



LOUISIANA TEACHERS OF ENGLISH TO SPEAKERS OF OTHER LANGUAGES

EDUCATING AND SERVING THE
CITIZENS OF THE WORLD IN THE STATE
OF LOUISIANA

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Contents:

- **President's Letter**, page 1-2
- **Editor's Letter**, page 2-3
- **LaTESOL News**, page 4
- **Scholarships**, page 5
- **SETESOL**, page 5-6
- **TESOL Position Statements**, page 5-7
- **Reflection on TESOL's Position Statement on English Entrance Exams for Nonnative English Speakers at Schools and Universities**, page 7
- **Job Postings**, page 8

President's Letter

Dear LaTESOL members:

I am happy to report that TESOL 2009 in Denver was an overwhelming success, despite a blizzard hitting right in the middle of it. The harsh meteorological and economic conditions have not stopped TESOL from continuing to expand the number of affiliates with Nile TESOL and others joining; however, the economic climate has forced TESOL to set a goal of maintaining current services instead of expanding the offerings that TESOL provides. The only anticipated cut is the elimination of *Essential Teacher*; this journal will be replaced with *TJ, Teaching Journal*.

TESOL has generously donated SEVEN FREE TESOL MEMBERSHIPS to LaTESOL. This gift has over a \$700 value. We would like to award these memberships to LaTESOL members who have never been a part of international TESOL. If you contribute an article to the newsletter or present a lesson at the annual conference, we would like to give you this TESOL membership free. Please submit an article or presentation for more information.

TESOL has a number of policy statements accessible on-line. Any group of seven members can submit a resolution to be voted on by the membership. This year the TESOL membership approved a resolution reaffirming the right of deaf children to learn a native signed language.

SETESOL, Southeast Regional TESOL has its annual conference this September in Atlanta. I would like to encourage you to attend and network with others across the region. Last year, only a dozen Louisiana members were able to attend, so we would love to expand our representation there.

Otherwise, as the Louisiana legislature decides the budget, I would like to encourage you to make your preferences known. English educators and English learners need to be vocal about the needs we have and the services we provide.

–Robert Connor

Editor's Letter:

Dear Readers:

This year's TESOL Convention, Uncharted Mountains/ Forging New Pathways, was my very first international conference and as I made my way through two days of conferencing at the Denver Convention Center, I was again and again struck with awe and excitement to be among so many kindred with so much knowledge to share.

After my 9am arrival in Denver on Thursday, albeit twelve hours later than planned, I attended a demonstration called "Privatization of IEPs." The question, "Is privatization the trend of the future for IEPs?" wasn't exactly answered during the session. Rather, the session evolved into an interesting discussion of shared experiences on this issue. Most people either had bad experiences or were currently being solicited by private organizations and unsure how to respond. The recommendation for all interested IEPs is to handle the situation by benchmarking results and keeping open staff dialogue about development: clear policies and procedures, standard rubric assessments, clear path of matriculation, and periodic surveys.

Mile-high from my first official session and seeing snow for the first time *ever*, I headed for lunch a few blocks away at Bubba Gump's. Fortuitously, a wonderful woman who recognized me from the aforementioned session offered to share a table with me. She, a 30-year TESOL veteran from the University of Kentucky, gave me her insightful take on Allen Luke's plenary speech, "Unpacking the Schooling of Linguistic and Cultural Minorities." She was extremely inspired by his attitude and belief in their obstacles as surmountable: becoming translators for their parents, expectations placed upon them to rise above their current situation, to assimilate/acclurate and also to perhaps pay homage to their native homelands, often a place they've never experienced.

My final stop on Thursday afternoon was the Editor's Workshop where I met with fellow editors of TESOL affiliates worldwide. The topic that I found most interesting was the print vs. electronic debate and I would like to open up a dialogue with you about this issue. I see electronic communication as more progressive because it is faster and less expensive, opens the form to many new levels of interaction, and provides a wider forum for sharing information. Technological advancement is at the forefront of many fields, education included, and the value of hyperlinks, flash, and increased traffic on your own site are undeniable. This kind of progress is *essential* to the development of communication(s). While the opposition argues that without hard copy publication, members and contributors will sacrifice benefits of membership and scholarship, respectively, the solutions are really quite simple:

- Offer something else (like a LaTESOL mug or t-shirt that can be received at the annual LaTESOL conference) in exchange for the shift in member benefits, unless the gripe is truly about access, in which case a login and password for publication(s) access could be applied.
- The latter solution is to publish an annual (bi-annual, if you prefer) print publication.

