keep track of the points on the board. If the students do not ask the question using correct grammar, you can choose not to award them points. After a few minutes, change the point value so that a “yes” response receives one point and a “no” response receives three points. This reversal surprises students and causes them to think of different questions to ask. For example, the students could ask you, “Are you a student?” Students could also ask each other these questions to encourage more student interaction. In the end, the team with the most points is the winner and receives a prize.

Jeopardy and Other Premade Games

Jeopardy is an excellent game for reviewing concepts, vocabulary, or other content. You can use a premade board (from the Internet) or a template to create an original version. Some other games that are good for teaching or reviewing vocabulary include Scrabble, Memory,
Boggle Junior, and Scattergories. Guess Who provides great practice for students at lower levels in describing different types of people. In addition, Apples to Apples provides vocabulary practice and also presents cultural information about famous people. Bingo is a versatile game that can be incorporated in the classroom as an icebreaker in Find Someone Who (See Appendix C) or to teach items such as numbers, minimal pairs, vocabulary, irregular verbs, or syllable stress.

Music
Music is an effective medium that can increase students’ motivation and enjoyment and provide a meaningful context for the target language skill being taught. Not only can music be used for listening comprehension, but it can also be used to teach many aspects of language such as grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, and reduced forms. For example, the popular song, “Somebody that I Used to Know” by Gotye can be used to teach the simple past and relative clauses. The song “Mr. Mom” by Lonestar can be used to teach family and home vocabulary, while the song “Complicated” by Avril Lavigne can be used for pronunciation, specifically enunciating words. Another aspect that can be addressed through music is that of theme. For example, “True Colors” by Cyndi Lauper teaches the theme of accepting others. Music can also be used to teach reduced forms such as gonna, wanna, and shoulda as well as slang which are so common in informal spoken English. See Appendix D for more examples of songs and activities that can be used with music.

Classroom Management
Fun activities can be used beyond educational purposes. They can also be incorporated to lessen the tedium of day-to-day classroom management activities. We have found that taking a more lighthearted approach to some mandatory activities can make them less tiresome. Starting class on-time and doing class activities such as timed writings can be facilitated by the use of online timers (http://www.onlinestopwatch.com/). When students can see that there are five minutes left until the end of break or until the end of a pair activity, there is no squabbling about time. This online stopwatch is also useful for giving students a time limit for in-class tests or writing journals so they can see how much time they have left and cannot argue about not having enough time.

If students insist on using their cell phones when they are not supposed to, try making it mandatory for them to use them by providing polls (http://www.poll everywhere.com). Polls can be used to review a grammar point, to see who did homework, or to see which of two assignments students want to review. The only limit is the instructor’s imagination. After registering at this free website, the instructor just needs to type in the question and the possible answers. The poll is then projected where students can see it. Once they have been taught how to respond, they just send a text message with their responses, and the results are instantly tabulated before their eyes.

Another activity that can help reduce use of students’ first language (L1) is the Penny Game. This game provides positive reinforcement for students who speak their L1 too much in class and need to be reminded to speak English only; this usually occurs in a Beginning-level class. At the beginning of class, give each student a certain number of pennies (such as three or a number of the teacher’s choice). Anytime a student uses his L1, a penny is taken away. The student(s) with the most pennies at the end of class receives a prize such as a piece of candy. The teacher can decide if s/he wants to give extra credit points for each remaining penny, or give a reward to only the person with the largest quantity of remaining coins. If your students are competitive, this can be a good motivation to avoid speaking their L1. You can also have students
donate a penny or another coin if they accidentally speak their L1. Then you can use the money you collected to pay for a party at the end of the term.

