

NMTESOL Newsletter

New Mexico Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages

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Spotlight on Amy Christensen:

Vice President of NMTESOL by Tom Pierce

Tom: How did you get involved in ESL?

Amy: After earning my undergraduate business degree, I went to Spain for a two-week vacation before starting a job in corporate America. I ended up staying in Spain for a year teaching English. I fell in love with teaching and came back home and got my M.A. in TESL from the University of Arizona. I taught for a year in a private university in Mexico before moving to Colorado where I taught business English at the Economics Institute, a school affiliated with the University of Colorado to prepare international graduate students for academic achievement at universities across the nation. While there I was sent on 2-4 month teaching contracts in Korea, Indonesia, and Vietnam.

I moved to Albuquerque with my family and taught English part-time at CNM in the Arts & Sciences department before getting hired full-time to teach Developmental English. My current passion is teaching Citizenship at CNM.

Tom: Why are you interested in working with NMTESOL?

Amy: I realized after working part-time on the weekends and at night how lonely it can be teaching ESL. I missed sitting around at lunch with a group of teachers talking about our successes and failures in the classroom. So, I'm interested in working with NMTESOL so that we can develop more of a sense of community and professional camaraderie in New Mexico.

Tom: What do you think NMTESOL can accomplish?



Amy: While in Colorado, I was actively involved with CoTESOL which is an outstanding TESOL affiliate for us to emulate. I would like to see ESL teachers in New Mexico come together for an annual conference where we can learn from one another. In addition, I think this newsletter can be the perfect vehicle for teachers to share teaching tips and ideas. Finally, I'd like to see a blog started for us to share our concerns in the field of ESL. The success of NMTESOL is going to depend upon people joining this organization, which will only happen if there is a value attached to membership. In my mind, the value lies in communicating with one another about professional issues in our field.

Tom: I have heard you are creative in the classroom and your students really enjoy your classes. What's your secret?

Amy: I think the secret to being creative in the classroom comes from being willing to experiment with new ideas and techniques which frankly don't always work as successfully as I would like. I'm willing to take this risk because I always learn from my failures which is what makes teaching so dynamic for me. Who needs a casino when as a teacher you can throw caution to the wind and facilitate an activity in a new way? The payoff, of course is observing students happily engaged in an activity that you have just designed. Okay.... How many people are now humming Kenny Rogers' song "The Gambler"? *You gotta know when to hold 'em, know when to fold 'em, know when to walk away, know when to run...*

Tom is a Director of Instruction at Central New Mexico Community College in Albuquerque.

Tips for ESL Literacy Teachers

by Heide Spruck Wrigley

“Provide opportunities for different groups to work together, share information, and be a resource for each other.

Ask learners to read as a group, share their ideas about a piece they have read, and write collaboratively.”

This is **Part 1** of an article reprinted by permission from *Wrigley and Guth (2002), Bringing Literacy to Life, LiteracyWork International, Mesilla, New Mexico*. **Part 2** will be published in the next issue of the newsletter.



How can teachers provide a rich literacy experience for their students?

The following suggestions, based on the educational principles that shape rich language and literacy development, may provide some ideas. These guidelines are not meant as “teacher-proof” solutions to ESL literacy; rather they are meant as a basis for reflection and discussion.

Strive for genuine communication between yourself and your students

Design activities that tell you who your students are, what their experiences have been, what they care about, and what literacy means to them. Share information about yourself, your joys, and your sorrows, and invite your students to talk about themselves. Treat your student as you would any intelligent adult and do not spend a great deal of time asking questions to which you already know the answer. After you have just written the date on the board, saying “Suma, could you please read the date on the board?” is more respectful than asking “What’s the date today?”

Make your classroom into a community of learners where everyone feels welcome and all views are respected

Provide opportunities for different groups to work together, share information, and be a resource for each other. Ask learners to read as a group, share their ideas about a piece they have read, and write collaboratively. Invite contributions that do not depend on language and literacy, such as illustrating a story the group has written. Provide opportunities for sharing experiences across cultures by asking learners to talk about their lives back home and share significant cultural customs (e.g., weddings, funerals, or births) and family traditions. Discuss differences in literacy practices as well as commonalities. Learn to be a facilitator who guides the group, instead of a general who controls all interactions.

