



M A R Y L A N D TESOL NEWS

MARYLAND TEACHERS OF ENGLISH TO SPEAKERS OF OTHER LANGUAGES

www.marylandtesol.org



Biophilia Factor and ESL

By *Susanne*

*Gardner, ESL Instructor,
Maryland Correctional
Institution - Jessup*

As a correctional educator for nine years, I have long noticed that my adult English-as-a-second-language (ESL) students at the Maryland Correctional Institution – Jessup (MCI-J) pay close attention and become more intrigued with the lesson when it is correlated to certain subject matter in nature. Whether we are talking about the beautiful beaches of Florida, the jungles of Honduras, or the weather in Maryland, students react differently, and their attention is more



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TESOL International Pre-Convention Days

By *Diane Dunlap, Adult Education IS Co-Chair and
Team Leader Community College Day 2016*

Adult Education Day

This March in Toronto, TESOL International introduced Adult Education Day as a pre-convention feature. Those who attended learned how it's done in Canada, which is a bit different than here in the United States. One enormous difference is that adults who want to take advantage of the free English classes provided to immigrants must present legal documents to show their official status in the country. Also, Canadian adult education classes are administered through their public school system. Differences aside, the day provided a useful exchange of ideas among teachers of English to adults, who are among the most dedicated, underpaid, caring teachers there are.

Having been selected as Team Leader for next year's Adult Education Day in Baltimore, I shadowed Sharon Rajabi, the 2015 Team Leader for the day. This primarily consisted of staying out of her way as she wrangled volunteers and put out small fires

like presenter no-shows. We did have many conversations following the event, during which I discovered that my role would be much larger than I had known. The Team Leader would set the strands and sessions, select a keynote speaker AND recruit and manage the volunteers. After I got over the initial shock of my new duties, I had the chance to confer with TESOL International staff and my fellow Maryland TESOL Board members who were present at the convention. Over the next couple of days I had fleshed out a pretty good schedule for next year's Adult Education Day.

Change of Plans — 2016 Community College Day

In April, TESOL decided to cancel Adult Education Day 2016 and replace it with Community College Day! This is exciting news for Community College ESL teachers. However, this is certainly a disappointment to the Adult Ed ESL teachers who have already volunteered to help with or present

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A Message from Your MDTESOL Newsletter Editors

by Chester Gates and Billie Muñoz, Newsletter Editors

Summer is upon us. We know whether American Pharoah will win the Triple Crown. (He did) We know whether Martin O'Malley will seek the presidency. (He will) We know where TESOL will hold its 2016 International Convention. (Baltimore)

We don't know what funding we will have for ESOL programs in the fall. We don't know how people will react to April's riot, looting, and arson in 2016. We don't know if we'll know who the candidates for President are.

Our ignorance of the future is not new, but sometimes it takes events to remind us. Still, we'll take what we have today and carry it to the office, or classroom, or

hearing room and continue on with our job. Though, we do not have to do this in isolation. This is one reason that organizations like TESOL and Maryland TESOL exist. They give us the opportunity to meet fellow travelers in the field and exchange information, offer advice, and give encouragement.

We hope that this summer issue finds you well and helps you prepare for our future together.

2014



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A Message from Your MDTESOL President

by Debra Suarez



Welcome to the final Maryland TESOL Newsletter of the 2014-2015 academic year. It has been an exciting and busy year for the Maryland TESOL Community!

In previous newsletter articles, I have reported on our accomplishments with the fall conference during which we hosted Dr. Stephen Krashen as our Keynote Speaker. I also reported on the continued updating of our website: We have expanded the Member Center Resource Library and Video Gallery where videos and other resource materials are available for free to MDTESOL members. I have also reported on the progress of the Strategic Plan which is repositioning MDTESOL so that it can overcome its growing pains and develop into a more state-wide organization.

In this newsletter, I'd like to share with you the work accomplished this Spring by the MDTESOL Interest Section co-Chairs. Each MDTESOL Interest Section is organized by two co-Chairs. The co-Chairs work throughout the year, writing newsletter articles and helping with the annual fall conference. However, one of their main responsibilities is to organize a professional development event in the Spring. MDTESOL has sponsored numerous professional development opportunities for its membership. It's a pleasure to report this year's accomplishments of our hard working MDTESOL Interest Section co-Chairs!

The Adult Education IS sponsored "Teaching Non-literate English Learners" by Colleen Shaughnessy, which was exceedingly well-attended and well-received.

The Graduate Student IS organized the annual Graduate Student Mini-Conference, "Breaking Down Borders: Graduate Students Revolutionizing TESOL." For many graduate students, this was the first time that they gave a professional presentation.