To practice language, it is not unusual for students to be placed into groups or with a partner. Usually the easiest way is to just let students choose their own partners, but our experience has shown that they typically choose the same partner time after time. Thus, we incorporate different “random” ways of assigning groups. We say “random” because with slight manipulation, the teacher can actually control who works together while allowing the students to believe it is random. Three common devices we use are playing cards, colored index cards, and candy. With these, you can have each student randomly select one. The teacher can then say either, “get with others who have the same number, candy, color” or form a group of three (four or five), where each member has a different item. When using playing cards, the teacher might first have numbers get together, then regroup with people in the same suit to repeat the activity or compare responses.

**Conclusion**

Using a variety of methods for classroom management keeps each day fresh for both the teacher and the students. Boredom can lead to absenteeism and apathy, so these methods are an effective way to make the classroom more lively and exciting. Assessment in these activities is informal and based on teacher observation of the students’ performance. These games can be viewed as a type of assessment to see if the students have learned the target language structure. Furthermore, activities can be modified and made easier or more difficult in process if necessary, but any activity is only as good as how it is presented. Students need to realize that they are not just playing a game, but they are actually learning. The teacher must promote the value of the activity if s/he wants the student to believe in its worth and be fully engaged in active learning. For more information about these activities along with sample materials, a list of websites, and our conference PowerPoint presentation, please go to our website: http://itsokaytohavefun.webs.com/.

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References


Appendix A: Sample Word Clouds

Wordle:

Tagxedo:
Appendix B: The Dice Game

Rationale: This game is good for review for vocabulary and/or grammar concepts.
General rules: On the board I draw the dice or put up pictures to represent the dice. Under each die, I write a category of vocabulary or grammar that we have been studying or want to review. Examples: question words, weather expressions, clothes (women’s, men’s, above waist, below waist, and other categories.), jewelry, daily activities, food groups, rooms in the house, family members, transportation, colors, professions, school subjects, past participles of irregular verbs, count nouns, non-count nouns

Students are divided into teams. There should be at least two teams. If you have a larger class, you can have more teams. One at a time students roll the dice. The numbers on the dice indicate which numbered categories to which they must provide an example. For each correct answer, the team earns the points of that die category. If a student rolls doubles, s/he gets an additional turn. I keep a tally on the board so students can see. I also periodically count off how many points teams have to review counting by fives. I usually have each team use a different color marker.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Team one</th>
<th>Team two</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This game can be adapted for various skill levels. For an intermediate level, I require students to provide the word and spell it correctly. They may look at their notes while at their seats, but once they have rolled the dice, they are on their own.

In lower levels, I make the student whose turn it is provide the word, then his teammates may help with the correct spelling. I allow the teammates to use notes, books, translators, etc.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>fruit</th>
<th>vegetables</th>
<th>beverages</th>
<th>meat</th>
<th>dairy</th>
<th>containers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>abble</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>can</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Appendix C: Sample Bingo for *Find Someone Who* Icebreaker

**FIND SOMEONE WHO...**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Is wearing the same color as you</th>
<th>Likes to travel</th>
<th>Has never had a cavity</th>
<th>Can say the English alphabet</th>
<th>Is an only child</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Has a birthday the same month as you</td>
<td>Is the oldest in his/her family</td>
<td>Likes chocolate</td>
<td>Whose favorite color is red</td>
<td>Likes to read</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plays a musical instrument</td>
<td>Likes to ride roller coasters or go to amusement parks</td>
<td>Cooked a meal recently</td>
<td>Likes living in the U.S.</td>
<td>Has been in a car accident</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can speak more than 2 languages</td>
<td>Has lived in more than three cities</td>
<td>Is a vegetarian (doesn't eat meat)</td>
<td>Saw the same movie as you recently</td>
<td>Doesn’t like pizza</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Appendix D: Sample Music Selections for Various Categories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Samples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grammar</td>
<td>“Somebody that I Used to Know” by Gotye (simple past and relative clauses)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Hello Goodbye” by The Beatles (opposites – beginner)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Find Out Who Your Friends Are” by Tracy Lawrence (parallelism)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocabulary</td>
<td>“Mr. Mom” by Lonestar (family, home vocabulary)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theme</td>
<td>“True Colors” by Cyndi Lauper, Phil Collins, Glee (acceptance)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pronunciation</td>
<td>Jazz Chants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Complicated” by Avril Lavigne</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Life’s a Dance” by John Michael Montgomery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduced forms</td>
<td>“Ain’t no Sunshine When She’s Gone” by Bill Withers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Don’t You Worry ‘bout a Thing” by John Legend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“I Wanna Hold Your Hand” by The Beatles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening comprehension</td>
<td>“Because You Loved Me” by Celine Dion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Types of Song Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cloze activities</td>
<td>Dictation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gap activities</td>
<td>Finding antonyms, synonyms, or homonyms of words in song</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reordering lines of song or stanzas</td>
<td>Choral reading of song</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matching beginning of line to end of line</td>
<td>YouTube karaoke</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Photo vocabulary</td>
<td>Discussion of theme of song</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:** Preview the songs you choose to make sure they are culturally appropriate as we are often desensitized to some of the content. Also, review the videos as our interpretation is not always the same as the producers.
Using Wikis in the ESL Classroom

