



## Winter 2017- Volume 47, Issue 1

### Quarterly online newsletter focusing on themes of interest to ESOL Professionals

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

I would like to dedicate this issue of Idiom to all the educators in New York State. Regardless of your titles and the settings, you devote endless time, energy, and resources to provide high quality education to your students. On behalf of the entire NYS TESOL Executive Board, I want to **thank you** for your tireless commitment to the field of education, in general, and to your students, in particular.

It has been two months since I officially became President of NYS TESOL. I was reminded at the first meeting, in December, of the countless number of educators who go above and beyond the call of duty in order to enrich and enhance our profession. I will not be able to name everyone, past and present, in this short letter, but I want to recognize the current Executive Board, both volunteers and staff, for all they do to keep this organization effectual and viable. To this end, here is a brief overview of what we have planned for the year:

- The Board recently appointed Michelle Maturen as Vice President for Advocacy.
- Each Vice President has a business plan which can be seen on their respective webpages.
- The Vice Presidents for Communications, Membership, and Outreach are collaborating to augment membership benefits such as offering scholarships, increase membership, and communication with members.
- The Vice President for Finance, along with the Treasurer, Business Manager, and Technical Support Specialist, to review and improve the organization's internal functions in order to maintain our fiscal health. One change will be an upgrade of our technology services with a new vendor.
- The Vice President for Advocacy will be issuing position statements that reflect the current educational climate.
- The Vice President for Annual Conference has been working on the 2017 conference. The conference is entitled, *Empathy in Action: Social Pedagogy and Public Advocacy for English Language Learners* and it will take place on November 3–4, 2017 at the Hilton Long Island/Huntington. I hope to see all of you there!

Of course I cannot forget my fellow officers. I want to thank Ravneet Parmar, President–elect, and Sarah Elia, Immediate Past President, for their support. Each one of us is part of every subcommittee as a supporting member or as a lead to ensure that the initiatives are carried out this year.

<a href="#">President's Letter</a> by Anne Henry	1-2
<a href="#">Are they really listening?</a> <a href="#">Interactive Listening Strategies for Effective Discussion</a> by Mary Ritter and Abby Porter, American Language Institute at New York University	2-3
<a href="#">Finding Assessable Moments:</a> <a href="#">Formative Assessments in the ENL Classroom</a> by Beth Clark-Gareca, SUNY-New Paltz	3-5
<a href="#">Virtual Field Trips Open Classroom Doors</a> by Alexandra McCourt and Sylvia Schuman, K-Adult Educator	5-6
<a href="#">Co-Teaching in the Science Classroom</a> by Laureen Avery, Project ExcEl, Tarrytown and Ossining Public Schools	6-9
<a href="#">English+Games=Practice AND Learning!</a> by Robin Schwarz Lovrien, Adult Educator	9-12
<a href="#">Teaching Internationally</a> by Diane Nottle, CUNY Graduate School of Journalism	12-13
<a href="#">Becoming a Language Specialist:</a> <a href="#">The Unique Role of the ENL Teacher Integrated Periods</a> by Clara V. Bauler, Assistant Professor, TESOL/Bilingual Program, Adelphi University	13-15
<a href="#">Smartphone Apps to Develop Language Literacy for Early Childhood Emergent Bilingual Children</a> by Victoria Núñez, Department of Literacy and Multilingual Studies, Mercy College	15-18
<a href="#">Masthead</a>	18

Before I end, I would like to make a plea to all: please become members of NYS TESOL. The organization is only as strong as its members. At the moment, there are approximately 1300 members. This is a very small fraction of the overall number of professionals in our field. It is imperative in this particular political climate that we have a **strong collective voice** if we want to **effectively advocate** for English language learners (ELLs) and their families, who by definition, lack the linguistic ability, to advocate for themselves. We are facing four years of challenges. The NYS TESOL Executive Board will do everything in its power to achieve the organization's vision and mission but we cannot do it alone. We need you.

*Anne Henry*

Anne Henry  
President, NYS TESOL  
Instructional Specialist, Buffalo Public Schools

### **Are They Really Listening? Interactive Listening Strategies for Effective Discussion** **by Mary Ritter and Abby Porter Mack**

In this presentation, we demonstrated the method and strategies by which we encourage students actively to listen to one another in an interactive discussion. In the making of meaning from utterances, both the listener and the speaker play particular roles; the listener role is not a passive one. Rather, the successful listener must receive the message, organize it, and re-create it to the satisfaction of the speaker (Field, 2008). This is no easy feat, and in our intermediate to advanced classes, we teach the mirroring strategies outlined below, which require the listener to paraphrase the speaker successfully in order to complete the task. The listening skills developed can be deployed in completing jigsaw activities, resolving conflicts, participating in seminars and Q & A sessions, and even taking oral exams.

#### **Approach**

The first step is to set up a task in which students need to understand one another well in order to succeed. In our presentation, we used a two-person role-play with a conflict embedded in it as an example, but a Q & A session would also work well. Students then select a voice recording app on their devices (most smartphones have this feature), open their voice recorders, and set them up to record. The instructor then asks students to participate in the role-play as they record their dialogues using their voice recorders. The students first complete the activity without the aid of the mirroring strategies, recording their discussions for one to two minutes and noting patterns of language use. Students then learn the mirroring language (explained below) and practice the strategies briefly with the instructor. Then they continue the role-play with their partners, incorporating the phrases and strategies they have learnt. Students finally compare the pre- and post role-plays and make observations about the efficacy and applications of the mirroring language.