Voila! Problem solved? You tell me. I would love to hear from anyone with an opinion on this issue. Please, raise your voices.

On Friday, my last day of the conference, I attended “Changes and Challenges: Voices of Saudi Students Studying in America.” I currently work in a program with a large Saudi (male) population so I was eager to hear this study, presented from two sides: Saudi women and Saudis in general. The women spoke a lot about stereotypes, especially for wearing of the hijab. In fact, Saudi women that changed to more western garb, i.e. not wearing hijab, experienced judgment from Saudi males who saw them as coming from a bad family. For the general study, photo elicitation provided information on perceptions of differences between the educational systems the United States and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, or KSA. The students brought in predictable representations like co-ed environments and clock towers. Conclusively, the students appreciated the diversity of their educational environment here and a desire to be accepted in support of, rather than in spite of, their differences because their culture is so very different from our own. For example, most have never had a teacher of the opposite sex. Therefore, we must remain sensitive to these kinds of differences, while fostering an atmosphere of trust, compassion, inclusion, and safety.

The last session I attended was “Successful Integration of IEP Curricula with Local Communities.” A lifetime resident of southwest Louisiana, I expected to walk away with ideas to facilitate more interaction with the rich culture and community here, the intention being educational opportunities for all involved. I quickly learned that my thinking was narrow since this kind of integration also benefits the community itself. For example, partnering with community organizations like United Way and Big Brothers/Big Sisters, having a language exchange rather than conversation partnering, and volunteering for a food drive are all things that will truly benefit the community-at-large in addition to providing our international students with both educational and humanitarian opportunities. Moreover, these authentic experiences with the outside community can dispel stereotypes, build community, and relieve boredom and stress for our students. The UL Lafayette IEP decided on an informal food drive due to needs at local food banks and the generosity of our students has left me quite impressed. To begin using this strategy, consider these key questions:

1. What is the benefit to students?
2. Can we do it logistically and financially?
3. Is this something that we really want to do?
4. What are the students’ needs? If academic, target universities; if business, then business; also, target school and community organizations.
5. Most of all, where can we easily connect with the community?
6. Develop, evaluate, adjust, repeat, extend, share!

–*Sabrina LeBeouf*

LaTESOL News

- LaTESOL 2009 date and location has been set: Friday, November 13, 2009. This year’s convention will take place at the Cajundome and Convention Center in Lafayette, Louisiana.
- Writing Contest: Call for submissions from teachers who have a “teachable moment” in K-12. Only current LaTESOL member will be eligible to apply. The prize is FREE TESOL membership or renewal (\$85 value).

Scholarships

The TESOL Professional Development Scholarship

Who's Eligible: All current TESOL members.

Purpose: To assist in the professional development of TESOL members by facilitating attendance at the annual convention. Recipients may also choose to attend a pre- or post convention institute (PCI) in addition to the convention.

Amount: Forty-three scholarships for the waiver of (a) convention registration only or (b) convention registration and tuition for one PCI.

Criteria: Applications are evaluated according to the statement of (a) how attendance at the TESOL convention will further the applicant's professional development, (b) how attendance will benefit the applicant's ESL/EFL community, and (c) demonstrated need of financial assistance to attend the convention. Scholarship recipients are expected to volunteer at the convention for a minimum of 2 hours; the names of recipients will be forwarded to the volunteer coordinator for the 43rd Annual TESOL Convention in 2009.

To Apply: Send a one-page statement marked "Professional Development Scholarship" indicating (a) your name (as it appears on TESOL membership), address, telephone, e-mail address, and TESOL membership numbers, if available; (b) how attending the 43rd Annual TESOL Convention will further your professional development; (c) how attending the conference will benefit your ESL/EFL community; and (d) why you need this scholarship.

Additional Comments: The TESOL Professional Development Scholarships, established in 1995, are offered to support the TESOL membership with ongoing professional development and to make the TESOL convention more enriching, fulfilling, and accessible to all members. This year, 43 scholarships will be awarded, one for each year of TESOL's history.

Due Date: Applications must be received on or before November 1.