Kristin Jatkowski Homuth
Allison Piippo

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Using Wikis in the ESL Classroom

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Abstract
Although teachers may groan when they hear students use the word “Wikipedia”, wikis can actually be an effective tool in the ESL classroom. Wikis can be used for group collaboration, improving writing and editing skills, and providing ownership for a student over a product that can be used in future classes. This article discusses the pedagogical benefits of using wikis in the ESL classroom, provides brief instructions for creating a class wiki, and gives suggestions for how a wiki can be used in the classroom.

Introduction
As the global community becomes ever more technologically savvy, ESL students at the university level arrive with increasing technological knowledge. To stay ahead of the game, ESL instructors must be aware of emerging technology and how to use it to an effective purpose in the classroom. Students in the modern age expect instructors to use technology in the classroom. In the digital age, to avoid using technology in the classroom is to, at best, be considered a dinosaur, and at worst, to be ineffective at communicating with “digital native” (Prensky, 2011) students. This paper seeks to clear away the mystique surrounding the classroom Wiki: to provide both a rationale for using Wikis in the ESL classroom and to give instructions, tips, and practical suggestions for ways to use Wikis in the ESL classroom.

Definition
A “wiki” is Web 2.0 software that allows collaboration among those chosen by the creator of the wiki. In layman’s terms, it is a website that anyone can contribute to, depending on the access granted by the site administrator. This means that a wiki can be edited by multiple people, sometimes at the same time, depending on the host site. In the case of Wikipedia, access is granted to all internet users, making it at once an excellent and an unreliable resource. This paper will provide examples based on two of the most common free wiki hosting sites available at the time of this writing: Google Sites (google.com/sites) and Wikispaces (wikispaces.com). Because they do not require knowledge of HTML or other programming codes, Wikis are useful resources for teachers and students.

Rationale
The main rationale for using Wikis in the classroom stems from the TESOL Technology Standards themselves (Healey, Hanson-Smith, Hubbard, Ioannou-Georgiou, Kessler, & Ware, 2011).
“Goal 1: Language learners demonstrate foundational knowledge and skills in technology for a multilingual world.” (Healey et al., 2011, p. 19)

The first goal suggests that students must have a basic knowledge and ability to work with technology. Wikis are a great way to teach this because they incorporate typing skills with the creation of hypermedia. Students must learn how to use technology in order to participate in the classroom Wiki.

“Goal 2: Language learners use technology in socially and culturally appropriate, legal, and ethical ways.” (Healey et al., 2011, p. 36)

Goal 2 requires that students must learn to use technology in ways that are appropriate and morally sound. These issues often come up when using Wikis, due to students being able to copy and paste from the Internet. This also allows for conversations and lessons about plagiarism.