The Advocacy IS held its event on "Human Trafficking 101 for ESOL Teachers" presented by Constance Huntsman, Esq. & Diana Siemer. This event helped ESOL teachers better understand the implications of human trafficking for their students and their work.

The Elementary Education IS sponsored Minna Nilanont, Prisca Rodriguez & Maria Bonet to present their work "Picture Books to Comic Books to Graphic Novels: Images to Support Reading for ELLs." And the Secondary Education IS offered "Supporting Long-Term English Language Learners" presented by Margarita Calderon. Both sessions offered practical instructional tips for teachers.

The Higher Education IS and Program Administration IS collaborated to bring Joann Shin to discuss "Highlighting Your Best Classroom Practices through Journal and Online Publishing: What is Possible?" This event was held on the same day as our Annual Spring Dinner, so attendees went from the workshop to the dinner!

Together, the MDTESOL IS Spring Events give teachers continued professional development opportunities brought by noted expert speakers, on a variety of key topics, and offered in small group settings. Next year, you can learn more about these events via e-mail to the membership, on our website, and through the newsletter.

Finally, although you have probably heard, it bears repeating! MDTESOL will hold its Fall 2015 Annual Conference at Washington College in Kent County. The Call for Proposals has been announced, and conference registration will soon be opened.

In this, my last newsletter report as President of MDTESOL, I'd like to extend my sincere gratitude to the full MDTESOL Board. It has been an honor serving the MDTESOL Community with such a dedicated and hard working group of professionals.

And to you, the MDTESOL membership, Thanks for all you do every day for the English language learning field in Maryland!

Sincerely,
Debra Suarez
Maryland TESOL President

TESOL 2016 International Convention & English Language Expo

5-8 APRIL 2016 • BALTIMORE, MARYLAND, USA

SCHEDULE AT
A GLANCE

EDUCATION
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PRE- AND POSTCONVENTION
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Highlights From TESOL 2015



2016 Call for Participation



Simple and Authentic Writing Tasks

By Tabitha Kidwell

Take a moment and think about the last 5 things you wrote.

Did you do it?



Your list is probably something like mine: a to-do list, a text message, a Facebook update, a comment on a student's paper, and my name, address, and phone number in an online form. Believe it or not, these are all possible writing activities!

Teachers often focus only on extended text types like narratives and essays. Students, especially beginners, need practice of simple daily writing activities, too. In fact, they probably need to practice everyday text types more! It's unlikely that many of our students will go on to be published authors in English, but they will probably need to use English on website forms or to communicate on social networks. Below are a few simple and authentic writing tasks; if you start paying attention to your own daily writing habits, you will probably come up with many more ideas!

Shopping List

Give students a photo of a refrigerator or pantry shelves, and ask them to make a grocery shopping list based on what is missing. You can give a specific recipe to provide a little more scaffolding for beginners.

Map Drawing & Labeling

Give students a situation that requires them to draw and label a map. For example: Your friend fell down the stairs and hurt her foot. She needs to go to the hospital, but your only friend with a car doesn't know where it is. Or, Your teacher wants to come visit your house, but doesn't know how to get there. He will be coming from school. Encourage students to label roads, buildings, and other landmarks along the way.

Texts

Sick of catching students using their phones during class time? Use it as a learning tool! Pair students and have them have a short text message conversation in English about a given topic. One of them can show you the conversation afterwards so you can grade it or give comments. If students don't have unlimited texting, you can have them pretend by passing a paper back and forth.

Facebook/E-mail messages

Another alternative to the text message conversation is to ask students to have a conversation via Facebook or e-mail about a given topic. They can include you in the messaging so you can evaluate their language. Assign this as homework, or, if you have access to computers, do it during class.

Greeting Cards

Have students make cards for an holiday like Valentines Day or Mother's Day, or for a recent real-life event like a teacher's new baby, a classmate's grandmother's death, or a secretary's illness. Or, have students make thank you cards for someone they are grateful to.

Completing Forms

Give students a bank, hospital, or post office form, and ask them to fill it out. Make it more authentic by giving a situation, i.e., you are checking your mother into the hospital; you are sending a package to your family in your home country; you need to transfer money to a study abroad program. Or, ask them to complete online forms to buy a plane ticket and reserve a hotel room for their dream vacation (just don't have them send it!).

Complaint Letter

Do you have a class full of whiners? Fuel that negative energy to learning English! Give a situation where students need to write a complaint letter, for example: You received this bill for electric services you did not use and need to request a refund, or you had awful service at KFC and want to inform the manager.



How To Teach ‘Freddie Gray’

By A Lesson Plan Provided by the Advocacy Interest Section

Note: This is not in any particular lesson plan form but can be adapted accordingly.

Objective: To give students the training to analyze a complex event with varying interpretations.