#### **Mirroring Strategies for Interactive Listening**

- ☐ The first speaker should use the first person singular, I, to tell the listener what s/he wants him/her to hear. If feelings are an important part of the message, the speaker should include an explanation of the feelings using "I feel."
- ☐ The listener should reflect on the message just imparted and then summarize it using "If I got it..." or "If I heard you correctly..." At the end of the summary, s/he should ask, "Did I get it?"
- ☐ If the listener misunderstood the message, the speaker should explain what was missing or misinterpreted. The listener should continue summarizing until the speaker is satisfied, then ask, "Do you have more to add?" or "Is there more you want to say about that?"
- ☐ When the message is completed and the first speaker is fully understood, the listener summarizes the discussion again and asks, "Did I get all of that?" Then the listener acts as the speaker and the process is repeated (Hendrix & Hunt, 2008).

While the partners are working through the dialogues using the mirroring language, the instructor's role is to encourage the listeners to focus their attention on the speakers without interrupting and encourage the speakers to hold the floor authoritatively while avoiding repetition. Our students, who study Integrated Marketing, report that they have found these mirroring techniques applicable in a variety of academic and social contexts, even pointing out that this language would be useful in their future workplaces. As one student noted at the end of the semester, "the most remarkable progress is that I learned how to use the mirroring strategy to reflect the details and ask more directing questions to my classmates." Getting students to listen to one another in meaningful interactions is not only a significant move away from the teacher-centered classroom; it also trains the listening skills that students will need to employ in real-life situations.

Field, J. (2008). *Listening in the language classroom*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.  
Hendrix, H., & Hunt, H. L. (2008). *Basic Clinical Training in Imago Relationship Therapy* (Vol. 1-A, Course 200). New York, NY: Imago Relationships International.

Mary Ritter teaches English for Academic Purposes and English for Specific Purposes in the American Language Institute at New York University in Manhattan. The recent winner of an NYU-SCPS Teaching Excellence Award, she specializes in teaching listening and speaking, pronunciation, intercultural communication, and presentation skills.

Abby Porter Mack is a language lecturer and the testing coordinator in the American Language Institute at New York University. She has a Master's degree in Applied Linguistics from Teachers College, Columbia University. Her research interests include second language literacy, second language assessment, and CALL.

### **Finding Assessable Moments: Formative Assessment in the ENL Classroom** **By Beth Clark-Gareca**

Assessing the linguistic growth of English Learners (ELs) is a persistent weakness for English as a New Language (ENL) teacher candidates. The NYSTESOL session, *Finding Assessable Moments: Formative Techniques in ENL Classrooms*, began by identifying some of the major challenges in teaching assessment in teacher education programs in the field of ENL. During this interactive session, teachers agreed that language assessment is an area in which they feel underprepared, and teacher educators and supervisors expressed some of their difficulties in giving constructive feedback to teacher candidates in the field, particularly in the area of assessment. With some of the challenges uncovered and identified, this presentation focused on how to help candidates incorporate both planned and spontaneous linguistic assessments during their ENL lessons.

Following a distinction identified by Brown (2004), participants considered the differences between intentional and incidental formative assessment during classroom lessons. Intentional assessment is typically planned for ahead of time and is featured in teachers' lesson plans, but incidental formative assessment is spontaneous in nature, and relies more heavily on recognizing "assessable moments" in the classroom. Through group discussion, participants considered a variety of intentional assessment techniques, e.g., thumbs up/thumbs down, exit tickets, portfolio submissions, and classroom circulation as examples of intentional assessment. Examples of incidental assessment were considered through the presentation of several scenarios:

**Scenario 1:** A teacher poses a question to the class, but the question lingers in the air. No student tries to answer or raises a hand, resulting in absolute silence for five or more seconds.

**Scenario 2:** A teacher gives directions to students to specify how to complete a writing task. After giving the directions, the teacher asks a student to summarize what the teacher has just said. The summary attempt is insufficient, either because of fluency, organizational, or informational difficulty.

In both of the above scenarios, the teacher is conducting incidental assessment through asking questions. After analyzing the possible causes for what went wrong, teachers need to take action and determine what next steps to take in his/her instruction. These next steps may include rephrasing a question, breaking down complex grammar, and giving directions in a logical and manageable sequence. Assessment techniques are a very important component in novice teachers' observed lessons, and very often, these moments lie unexplored in the conversations between supervisor and teacher candidates. Because they are only just learning how to be teachers, the ability to analyze ELs' language production in the moment so as to redirect their instruction toward maximizing linguistic gains tends to be underdeveloped for teacher candidates. Helping candidates develop the analytical skills to *find* assessable moments during their lessons is an important function of the student teaching supervisor. Supervisors typically examine teacher candidates' lesson plans before the lesson is executed, which is an opportune time to explore the intentional assessments that the candidate has planned for. During these conversations, language and content objectives can be vetted in this pre-instructional phase to determine if they are sound and realistic. Exercises in the writing of objectives as well as explicit criteria to determine if ELs have reached the objective can be supplied to novice teachers, as well as opportunities to rewrite lesson objectives through lesson plan drafts, should be included as part of the mentoring process.