Link literacy with visual information

Provide information in the form of visuals and realia (objects such as phones, staplers, food, signs) to get a point across. Choose photographs, posters, slides, and videos whose message can be understood without language (e.g. Charlie Chaplin’s “The Immigrant,” the grape stomping scene from “I Love Lucy”). Use these visuals to create an atmosphere, illustrate a point, demonstrate a task,

elicit a feeling, or pose a problem. Encourage learners to respond in many different ways, allowing them to smell, touch, and manipulate realia and to respond to visuals in both verbal and non-verbal ways (classifying signs or developing sequence/stip stories by moving pictures around). Provide opportunities for learners to illustrate their writings with drawings and photographs and give them a chance to interact without having to depend on language and literacy (e.g., sharing food, organizing a potluck, dancing at end-of-class parties).

Publish your students’ work

Make room for your students’ writing on your walls and in the hallways. Involve them in making signs, labels, and posters. Write their ideas down on large newsprint, post these on the wall, and refer to them often. Involve the school in publishing end-of-semester yearbooks, autobiographies, and collections of student writings. Use hallways or places where students congregate as a gallery for displaying student work, photos, poems, etc. Encourage learners to invite family and friends to visit and admire their work.

Heide is Senior Researcher at LiteracyWork International, Inc. in Mesilla.



Ask Rae! *How can I remember the parts of speech?* by Rae Nichols

Good day to you! Some people are actually interested in English grammar, but have difficulty identifying the parts of speech in a sentence. Is it a noun, a pronoun, an adverb, or what? Perhaps this short poem will help sort this out.

The Eight Parts of Speech

1. All names of persons, places, things, are NOUNS, as *Caesar, Rome, and kings*.
2. PRONOUNS are used in place of nouns: *I think; she sings; they work; he frowns*.
3. When the kinds you wish to state, use an ADJECTIVE, as *great*.
4. But if of manner you would tell, uses ADVERBS, such as *slowly, well*
To find an adverb, this test try:
ask, "How?" or "When?" or "Where?" or "Why?"

5. PREPOSITIONS show relation, as *with* respect, or *in* our nation.
6. CONJUNCTIONS, as their name implies, are joining words; they are the ties that bind together day *and* night, calm *but* cold, dull *or* bright.
7. Next we have the VERBS, which tell of action, being, and state as well. To *work, succeed, achieve, and curb* – each one of these is called a VERB.
8. The INTERJECTIONS show surprise, as *Oh! Alas! Ah me! How wise!*

Thus briefly does this jingle state the PARTS OF SPEECH, which total eight!



Have a good day! Rae

Send your questions to: rrnichols28@msn.com and put NMTESOL in the subject line.



English through Music in Argentina! by Kristina Sievers

June through August, I spent time in Esquel (Patagonia), Argentina working for the MAPU Association. This association works on a variety of environmental, social, and educational projects in the town of Esquel and other locales in Argentina. One of their goals is to build a community center on the site of their home/office in which teenaged students can come after school to participate in various activities, including an English language program. The students are studying English in their public school, but this program would differ in its teaching approach. Instruction incorporates music into every session so that students can have a little more fun with language learning and maybe get a few songs stuck in their heads, and hence learn more English.

This summer (winter in Esquel), I worked at the school developing activities to accompany 100 songs that were selected for the project. We have plans to continue working long-distance until there is enough material to satisfy the needs of the program. In addition to the after-school program, there is another project in the wings in which teachers in NMTESOL land may be interested. The MAPU directors would like to facilitate web-based relationships between middle and high school students in Esquel and the U.S. If you teach at the secondary level and would be interested in such a project, please contact me at ksievers@cnm.edu.

Materials we develop will use the lyrics of the individual songs as the basis for the learning activities. Here's an example of one of the worksheets developed using the Barenaked Ladies' song: *If I Had a Million Dollars*.

If I Had \$1,000,000 – Barenaked Ladies
<http://youtube.com/watch?v=nCImrmR63JE>

If I Had \$1,000,000 (If I Had \$1,000,000)
I'd Buy You A House (I Would Buy You A House)
If I Had \$1,000,000 (If I Had \$1,000,000)
I'd Buy You Furniture* For Your House
(Maybe A Nice Chesterfield* Or An Ottoman**)

If I Had \$1,000,000 (If I Had \$1,000,000)
I'd Buy You A K-car* (a Nice Reliant Automobile)
If I Had \$1,000,000 I'd Buy Your Love.