Rationale: Much of the news reporting and social networking on the troubles in Baltimore (May, 2015) are surface level. As the mainstream news media operate on the principle “if it bleeds it leads”, root problem are fairly ignored to in order to highlight sensational events. The riots of Baltimore has many root causes but is not covered extensively by those purveying the news.

Many of our students are unfortunately familiar with such circumstances and reactions to how Baltimore reacted to the murder of Freddie Gray.

Target Vocabulary:

- Poverty
- Custody
- Thug
- Indictment
- Looting
- Rioting
- Spinal cord
- White privilege
- Police brutality

Possible Sources:

News media sources (mainstream):

CNN, WMAR-TV 2, WJZ-13, WBAL 11, Fox News, Telemundo, other

Newspapers:

- New York Times
- Washington Post
- Baltimore Sun
- The Guardian
- other

Other sources for news coverage:

- BBC
- RT (Russian TV)
- Al Jazeera
- PressTV (Iran)
- YouTube
- Telesur

Warm up activity:

Discuss with a partner: Can you think of a time in your country that an event sparked a nation-wide reaction?

Instruction:

- As a class, decide what aspect of the Freddie Gray case to investigate.
- Students will be grouped and decide what aspect of the case they’d like to discuss.
 - o Examples:
 - The arrest
 - While in police custody
 - Reaction to his death
 - Reaction to the indictment
 - Conditions of the community
 - History of police brutality in Baltimore
 - Other
- Students will use on-line technology to peruse all forms of media to determine what is common in the coverage among the differing sources of their particular topic.
- In any form decided by the students/teacher, the students will present their findings.
- From this, they will then ask questions of what was NOT discussed in any of the stories. What was missing? What issues were not covered adequately? If time permits, they can follow up on these questions and report to the class their findings.

Writing component:

The students will write a paragraph on how the media covered their particular topic related to the Freddie Gray matter.

at the pre-convention day next year. I appreciate your enthusiasm and hope you will be able to attend the main TESOL Convention in Baltimore, where there are sure to be many Adult Ed sessions.

Now, I need the help of Maryland TESOL members with the first-ever Community College Day to be held at the Baltimore Convention Center on Monday, April 4, as a Pre-Convention feature of the 2016 TESOL International Convention. The deadline is approaching. Registration begins in September.

With the help of my colleagues at Montgomery College I have outlined 5 strands and 4 sessions, which are presented in the featured chart. This lineup has been approved by the TESOL Education Projects Manager and we are now soliciting presenters. Anyone who has an expertise in one of the areas outlined here, and who would like to present at the TESOL Community College Day, please contact me, Diane Dunlap at dhdunlap2016@gmail.com

Prospective Presenter Instructions

The process for selection of presenters for this event is by invitation. Do not prepare or send a proposal. Send an email with a short description of the presentation you would give and which strand and session it would

fill. Include a brief bio and credentials. If selected, the final invitation will come from TESOL International. Compensation for presentations is limited to free registration for the Community College Day only.

Volunteers Needed

Soon I will be recruiting 20 volunteers to help out for the day. Volunteers at Community College Day will monitor each session, give directions and assist both the presenters and the attendees. Each volunteer will have free registration for the Community College Day only. Anyone interested in helping out who will be available on Monday, April 4, 2016, should also contact me at dhdunlap2016@gmail.com. There will certainly be at least one mandatory pre-event meeting at a location not yet determined.

Suggestions Welcome

Following the featured sessions, the day will end with a panel discussion on a topic that is still undecided. We want to make it a can't-miss event, so please sent in your suggestions. One possibility is a panel on the challenges of teaching and being Gen 1.5 students. What do you want to know about this issue? Who do you think would be a good panel member? Other ideas for a panel discussion are welcome.

Curriculum Redesign	Accommodating changing laws and federal/state mandates.	Incorporating changing pedagogies and theories. Examples of Mixed Groupings/ Special Sections/Learning Communities	Adjusting to changing demographics and student profiles. Using data on diversity of student population in institutional planning.	Providing support to ESL writers beyond the ESL classroom. Examples and feasibility.
Technology	Personal devices in the classroom. Help or hindrance?	Distance education viability for ESL classes. Case studies/examples of success.	Is the Language Lab obsolete? The past, present and future of course lab requirements.	New Tools you can't do without.
Assessment	New ideas in placement instruments. Panel.	Formative classroom assessment techniques.	Defining success. Student goals vs. institutional standards.	Creating a continuum between pre-academic ESL and academic ESL courses with regard to advising, standards and expectations.
Writing	Where does grammar fit into the content-based instruction landscape?	When is second language writing good enough? Who decides? Should there be double standards for ESL writers?	How some CC programs use tutors successfully to improve second language writing.	Does literature have a role in teaching academic writing? Panel.
Sociopolitical Issues	Cultural Competencies	Relationship of ESL program to college as a whole. Addressing the questions of credit, development courses and Gen Ed.	Working with special needs students who have a learning disability, life challenges, or a significant discrepancy between their oral and written skills.	Learning Communities in the Community College