Post-observation debrief sessions between teacher candidates and supervisors are another very important component in helping teacher candidates to recognize opportunities for assessment. Using the lesson plan as a guide, supervisors and teacher candidates need to analyze the lesson post hoc from an assessment perspective. Through probing questions such as, "Did the ELs in the class meet the objectives you set out for them? How do you know?" and "What will you do in the next lesson to revisit or reinforce those unmet objectives?", teacher candidates are given opportunities to develop stronger analytical skills, thereby becoming more effective intentional and incidental assessors.

Toward the close of the presentation, formative assessment techniques were brainstormed, shared and demonstrated. Some ideas that participants explored were: a) Ways to expand the utility and precision of Exit Tickets (a final assessment task at the end of a lesson to determine what students' are taking away from the content), b) Use of Color Cards, or cards with different colors representing students' expression of their understanding of content; e.g. Green - "yes, I know what that means", Yellow - "I think I know what that means", and Red - "I'm not sure I know what that means", c) Ways to incorporate peers support assessment systems in class, e.g., Partner Quizzes, in which students complete a quiz in a team and then compare answers with other teams to determine what students have learned from a lesson. Many other examples were suggested (see Hill, 2015; Wees, 2012 for more examples).

Finally, though many ENL teachers currently suffer from assessment overload in their schools, formative assessment provides a fresh and fun perspective on a necessary component of any language classroom, largely because the results of the assessment have no negative implications. In fact, the most important part of classroom assessment is not *what* data are collected, but what teacher candidates *do* with those data in their subsequent instruction. It is only through developing these critical, analytical skills that ENL teachers ultimately ensure that their instruction is appropriate to meet students' linguistic needs to further their English language proficiency.

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Beth Clark-Gareca is an assistant professor in the TESOL program at SUNY-New Paltz. Her research interests include teacher education, bilingual education, and K-12 language assessment. She supervises teacher candidates in the field of ENL in several school districts in and around the New Paltz area.

### **Virtual Field Trips Open Classroom Doors** **By Alexandra McCourt and Sylvia Schumann**

What teacher wouldn't want to take their students on an exploration through the Grand Canyon to examine rock formations and erosion, walk through the battlefields of the Civil War, or experience life through the eyes of Benjamin Franklin in his home? Schools today have limited budget and have a hard time allocating funds for local field trips, let alone distant excursions. Fortunately, thanks to technology, virtual field trips make normally out of reach destinations possible and affordable for the average public school class.

In order to expand the walls of our classroom and engage our students in the content we have incorporated four types of virtual field trips into our curricula: video exploration, hybrid field trip, virtual interactive website tour, and live expert.

Video exploration is the most commonly used type of virtual field trip. This typically entails a teacher showing videos to the class or creating a video playlist for students to view and refer to. Teachers often incorporate these videos to enhance their lessons by providing audio and visual cues to clarify information and engage all students in their learning.

Hybrid field trips combine a virtual tour with an onsite visitation. Students are able to research sites prior to their field trip, and are able to hone in on various aspects of the sites in order to streamline their investigation. Classes can view collections and sites on the computer mapping their journey and gathering data about specific items and locations ahead of time. Hybrid virtual field trips are particularly good when class visits have time constraints. An engaging preview activity for a hybrid field trip may include a website scavenger hunt where students explore and research specific aspects of the field trip site. Whereas a culminating activity may include using the website to assist in writing reviews, creating brochures, mapping sites, or creating a guidebook. Hybrid local field trips help students make connections to and engage with their community, as the students have continuous in depth interactions with local sites, rather than just a one time visit.

Virtual interactive website tours are a great way for students to “visit” far away destinations that they would otherwise not experience. This type of field trip provides students with opportunities to explore collections and exhibits worldwide. Interactive websites allow students to navigate sites multidimensionally, creating their own paths in which they are able to self pace and zoom in and out of various aspects of an exhibit from different angles. For example, classes can walk through the seven rooms of the Lascaux Caves in France at [www.lascaux.culture.fr](http://www.lascaux.culture.fr) and examine the actual ancient cave paintings, instead of just looking at a picture in a textbook. Using this type of website can open up the world to classrooms everywhere.

Having a virtual field that features a live expert takes a little more planning, but classes can engage with and utilize the expertise of the virtual guest. Teachers make virtual appointments with specialists to appear live online and interact with their students from specific sites. Live experts are able to walk students through field trip sites with a camera while discussing and responding to the classes comments and questions in the moment. These virtual field trips are streamlined to specifically address the focal points of the classroom objectives. Instant messaging, live chatting, Skype, Facetime or Youtube live can easily be used to connect around the world. A few places that have live experts available are: NASA, University of Nebraska State Museum, Omaha Zoo, Institute for Holocaust Education, and the National Park Service. Additionally, the Center for Interactive Learning and Collaboration ([www.cilc.org](http://www.cilc.org)) has a database of virtual field trips and experts that can be easily accessed.

Virtual field trips are no longer a thing of the future, but a part of the here and now. Teachers have a variety of virtual field trips to choose from that will engage students at varying levels of both content and technological savvy. Virtual field trips have opened the doors of classrooms far and wide, and enable students to become engrossed and active participants in their learning.

Alexandra has a M.A. TESOL and began her teaching career in South Korea where she was able to experience first hand being a new language learner. She enjoys teaching all ages and currently teaches middle school children, as well as adult English Language Learners in an evening program. She has authored several publications for educators of English Language Learners, writes a community column in a local newspaper and is a book reviewer.