Please submit applications via email to awards@tesol.org or mail to:

Awards Committee
TESOL
700 South Washington Street, Suite 200
Alexandria, Virginia 22314-4287 USA

SeTESOL

Dear fellow TESOLer,

Summer is fast approaching, and we once again encourage all of you to consider sharing your wonderful research and successful classroom experiences and projects at the SETESOL Conference in Atlanta, GA from Sept 17 - Sept 19, with Pre-conference Workshops on Sept 16. Information about our featured speakers, including Dr. Keith Folse, Dr. Esther de Jong, Ms. Immaculee Ilibagiza and Dr. Margarita Calderon, and links to the session and poster proposal forms, hotel registration and conference registration are available at <http://www.gatesol.org>. Just click on "SETESOL 2009" in the left tab under "Conferences."

If you have presented at a local or state conference, we encourage you to submit your earlier presentation for this regional conference. Or if you are developing a new presentation, you might wish to consider selecting a topic related to the conference theme A Passion for

Language and Teaching. Another possibility would be to prepare a presentation proposal related to one of the interest sections, such as Adult Ed, Bilingual Ed, Elementary Ed, Second Language Writing, Intensive English Programs, International Teaching Assistants, Refugee Concerns, etc.

GATESOL is very proud of how effectively our SETESOL affiliates work with ELLs, and a great way for others throughout the Southeast to learn about our successes and spread them to our learners is for you to present at the regional conference.

If you have any questions about this process or need some guidance in preparing your proposal, please feel free to ask.

Sincerely,

Heather Boldt
SETESOL 2009 Program Chair
ESL Instructor, The Graduate School
Emory University
404-727-8075

TESOL Position Statements

[Position Statement Opposing Bullying, Harassment, and Hate Crimes](#)

“Around the world, starting in the 1980’s, awareness of bullying, harassment, and hate crimes has been increasing. Whether it be racial and linguistic minorities; immigrants; or gay, lesbian, or transgendered individuals, there is increasing global concern over verbal and/or physical attacks against those who are perceived as different from the majority.¹

English language educators working with racial and linguistic minorities; women; and gay, lesbian, and transgendered people must make clear that diversity among human beings is not only to be tolerated but celebrated. As the global association for English language educators, TESOL values individual language rights, collaboration in a global community, and respect for diversity and multiculturalism. TESOL strongly opposes bullying, harassment, and hate crimes, which it defines as follows:

Bullying, which can be carried out by individuals or groups, is unwanted conduct affecting the well-being of people at school and at work, related to age, sex, race, disability, religion, nationality, sexual orientation, or other personal characteristics. Harassment consists of various unsolicited behaviors that make the recipient feel uneasy, humiliated, intimidated, or uncomfortable.

Hate crimes are crimes such as murder, sex offenses, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, motor vehicle theft, manslaughter, arson, and other crimes involving bodily injury to any person in which the victim is intentionally selected because of the actual or perceived race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, or other difference. Often there is an abuse or misuse of power. In order to address these issues, TESOL supports

- Development of educational practices by TESOL professionals to assist students and scholars experiencing bullying, harassment, and hate crimes
- Development of educational practices by TESOL professionals to teach majority- group members the value of diversity and of the human and civil rights of minorities
- Creation of opportunities by TESOL professionals for members of minority groups to educate their peers
- Encouragement by TESOL professionals of appreciation and respect for those who do not look/ behave like the majority”

Position Statement on Fairness and Equity in ESL Program Reduction

“During turbulent economic times, educational programs that serve culturally, linguistically, and economically diverse student populations may be at a disadvantage when competing for reduced funding with programs that serve conventional, mainstream student populations. This disadvantage is particularly acute for English as second language (ESL) programs, which are often mischaracterized as being remedial in nature.

In fact, language programs for nonnative English speakers in the United States and other Anglophone countries hold as their primary goal the achievement of native-like proficiency in English for the purposes of interacting both culturally and economically with the traditional English-speaking culture. This high level of proficiency is critical to students’ academic, social, and financial success. One’s ability to communicate effectively in the language of commerce and society is vital to the integration of language-minority individuals and families. Effective language skills are essential to seeking jobs and developing careers. Program reductions will only further limit the possibility of successful cultural and economic adjustments of ESL students contributing to the regeneration of our economy in these difficult times.

In addition, the denial of advancement opportunities to those most at risk in our communities may have negative and long lasting effects that are disproportionate to students in other programs. Those students in ESL programs often depend more heavily on educational resources at public institutions, as they do not have the financial or social resources to do otherwise. In fact, deep cuts in language acquisition programs may actually increase the sense of cultural, linguistic, and economic marginalization that many ESL students experience.