focused, when I include aspects of nature in our classroom lessons. This student interest exists when we refer to all kinds of animal and plant species; it seems that flora and fauna provide an emotional boost to learning in a correctional environment that prohibits students from actually participating in nature activities such as taking hikes and walks, swimming at the beach, or observing animal behavior. Harvard biologist Edward O. Wilson has defined this emotional attachment as biophilia, the innate attraction to life by human beings (Wilson, 1984), known in the science community as the biophilia hypothesis. This inherent attachment has long been recognized by environmentalists who work to preserve nature, by naturalists who appreciate all living things and their origins, and by ordinary people who just find it refreshing and peaceful to take walks outside or visit the zoo.

After I observed so much student interest with the natural world through class lessons and discussions, readings, body tattoos, and drawings, I decided to incorporate the biophilia factor into my educational planning for English language development at MCI-J. I discovered that biophilia is a successful tool to motivate students in the correctional classroom, and it may be helpful in other ESL classrooms where traditional pedagogies have not been successful. Biophilia can be correlated to both the Maryland Content Standards for Adult ESL and the Common Core State Standards.

Stories with animals play an important part in our ESL curriculum, and many of the books I use are nonfiction and informational, geared toward reading levels 1 –



3. I particularly like the Capstone Press, Redbrick Learning series, which includes books on mammals, reptiles, and other animal classifications. From the basic text, I incorporate vocabulary on body parts, habitat and



adaptations, food sources, and unique characteristics, so a lot of vocabulary can be utilized. Students read, write, listen, draw, and speak about many aspects of new learning about animals and animal behavior. Most of my students are Latino, and because of their affinity for the animal world, their nicknames to each other are animal-based. Thus, we have *Pingüino*, who walks a little pigeon-toed; there is *Búho*, who has large piercing eyes; and *Burro*, who lumbers into class like a donkey. Everyone has an animal name, and this is a lesson in itself!

Although many of the men have had no educational or artistic training, they are gifted art students and make excellent reproductions of what is being studied. Animals are a favorite topic, and these renditions are later laminated and used in the classroom for language development in discussion and prompts. Thus, my students are also my assistants, helping me with educational materials. We use animals as a subject for learning about almost everything—colors, numbers, parts of speech, geography, opinions/facts, and even some mathematical concepts. Animals are majestic and beautiful, but they are also forgiving and loyal, and they provide incentive for learning and paying attention to the task at hand. For more advanced students, animal topics can be used for writing practice with paragraphs, and these topics are more appropriate in correctional education than writing about a “summer vacation” or “a favorite book.”

Louv (2011) discusses the power of nature as it invigorates people to feel alive and pay attention. This power is a much-needed boost for incarcerated students who are confined, restrained, and controlled in their daily lives. While I have seen students

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become submissive and passive throughout the months and years that they are enrolled in a correctional education class, when students watch a nature movie or look through old National Geographic magazines with features on different living systems, they become energized to keep language alive. This innate interest in flora and fauna is the key to their success in learning geographical information within the confines of the correctional classroom. The magazines have beautiful articles on different cities, countries, rivers, people, plants and animals, and we use them to enhance what is being learned in geography and other subject areas. The articles are too hard for my beginner

students, but they enjoy looking at and discussing the wonderful pictures and reading the captions, copying words they know. Students also note that other MCI-J students, not ESL, borrow the magazines to read, and this inspires them to be part of that “reading group.” In this way also, students are introduced to complex images of climate, migration, weather patterns, and culture in different parts of the world. This provides motivation for higher-level learning, as students at MCI-J progress from ESL to basic literacy, intermediate and advanced literacy, and finally, GED prep. With nature all around us, and many issues to explore, biophilia in the classroom can provide a wonderful foundation for learning and experiencing our world.

References:

Wilson, E. (1984). *Biophilia*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Louv, R. (2011). *The Nature Principle*. Chapel Hill: Algonquin Books.

TESOL 2016 International Convention & English Language Expo

5-8 APRIL 2016 • BALTIMORE, MARYLAND, USA

CONVENTION NEWS

Registration Open Early September 2015

Information on rates, hotels, keynotes, and invited speakers will be available in August.

Are You Receiving emails from MD TESOL?



Have you been receiving emails from MDTESOL? If not, you may need to add website@mdtesol.org to your list of "safe senders" in your email account. That way you can stay informed about all the exciting Interest Section events, advocacy issues, and conferences that MDTESOL offers throughout the year.



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