Sylvia has a M.A. TESOL and School District Administration Certification. Due to her upbringing and travels to numerous countries, she speaks three languages fluently and can communicate proficiently in four more. She is currently teaching kindergarten English Language Learners (ELLs), and has taught all different grade levels, as well as adults.

### **Co-Teaching in the Science Classroom** **By Lauren Avery**

The New York State Department of Education issued updated regulations in 2015 requiring English Learners receive at least a part of their ENL instruction in an integrated, or push-in, model. In practice, this has resulted in ENL teachers and content area teachers working side by side in the same classroom. Sleepy Hollow Middle School co-teachers Mike Garguilo (science) and Andrea Calabrese

(ENL) shared their recipe for successful co-teaching, communication and organization, with colleagues at the November 2016 NYS TESOL conference in Syracuse, NY.

Sleepy Hollow Middle School is a *Project ExcEL* school, and partners with second language development experts from UCLA. ExcEL schools promote improved academic outcomes for students learning English in public schools through the use of data to monitor student progress and adjust instruction and the creation of accessible school structures that ensure every student engages in personalized planning and goal setting. At ExcEL schools community partners to provide wrap around services and supports for students and their families. During the 2015-16 school year, UCLA coaches worked intensively with co-teachers at Sleepy Hollow Middle School as they implemented and strengthened their co-teaching skills, strategies, and materials.

Mike and Andrea were willing to start from scratch and re-examine everything they thought they knew. As they put it, *“Bye science curriculum, years spent making you, but you’re no longer effective for ESL.”* By working as a team and being open to new ideas, this co-teaching powerhouse has begun to assemble an approach that is demonstrably fostering student success. After more than a year of working together, ENL specialist Andrea Calabrese suggested some guiding principles for the ENL teacher:

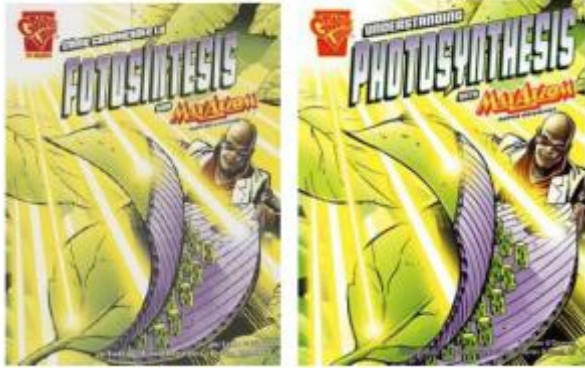
**A Different Role:** The purpose of the class is to understand and apply the content, and so our roles are not really to teach English, rather to use strategies and scaffolds to make the content accessible, even with limited English skills.

**Language Objectives:** The most important language objective is that students use (read, write, listen and speak) academic vocabulary appropriately. When students get to a place of ownership of these Tier 3 words, they are able to use them to engage with the content in meaningful ways.

**Communication is Key:** Many times, even with stated content objectives, I need to ask my co-teacher what the “bottom line” of the lesson is. Together we review the modifications to ensure I didn’t inadvertently remove or misinterpret a key concept.

**Time Commitment:** There is a large time commitment embedded in the co-teaching relationship. Often I spend 2 or 3 hours (or more!) adapting a 45-minute lesson for our ELLs. I can only do that because my co-teacher has a well-laid out, detailed curriculum map that is updated at least a week ahead of time. These modifications cannot simply be done “on the fly”.

Like many typical science classrooms, Mike and Andrea’s room has desks clustered in the front and lab spaces in the rear. In the integrated classroom, beginning English speakers are clustered together near the front so they can benefit from Spanish verbal translation during the class. A growing science word wall contains content words (mass, atom) and procedural words (determine, record) in English and Spanish, along with short definitions and/or graphic representations. Classroom resources are available in Spanish and English. A student and teacher favorite is Capstone’s *Graphic Science* series.



Andrea and Mike have worked together to rework every aspect of their 7th grade living environment curriculum and make sure *English Learners* can access the material and are successful. Each will tell you it's been a journey filled with their own professional experimentation and learning along the way. For every topic introduced, they plan 3 student support activities. Students are engaged in experiential learning and are 'doing something' every day. Annotated, personalized note-taking sheets are provided, highlighting vocabulary in two languages and drawing heavily on visual cues. Frequent pauses to check for understanding are integrated into the daily routines. Hands-on, discovery learning is stressed, including a heavy reliance on sorting activities to build comprehension and understanding for English Learners.

These talented co-teachers stress the importance of co-planning and finding the time it takes. Mike and Andrea's class moves at a rapid pace, and they will tell you there is no such thing as *over planning* for an integrated classroom. Google classroom also helps them collaborate with one another and students.

They know it is working - in the spring of 2016 83% of their middle school students passed the Living Environment Regents. In the words of these talented co-teachers: *When students have the opportunity to take learning into their own hands, such as during sorting activities, they become proud and motivated to continue to grow and learn. This is why we find that providing students in our classroom with lessons that let them become active learners allows them to become motivated and to work harder to meet high expectations.*





Their full presentation is available at [projectexcel.net](http://projectexcel.net) - and it is filled with practical, usable strategies to use in any classroom. You can reach Mike and Andrea by email at [mgarguilo@tufsd.org](mailto:mgarguilo@tufsd.org) or [acalabrese@tufsd.org](mailto:acalabrese@tufsd.org).