If I Had \$1,000,000
I'd Build A Tree Fort* In Our Yard.
If I Had \$1,000,000
You Could Help, It Wouldn't Be That Hard.
If I Had \$1,000,000
Maybe We Could Put A Little Tiny Fridge* In There Somewhere
([talking:] We Could Just Go Up There And Hang Out.
Like Open The Fridge And Stuff, And There'd Be Foods Laid Out For Us
With Little Pre-wrapped Sausages And Things. Mmmmm.
They Have Pre-wrapped Sausages But They Don't Have Pre-wrapped Bacon.
Well Can You Blame Them. Yeah)

If I Had \$1,000,000 (If I Had \$1,000,000)
I'd Buy You A Fur Coat* (but Not A Real Fur Coat That's Cruel)
If I Had \$1,000,000 (If I Had \$1,000,000)
I'd Buy You An Exotic Pet (like A Llama Or An Emu*)
If I Had \$1,000,000 (If I Had \$1,000,000)
I'd Buy You John Merrick's Remains (all Them Crazy Elephant Bones)
If I Had \$1,000,000 I'd Buy Your Love

You can listen to this song at <http://youtube.com/watch?v=nCImrmR63JE>. Email Kristina for all the lyrics and the four worksheets for this song.

Kristina is ESL Chair at Central New Mexico Community College in Albuquerque.



“Involving faculty from outside ESL in this process has proven to be invaluable, and the teachers have very willingly taken on this responsibility.”

Upcoming Conferences:

- www.anupi.org.mx — 6th International Conference Oct. 2-4, 2008 in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico
- www.az-tesol.org - Arizona TESOL conference Oct. 3-4, 2008 in Tucson
- www.colorado.edu/iec/cotesol - Colorado TESOL conference Oct. 24-25, 2008 in Denver
- www.tesol.org — International TESOL Convention in Denver March 25-29, 2009

While material submitted to the newsletter is primarily edited for space considerations, ownership of any article published in this newsletter is retained by the author.

The ESL Institute at ENMU by Nancy McKeand

For many years, Eastern New Mexico University (ENMU) has offered ESL courses to international students who want to brush up on their academic English. However, recent agreements with a number of Chinese universities have greatly increased the number of international students on campus. With this increase, came a greater need for an expanded ESL program. This led ENMU to establish an ESL Institute to serve the ESL needs of these international students. The Institute has received funding and began operation this semester.

The Chinese students, who make up the bulk of the ESL student body at this time, come to ENMU having studied one or two years at their universities in China. Their English proficiencies range from intermediate to advanced. Upon arrival, students are given a placement test. This is followed by an interview with faculty from the departments in which they want to study. Following the interview, the department faculty and the ESL Director decide how much ESL coursework a student will need prior to or in conjunction

with taking classes in their major. Involving faculty from outside ESL in this process has proven to be invaluable and the teachers have very willingly taken on this responsibility. The Institute and the academic departments have established a strong partnership.

A student entering the full ESL Institute will take three hours of reading, three hours of writing, six hours or more of general ESL, two hours of conversation, and two hours of study in the language lab each week. Depending on faculty recommendations, students may take a lighter ESL load – four, six or eight hours of coursework – and have more time available for courses in their major academic area of study. The ESL program aims to be as flexible as possible in order to meet the needs of the students and their departments.

The Institute is fortunate to have the use of a state-of-the-art digital language lab for ESL classes. The lab has twenty-five computers on

which students can study using the ESL software program “Ellis.” They can also access the, Tell Me More Online Campus program as well. The lab is available to students during and after class.

As part of the mandate of the ESL program at Eastern, the Institute is doing outreach to the local community. Initial steps have included opening the language lab in the evening and on Saturday to community members for independent study. There is a commitment to expand the community’s access to the lab and to the ESL program. A variety of plans are being discussed.

Currently, the ESL courses at the Institute are taught by the full-time director/instructor and four other faculty members. Three of the four instructors teach part-time in ESL and part-time at ENMU. The fourth instructor is a former ENMU professor currently teaching in the public schools.

Nancy is the ESL Director at Eastern New Mexico University in Portales.

As the Presidential Election Nears . . .

by Ann Cortés

I’m passionate about education! In particular, I am driven to advocate for our ‘at risk’ youth, who are challenged by generations of poverty, and who linger in the back of the class. This concern moves me to act politically during this critical time in our country’s future.