“Goal 3: Language learners effectively use and critically evaluate technology based tools as aids in the development of their language learning competence as part of formal instruction and for further learning.” (Healey et al., 2011, p. 46)

“Standard 3: Language learners appropriately use and evaluate available technology-based tools for communication and collaboration.” (Healey et al., 2011, p. 55)

This last goal and standard lay out the critical thinking requirements for students when it comes to technology. Wikis provide a hands-on, real-life way for teachers to address and for students to learn about the necessity of evaluating online resources. In addition, Wikis are, by their very nature, collaborative, and can help increase collaboration in and outside of the classroom.

These selected TESOL technology standards clearly lay out that ESL students should first have a foundational knowledge of technology, know how to use that technology appropriately, ethically, and morally, and use that technology to enhance their language learning through “communication and collaboration.” Wikis are an excellent way to incorporate these three Technology goals for students into an ESL curriculum.

In addition to the TESOL Technology Standards, other researchers have indicated that wikis can be used for a variety of other instructional uses as well, including:

- Scaffolding (Nakamaru 2011)
- Collaboration (Nakamaru 2011)
- Documentation (Herrell and Jordan 2011)
- Writing for an audience (Herrell & Jordan 2011, Barley & Coniam 2008)
- Hypermedia documents (Herrell & Jordan 2011)
- Immediate, specific feedback
- Can be used with all ages
How to Create a Wiki

Technology changes rapidly. Detailed directions on how to set up a wiki on our recommended sites may be outdated by the time of this publication. In addition, the wiki sites we recommend provide excellent tutorials on setting up wikis. Rather than providing detailed step-by-step instructions on setting up a wiki, we are providing Herrell and Jordan’s (2011) recommended basic steps used to create a wiki:

1. Set up your wiki. We recommend using WikiSpaces (http://www.wikispaces.com) or GoogleSites (https://sites.google.com). Follow the tutorials to set up your wiki.

2. Decide how you want to use wikis in your classroom. You could decide to have students use the wiki as individuals, pairs, or groups. Decide who will be able to access which pages and what power they will have to make changes.

3. Demonstrate how the wiki works. Model the project, and demonstrate to students how to edit and interact.

4. Encourage students to get started and provide support. Provide lots of time for guided practice and support for students. Look at this as an opportunity to learn together!

Ideas for Wikis

1. Have students write stories using picture stories or story starters.
2. Have students use a wiki page as a common space to collect information for group work.
3. Use a wiki for peer editing! Have students type their rough drafts on the wiki, then assign a peer editor to make suggestions.
4. Have students keep a wiki page as a writing portfolio.
5. Have students collect songs that illustrate relevant grammar points and post the titles (maybe even YouTube videos) on the wiki.
6. Create a wiki to be a “living document” from class to class, semester to semester. Students can add to the work of students in previous semesters.
7. Have students journal using a wiki, and then provide feedback to students on the wiki.
8. Use a wiki as a class calendar and have students track progress on assigned tasks.

Be Creative!

Recommendations

When using wikis in the ESL classroom, several cautions are advised. First, instructors should guide students through at least the first session with hands-on experience in a computer lab. This allows students to ask questions if necessary, but also ensures that the students have received all instruction necessary with initial hands-on experience so that if they do have problems later on, hopefully they know what to ask. Second, instructors should limit editing privileges, depending on the project. There are benefits, in some cases, to students knowing that their work is going to be on the Internet for anyone to see, not just classmates (Barley & Coniam, 2008). However, students can
also be intimidated by this fact if the project involves, for instance, their own writing. Instructors should use their own discretion, and perhaps the input of their students, in determining how “live” to make their students’ work. Finally, teachers should intervene and give clear goals to prevent “social loafing” and “free-riding” (Arnold, Ducate, & Kost, 2012). When technology is used in the classroom, it provides a potential for abuse due to the fact that students can be easily distracted by the Internet. Teachers should remain engaged in any project taking place during class time, but also ensure that students are participating fully by requiring an account with log-in credentials from each student.

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References