Lauren Avery, M.S., works with the Tarrytown and Ossining Public Schools through Project ExcEL. Avery is the Director of the Northeast Regional Office of UCLA Center X, located in Trumbull, CT. If you would like to contact Avery for further information on Project ExcEL or anything else, she can be reached at [avery@gseis.ucla.edu](mailto:avery@gseis.ucla.edu).

### **English + Games = Practice AND Learning!**

Robin Schwarz Lovrien

One of the great challenges of teaching adult English learners is assuring enough practice of skills or language. Despite knowing that adult learners need tremendous input to be able to retain language (Kuhl, P., 2009), every teacher also knows the difficulty of structuring activities so that learners speak as much as possible. Harder still is assuring that they are practicing good English used in natural ways (Condelli, L., Wrigley, H. S., Yoon, K., Cronen, S., & Sebum, M., 2003), and not just reinforcing fossilized errors or under-developed language. Games targeting *just* what learners want or need to focus on can go a long way toward remedying the practice problem and ensuring effective language learning (Deesri, A., 2002; Tuan, L. T. & Doan, N. T.M. ,2010; Vonoukova, D. ,2009).

I teach use of games in ESOL instruction often and teachers and learners love it. However, preparation time is as much of a consideration as student speaking time. To lessen the burden of preparation and make the use of games more accessible, here are several games and activities that can be played with one set or deck of cards. These games can be for players/students at all levels of instruction and English skill, too. And the content is determined by either the syllabus you must follow or the by students' needs.

**Content of the deck:** For high beginning or low intermediate students, one deck can be pairs of simple present and past forms of irregular verbs (e.g. eat/ate; sleep/slept) which are critical to everyday communication.

Work-place vocabulary is ideal content: terms and definitions, or pictures and names of actions needed on the job (e.g. words relating to hotel work or a skilled work setting of some kind). The 100 citizenship questions and their answers or just names and short definitions work well (e.g. 100 members= Senate; Martin Luther King=Civil Rights leader).

**Making the deck:** Create a deck of pairs, preferably using two different colors of half-size index cards (available on Amazon).

*Guidelines:* Use felt-tip pens for clear writing; write the words in the middle of the cards; use different colors of pen for each color of cards; start with 12-20 pairs for students who are lower and who scan more slowly; increase the deck for higher level students; time and students' speed at working with them will determine the number of pairs students will play with. Be sure to have lists of the content pairs for students to check themselves.



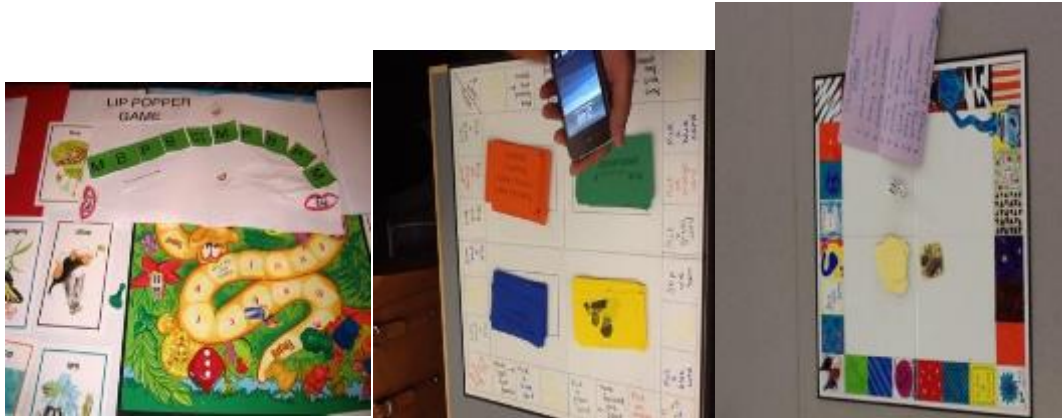
Present/past match                      synonym match

*Hint:* Have students make the cards working from lists of information to go on each deck. This gives them invaluable visual recognition, a leg-up on spelling, and ownership of the game, too!

**Play the games:**

1. *Matching:* Students match cards face up. This is the learning phase. Students work in pairs to match cards and discuss the answers together. They can check their pairs against the list you have prepared.
2. *Concentration:* Cards are face down in rows and columns, with cards of one color grouped together. Working in pairs or threes, one player turns over a card of each color; if they match, the player keeps them and takes another turn; if not, they are turned over and another player tries. Since some will be stronger at remembering the location of pairs than others, limit extra turns to one if a student matches a pair.
3. *“Instant bingo”:* This is “instant” because you do not create bingo play sheets. It is also what I call “indirect bingo” since players do not cover exactly what they hear. They must process information to find the match (e.g. they hear “eat” and must look for “ate”). Divide one color of cards among players (if there are 28 pairs and four players, each player will have seven cards arranged in rows and columns face up to make a sort of bingo grid.) The other color of cards is in a pile in the middle. Players take turns picking a card and reading it (or identifying a picture); the player who has the match calls for it and uses the call card to cover the match in front of him or her. Because everyone’s grid is different, one person will necessarily win, but students will want to play until ALL have covered their words. Be sure to teach them to self-check—though typically they monitor each other well.