Exacerbating this situation is the fact that many ESL programs at the post-secondary level in the United States and elsewhere are staffed with part-time, adjunct, or contingent faculty. Unfortunately, during difficult economic times, educational programs face the temptation of laying off part-time, adjunct, or contingent faculty educators that the institution is rarely under any legal or collectively bargained obligation to retain. Reductions of this kind only serve to reduce the level of continuity in high-quality instruction to which ESL students have become accustomed. TESOL strongly supports all ESL faculty's employment rights – part-time and full-time during these harsh economic times.

When economic conditions necessitate cutbacks in funding, TESOL urges public policy makers and managers of educational institutions to exercise fairness and equity in administering program cuts so as not to disadvantage culturally and linguistically diverse student populations or those who may already be suffering the debilitating effects of poverty.

TESOL further urges institutions and agencies to provide full support to the maintenance, especially during uncertain economic times, of programs that strive to address the cultural, linguistic, and academic needs of students at all educational levels and institutions who are learning English as a second language. As they may be disproportionately affected by difficult economic times, we urge the continued funding of such programs and their staff at levels sufficient to ensure the positive impact that such programs bring.”

Position Statement on English Entrance Exams for Nonnative English Speakers at Schools and Universities

“Assessment practices play an increasingly important role in determining access to educational and employment opportunities. Not only are assessments used to evaluate student performance and the quality of education, but they also function as entrance criteria to educational programs at colleges and universities. TESOL is concerned about the growing practice that formal, standardized English language tests are being used as the sole criterion to determine entrance to education programs at the tertiary education level. Moreover, the validity and reliability of the language tests used for this purpose are not always transparent. The high-

stakes nature of this kind of testing makes it imperative that assessment practices are designed to fairly and accurately assess candidates' skills for program entrance.

Following current recognized good practices in assessment, TESOL therefore advocates, first, for the development of tertiary admission policies that promote the use of valid and reliable language assessment instruments. Further, TESOL strongly encourages colleges and universities to use more than one form of entrance evaluation to determine candidacy for academic programs. TESOL also recommends that these policies be formed through professional consultation with English language experts."

Reflection on above position statement:

Who of us in the field can argue with the fairness and logic of this statement? Nevertheless, I am grateful not to have to wrestle with the implied problem, as I teach in a small institution, Saint Joseph Seminary College in Covington, with only a dozen or so students for whom English is not a first language. This makes assessing their language proficiency simple. During orientation week this handful of students is required to write a proficiency essay and submit to an interview. In one day, their placement is done.

TESOL's Position Statement does bring to mind a panel discussion I attended last year at CCC in New Orleans. There, educators from larger colleges and universities were discussing the complexity of evaluating the proficiency of nonnative speakers who applied for admission. The panelists identified two categories of second language students. First were the international students who had studied English in their home country and had never lived in the U.S. (or any other English speaking country). In most instances, these prospective students were required to take the TOEFL as one of the admission requirements, so they proved less of a problem than the second category.

Considerable time was devoted to discussing this second type of entering student.

Here the colleges and universities were dealing with nonnative speakers who had nevertheless spent a number of years as U.S. residents (often referred to as the 1.5 generation). Their application included proof of graduation from an American high school, as well as ACT and/or SAT scores or the equivalent. Often these scores did not reflect the students' degree of integration into the American culture or their ability to succeed in mandatory English composition classes and other entry-level courses. Language proficiency ran the gamut from high beginning to native speaker fluency. In many instances, the institutions had neither the budget nor the qualified personnel to further evaluate these students' command of English. This resulted in too many being enrolled in classes geared to native speakers and for which they were ill prepared. Even when an institution did have all the resources in place to assess the English proficiency of its in-coming students and did offer the ESL and developmental classes some required, a good number of students resented their ESL placement and failed to register altogether, or they disregarded the scores and managed to enroll in regular English classes, thereby jeopardizing their chances for a successful academic career.

Clearly, TESOL's Position Statement shows a concern for fairness and efficacy in higher education. In the face of multiple scenarios and institutional policies nation-wide, however, its application appears to succeed in varying degrees. In our own state of Louisiana, is there a uniform policy regarding the admission and placement of students who are nonnative speakers? Perhaps some LaTESOL member can address this issue in a future Newsletter....

—*Josette Beaulieu-Grace*

Job Postings

Please email us if you have a job opening you would like us to publish in our next newsletter:
sabrina@louisiana.edu.