As educators and as advocates for our students, I urge you to explore the educational issues that resonate for you and those

you care about; dialogue with others to construct a thoughtful and considerate decision this November. As an educator, these are the issues / the topics on educational reform that are motivating me to stay engaged:

- Pre-natal and post-natal education programs for parents
- Early childhood education reform including Head Start
- Standardized testing and alternative assessments
- Addressing the use of formal assessments as the only measure of accountability

- Revised funding quotient for NCLB
 - Schools of choice: charter, magnet, home schooling vs. vouchers for private school education
- So, as the presidential election nears, spend time investigating where the candidates stand on these critical issues and . . . vote!

Ann is an ESL consultant and teaches at Harrison Middle School in Albuquerque.



A Message from our President: "How I spent my summer vacation"

Dear NMTESOL members,

I would like to fill you in on our status as a non-profit organization and intent to be incorporated in New Mexico with a 501(c)(3) status by the IRS. We have made slow but steady progress over the summer. In early autumn we expect to submit required state and federal applications, and then be able to open a local bank account.

In early May, Kristina (treasurer), Penny (secretary), and I had meetings at New Mexico Educators Federal Credit Union to find out if and how we could establish free banking for NMTESOL. Three helpful NMEFCU managers set us on the path to state incorporation (a two-page form), federal tax-exempt status (a twenty-six page form), an Employer Identification Number, free checking, and the UNM Law Clinic, where our case now rests.

There were also the following 3 workshops at the Small Business Development Council of Albuquerque (affiliated with CNM), which Ann S. (newsletter editor) and I patiently sat through: Pathways to Success, Choosing a Legal Form for Your Business, and Paperwork, Insurance and Other Details of a Start-up Business. I also attended two individual consultations on how to get NMTESOL going officially, the first at the SBDC and the second at SCORE/Counselors to America's Small Business at the Rio Rancho Chamber of Commerce.

In short, we learned that although NMTESOL is a charitable organization that exists for the professional development of its members and the benefit of their students and is staffed by volunteers, we still have to attend business training, file incorporation paperwork, pay fees, and establish ourselves as a legal entity before we can become an affiliate of the international TESOL association. "That's so bureaucratic!" some of you are probably thinking. Yes, there is a lot of paperwork, but the officers are in agreement that we want to do things the proper way, so that

NMTESOL is re-established as sustainable.

The fact that there was already a TESOL affiliate in New Mexico led us to the NM Public Regulation Commission, which is the state office that licenses corporations (the first step in this whole process). I did some cyber archaeology, made a few phone calls to Santa Fe, and was able to confirm that the former iteration was incorporated as a domestic non-profit professional teacher association in July 1983.

Equally important, I was also able to confirm with the Public Regulation Commission that now in 2008, we can still use the name "New Mexico Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (abbreviated "NMTESOL"), despite the 1983 use, because the earlier association is inactive, revoked, and beyond the appeal period (PRC terminology). This is crucial information because that name is the best one for our association and at our start-up meetings on Friday afternoons in March and April, there was active discussion about whether we could or should use the same name as the previous association.

As soon as our checking account at NMEFCU is open, Jose Luis Diosdado, who works in Chaparral (Doña Ana county) and was the last treasurer of the former NMTESOL, has kindly offered to send us the \$333 that remains from the past. We will be sure to send an official note of thanks for his generosity and collegiality. A small portion of those funds will be used to reimburse a few of us who have already paid fees on behalf of NMTESOL. (A full accounting will be provided to the membership by the treasurer once the account is operational and dues are collected.)

The most recent office I visited was the UNM Law Clinic, whose mission is to educate UNM law students, under the supervision of law professors and licensed attorneys, through service to

clients who are unable to afford a private attorney. Fortunately, NMTESOL was accepted as a client, not due to financial need, but because we too are all about service, in our case, service to the community of ESOL educators and learners.

To conclude, in early September the officers of NMTESOL will meet with our new UNM Law Clinic student advisor to complete the paperwork and a timeline for our state and federal applications, for non-profit and tax-exempt status, respectively. The language in these forms will be based on the constitution and bylaws drafted by members during our March /April meetings. We will keep members updated on our progress. Keep this in mind: when we ask you to pay dues, then we are really official!

Finally, I also changed jobs, did some traveling at home and abroad, and had a lot of fun this summer. I hope you all took some time off for rest and relaxation. Have a great year, wherever you serve the ESOL community!

Best regards,

*Bill Ancker,
NMTESOL President*

Do you want to join NMTESOL?

Very soon we will begin accepting dues for yearly membership:

**\$15.00 tutor/student
\$20.00 regular**

We cannot accept payments at this time.

We are still in the process of registering the organization to secure an account.

☺ *We appreciate your patience!*

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