4. **Board game:** Once the content is fairly well learned, students can test themselves with a board game. Up to four players use any playing track with movers and a spinner or dice. One color of a deck is placed on the board. Players pick up a card, give the matching information (e.g. *Card:* George Washington; *player responds:* “First president of the US”). A successful answer earns a spin or a throw of dice and moving around the board. Students ALWAYS want to win and will readily engage in this game! Having players read as many cards as they spin or throw increases practice. Another day, students use the other color of cards to play.



5. **Pair practice:** Pairs of students can use the same decks for oral practice or for pair dictation, with one reading and the other writing on an erasable board.

Now you have at least five ways in which students can practice key material, interacting with each other and having to use correct English to negotiate the game, which is in itself a “natural” context for language. Content can be made more difficult (e.g. using questions and answers for verbs, critical information about work routines, etc.) very easily. Once students know the games (and be SURE you take time to TEACH them the games—do not assume they know), any content can be added or made more difficult.

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Robin Schwarz Lovrien, M.Sp.Ed:LD; Ph.D.; is a nationally known teacher, trainer and coach of teachers of adult English learners. Dr. Lovrien taught adult English learners for nearly 40 years in various settings and has consulted for over 25 years on local, state and national efforts to improve the instruction of adult ELs, focusing on issues that cause learning challenges for adult ELs and ways to avoid or address these challenges. She currently lives in Maine, where she coaches literacy volunteers who work with adult ELs.

## Teaching Internationally

By Diane Nottle

### CUNY Graduate School of Journalism

If it's been your lifelong dream to see the world – not as a tourist, but with a purpose – you've already taken an important first step. Your career choice and TESOL expertise can help make that dream come true, opening doors abroad while generating income.

Take me as an example. After a 35-year career in newspaper editing (including 20 years at The New York Times), I earned an ELT certificate from the New School in 2007. Since then, I have taught seven times in Poland (most recently as a Fulbright senior specialist), two semesters in China and one in Vancouver.

High on my wish list: Argentina, Cuba, Vietnam . . .

Curiously, I was almost alone among my New School classmates in having the express goal of teaching abroad. Why consider that option? The aforementioned love of travel, of course. It's also another teaching option, an alternative to a full-time job or adjunct status in an American school. It's a way to hone your teaching skills in an environment very different from what your training may have assumed. Above all, it's a new challenge that will test you in unimaginable ways.

But are you really ready for that challenge? Can you think on your feet? Can you cope with variable living conditions? (At one of my universities in China, another teacher described the accommodations as "high-end camping"; at the other, they were more like an apartment hotel, with a front desk and weekly maid service.) Can you live on what in some places is a nominal salary? Where are you willing to go, and how long can you realistically stay? Opportunities range from intensives of a few weeks to commitments of a year or more.

If your answers push you toward the next step, you're ready to start seeking opportunities. As in so much of life, word of mouth is often the best source of information. Pay attention to recruiting announcements from schools where you've trained; talk to people you know who have taught abroad. The internet supplies a wealth of possibilities: Dave's ESL Café (<http://www.eslcafe.com/>), ESL Employment (<http://www.eslemployment.com/>), corporate training programs, the State Department's English Language Fellows Program (<https://exchanges.state.gov/us/program/english-language-fellow-program>), the Fulbright Senior Specialists program (<https://exchanges.state.gov/us/program/fulbright-specialist-program>). Many volunteer opportunities also exist, but some expect you to pay for the privilege of volunteering.

Teaching *in* English isn't necessarily limited to teaching English. Being able to teach English for a specific purpose makes you even more marketable. English for fields like business, IT, law and media (my own specialty) is in high demand. Career-changers should emphasize their professional past and make the most of it.

The downside for career-changers is that age and experience are not necessarily in their favor. Asia tends to prefer its English teachers “young and blond.” (Many ads recruiting for Thailand, for example, state that no one over 40 need apply.) Age discrimination may be technically illegal, though still endemic, in the United States, but not abroad, where resumes routinely include photos and information like date of birth. Before setting your heart on a job or a country, check out its attitude toward age in employment.

And, as in any job-hunt, check out any prospective employer or offer thoroughly. Always ask to speak with past teachers; if the school or recruiter declines to put you in touch, it is not a good sign. Do everything you can to sign the contract before you go, and make sure it spells out accommodations, who pays travel expenses and how, and, if possible, exactly what you will be teaching. (At my first university in China, I receive my contract at 4 p.m. Saturday to start at 10 a.m. Monday. My course assignments bore no resemblance to what I had been told in advance, and another course was summarily added later, with no extra compensation.) And if the job is not as advertised? Be aware that many contracts include a penalty clause for early departures, and some may be written for a full year when you have verbally committed to only a semester.

Never underestimate the potential culture shock – chiefly from living and teaching conditions, but also from local conditions such as seemingly endless bureaucracy. Also assess your degree of tolerance for being alone or feeling isolated, especially in a culture where you don’t speak the language.

With all these variables, is teaching abroad worth the risk? Absolutely! Traveling with a purpose is a far richer experience than traveling as a tourist. Not only do you meet new people; you also have the luxury of settling in and spending extended time in a new place and culture – actually living there, however temporarily. You have opportunities to forge new academic relationships and partnerships that may last long beyond your stay. You will earn your students’ sincere gratitude and, in these politically fraught times, show them by example what being American truly means.

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### **Becoming a Language Specialist: The Unique Role of the ENL Teacher in Integrated Periods**

By Clara V. Bauler

With the implementation of amendments to the Commissioner’s Regulation Part 154, English as a New Language (ENL) teachers have increasingly engaged in co-teaching practices with content area teachers in mainstream classes. The New York State Education Department stipulates that the integrated periods entail students receive core content area and English language development instruction carried out by a combination of ESOL and content certified teachers or dually certified teachers. However, the regulations do not specify what co-teaching in integrated periods should look like or, more importantly, what role the ENL teacher should play in these classes. The lack of clear directions has led many school districts to place ENL teachers in co-teaching assignments that involve more than three content area teachers, different disciplines, and highly diverse groups of students, who can be at different levels of English language proficiency, speak various home languages, and come from plural socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds.

In spite of these challenges, if done right, co-teaching among ENL and content area teachers could be an empowering experience for both teachers as well as students. For that to happen, ENL teachers should be recognized by the strengths they bring, working side-by-side the mainstream content area teacher as

a “language specialist.” The relationship should be reciprocal (Morita-Mullaney, 2015), with each teacher bringing their expertise into planning, instruction, and assessment. It is important to note that this co-teaching relationship is fundamentally different from “push-in” models, where the ENL teacher assists the mainstream content area teacher in often non-reciprocal and isolating practices, such as working with one small group of English Language Learners (ELL) in a separate physical space of the classroom.

As a language specialist, the ENL teacher can support the mainstream content area teacher highlighting disciplinary academic language for all students, providing specific language scaffolds to differentiate and support all groups of students, and acting as a cultural mediator, bridging the assets and experiences ELLs bring while helping them navigate the implied norms and expectations of schools in the U.S. The ENL teacher as language specialist makes visible the invisible; that is, with the help of the ENL teacher, the implicit linguistic demands of the discipline, the tacit cultural expectations of group work and classroom participation, and the richness of perspectives and experiences ELLs contribute become an integral part of the lessons.

However, any co-teaching relationship is a complex and complicated process that involves the negotiation of curriculum and power dynamics within the parameters and norms of the school culture (Arkoudis, 2006). Long-term, ethnographic studies in England and Australia, where mainstream and English as an Additional Language (EAL) or English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers have been collaborating for many years in designing curriculum, have reported unequal professional roles and status: “Whereas subject teachers discursively owned their subject area and the tasks they set the students, EAL teachers did not project a similar ownership of curriculum-based learning” (Creese, 2002, p. 611). Similarly, Arkoudis (2006) suggests that “ESL teachers have felt uneasy about working with mainstream teachers as the professional relationship is fraught with misunderstandings and misconceptions, where the subject specialist has the power to accept or reject suggestions and where ESL teachers feel increasingly frustrated in their work” (p. 428). In these studies, the ENL teacher’s role and expertise were often perceived as peripheral at the personal and institutional levels.

In order not to replicate these problems and to continue serving linguistically diverse populations of students at our maximum potential, policy makers, administration, and ENL and content area teachers have to make co-teaching in integrated periods a priority. In this context, specific and timely professional development initiatives that support reciprocal relationships among ENL and content area teachers in planning, instruction, and assessment are paramount. Above all, ENL teachers need to be reassured and supported in their new role as language specialists in the school culture. To accomplish this goal, here are a few suggestions:

- Policy makers should stipulate clear expectations for co-teaching assignments and roles for ENL teachers in integrated periods during the school day in order to protect the integrity of the language specialist role;
- Administrators should institute and foster collaborative opportunities for ENL and content area teachers to share ideas and develop a strong professional relationship; and
- Both ENL and content area teachers need to acknowledge and negotiate their roles creating a level playing field, with each professional bringing their unique expertise into lesson design and implementation.

Without robust support from policy makers, school administration, and content area colleagues, ENL teachers will risk becoming isolated and underutilized. For ENL teachers to completely fulfill their role as language specialist, co-teaching assignments need to be at the center of the decision-making process made at school and state levels. It is only then we will truly service ELLs, and ultimately all children, in integrated periods.

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#### Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my colleague Dr. Emily Kang for her suggestions and support throughout our work to improve collaboration among content and ENL teachers in Long Island, NY.

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#### **Smartphone Apps to Develop Language and Literacy for Early Childhood Emergent Bilingual Children Victoria Núñez, Ph.D., Department of Literacy and Multilingual Studies, Mercy College**

In this article I pose the question of whether educators should raise parents' and childrens' awareness about educational apps for mobile devices in the same way they raise awareness about reading books to young children. I presented this project at the 2016 NYSTESOL conference and it is part of a broader analysis of a growing body of mobile applications for literacy and language development and research on technology and education. I seek answers to 3 questions: what theory, research and policy supports the potential usefulness of apps for language learning and literacy development among young emergent bilingual children outside of a school setting; what apps appear to be useful and why; how should educators approach the topic of language and literacy apps for young emergent bilingual children?

Recent research on technology in Latino/a homes reports that smartphones are the most popular tech devices owned by U.S. Latino/as (Fuller et.al, 2015; Pew, 2015). They are useful portals to the internet as research on the digital divide reveals that Latina/os have among the lowest rates of access to broadband internet connections within the US, with 45% reporting access through this means (Marrapodi, 279; Brown, et. al, 2015). In a recent review of the evidence that explains how Latino/as are

using mobile computing technology in the home, researchers reported that “disparities persist in how these tools are used in the home, with low-income parents reporting less frequent use of computers, smartphones or tablets for educational or school-related purposes” (Fuller et.al, 2015,p.4). This finding highlights one characteristic of the digital divide. As the cost of mobile devices has come down, the aspect of access has improved. Still lagging is the application of digital media for educational purposes, most importantly in communities with low literacy levels.

Exposing young children to early literacy skills through multimedia technology is not a new idea. Sesame Street, and for emergent Spanish/English bilinguals, Plaza Sesamo, has presented early literacy and numeracy skills to young children since 1969 and research on its effectiveness and that of other children’s educational television programs has built over the decades (Wartella et. al, 2016; Kearney & Levine, 2015). What is new is the explosion of media for children in English and Spanish. Beyond the explosion in children’s television, is the rapid expansion in technology devices including those under discussion here: smartphones and tablet computers that allow parents to carry this mobile technology almost everywhere they go. A research base is building that finds benefits to language learners from the “convenient microlearning opportunities provided by the mobile platform” (Joseph & Uther, 28).

Recent policy developments suggest that yes, educators can recommend technology to parents of early learners. In just the last year, policy makers pivoted and added their voices to theorists and researchers on the power and limitations of educational technologies for young children. The U.S. Department of Education statement (2016) urges parents to use technology to promote interactions with children, not diminish interactions. Rather than discourage all technology use with young children, the American Academy of Pediatrics has revised its recommendations regarding best practices for use of technology with young children. Their recommendations continue to support as strong a limitation on screen time as is possible for young children.

For children in Spanish-speaking homes and communities, the use of educational apps for literacy in English *and* Spanish is an additive approach that will support best practices in educating emergent bilingual children. These apps build children’s phonological awareness in Spanish, introduce or reinforce the correspondence between sounds and letters; build vocabulary, and early reading skills, at times in both languages, all skills that support the development of literacy in Spanish and English. What apps might be useful and why?

The first app I uncovered in the course of this research is Lee con Angel, Mi Ayudante de Lectura (translates as Read with Angel, My Reading Helper, hereafter referred to as LcA) which targets emergent readers primarily through Spanish literacy activities although it includes some significant features in English. Key goals of the program are its focus on building phonological awareness, introducing initial sounds, introducing vowels, concepts of print and leading children to reading short passages presented at five different reading levels. The reading passages are available in Spanish and English. Developed by former bilingual teachers in Texas, the app is attractive and intuitive in its design. It is designed to lead a child from one activity to the next in a sequence, and for this reason, moves more slowly than an app that presents more directly as a game. LcA is available for about \$7, a cost similar to the cost of one or two children’s books. This app is a small part of a larger company that offers many resources to bilingual teachers (see <http://kishmorrproductions.com/demo/home.php>) and good free demonstrations of the resources are available on their web site.

Lee Paso a Paso (LPP or Read Step by Step) addresses a similar set of language and literacy skills although without the context of the narrator/guide that LcA includes. The app is available in the app store for free, although the concept of “free” in the world of educational apps is worth more discussion which I return to below. Like LcA, LPP introduces initial sounds and always presents sounds as a part of a word in Spanish. There is extensive practice in identifying the first sounds in a word and dividing words



into syllables. Beyond this focus on phonological awareness, the app helps children to learn vocabulary in a game format. When you touch a picture the child hears the pronunciation of the word. There is no translation of the vocabulary. Based on my evaluation of a larger number of apps, this app feels more limited and repetitive, but it is a good introduction to educational apps. It is easy to figure out and the game-like features work well and are appealing to children.

Although recommending free apps is the most economic way for families to begin to explore mobile apps, from the perspective of tech-savvy consumers, many free educational apps appear to be little more than a teaser designed to entice the user to purchase the full app, referred to as in-app purchases. In-app purchases can be confusing, both purchasing and being aware of what you have purchased and how to access the purchased features. I do feel that LPP is most interesting after accessing the in-app purchases but I also think it's a great app to start with. By far, the most abundant free content in an app I uncovered through my research is You Tell Me Stories with Word Winks (YTMS), also designed by educators. YTMS focuses on reading stories to children and presents 9 free stories currently. YTMS works on emergent literacy skills in Spanish and English, so it is accessible to children and caregivers in either language. The app developers initially targeted literacy in English, but there are currently 2 stories on the app in Spanish (*Chicken Little*; *Oscar va al zoológico*) and more will be added. Children can listen to the stories being read to them, or they can read while following along with the program which uses a cursor to track the words to be read. YTMS is part of a broader project that seeks to train adult caregivers and teachers to use research-proven methods in story-telling with children as a means of developing language and literacy. A full description of the free resources available through this project is beyond the scope of this article, but available on their website (YTMS.org).

Conclusion: Yes, educators of young emergent bilingual children should recommend educational apps to their families. The educational apps discussed here build language and literacy skills in ways that are similar to other multimedia resources such as educational television programs. Research that supports the effectiveness of those programs can reasonably be extended to support the educational value in using mobile educational apps. When educators of young children do make recommendations regarding the use of mobile technology, it opens the door to present guidelines about the proper use of technology with young children, most importantly, to emphasize the importance of limiting screen time from an early age.

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Masthead

*Idiom* is published four times a year online at <http://idiom.nystesol.org> in February, May, July, and October.

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*Idiom* is published by New York State Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (NYS TESOL)

Our web site: <http://www.nystesol.org>

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