

# DAKOTA TESOL

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## Mission Statement

Dakota TESOL's Mission is to provide professional development and networking opportunities for ESL/EL professionals so they, in turn, can better meet the needs of those they serve.



# The Changing Landscape of ESL in the Dakotas

Missy Slaathaug

When I moved here in 1999, I knew of only a handful of people in South Dakota who had actual training in ESL. It is a whole different picture now, let me tell you. The Dakotas are meeting the challenge of working with this unique population with their usual pioneer spirit.

University programs in both states are adding classes to better prepare classroom teachers. Our next President-Elect, Dyanis Popova, is strengthening a program for teachers at USD, and Dakota State University recently added the option of a minor in teaching ESL to their teacher education program. The Statewide Title III Consortium offers amazing support and education to school districts across the state, including workshops and resources for teachers working with migrant or immigrant ELs. The number of SD ENL endorsed k12 teachers is growing; with scores of teachers having finished all the coursework, and more in the pipeline.

Adult Education has developed significantly as well. The standards for students' growth in their skills and program accountability to those goals has been very strong over the years, but the expectations are now even higher. This July, South Dakota released its first statewide credentialing process to honor the training required for Adult Education professionals – including the new English Language Instructor Credential. We are better equipped than ever before to support adult English Learners in achieving their dreams for work, on-going education and training,

to support the learning of their children and to become fully empowered residents and active citizens in our communities.

It is a similar story in North Dakota. Ten years ago, principals were not aware of the Home Language Survey. Most districts had no EL staff. Now most schools understand the civil rights of ELs, have at least one EL endorsed teacher and are finding a way to schedule daily ELD services. New ESSA report card requirements are highlighting the progress of ESL in districts. Growth charts are giving EL teachers a reasonable goal for ELD growth, and EL norms are providing a framework for reasonable expectations for content achievement. It is amazing progress.

Dakota TESOL is proud to be part of all this. We have been around since 2003 and apart from a small hiccup in 2005 – 6 when we almost went under, we have grown stronger and more vibrant each year. We are solid financially, and we offer an excellent annual conference, serving anyone who works with ELs: content teachers, ESL teachers, volunteers and paras, in every possible setting: k12, adult education, academic intensive English programs and higher education. We are small enough to form bonds and friendships from seeing each other once a year, and big enough to offer interesting conference break-out sessions and speakers. We are proud of our work and dedicated to learning more about our craft. Our board members have contributed articles to this newsletter; I hope you can take the time to read and enjoy and learn. But what I really hope is that you will consider joining the team – it's hugely rewarding. Talk to any current officer if you are interested – and if you are sitting next to me in a session, and we get to chatting, expect me to add your name to my list of likely candidates! ⚙️

## Can You Learn When You're Afraid?

Lindsey Olson

I have spent the majority of my teaching career focused on small-group ELL instruction where I would push into a mainstream classroom and service needs of students within the classroom. In the Spring of 2018 I took my career into a new direction and accepted a teaching position within a 5th grade mainstream classroom. The conversion of a small-group ELL teacher to a classroom teacher came with a lot of learning curves and a lot of "new" needs within my student roster.

Social and emotional well being seems to be one of the "hottest" catchphrases in education today. Social and emotional learning (SEL) is defined as the process through which children and adults understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions. I have spent the last year working to develop a safe and supportive culture within my classroom

where students would encourage themselves and others as well as celebrate and learn from failures.

Cleveland Elementary implemented a new social emotional learning program this year entitled, Move This World. Move This World's social emotional learning program has been developed to encourage, enhance and build safe and supportive learning environments. The Move This World curriculum is delivered through evidence-based, developmentally appropriate videos used to open and close instructional time. Through the video exercises, students develop social skills and strengthen emotional intelligence within Pre-K through high school students.

My classroom participated in the curriculum by watching one of the videos in the morning and one of the videos at the end of the day. All of the videos found within the MTW curriculum are aligned with the five social emotional learning core competencies as defined by the Collaborative for Academic, Social Emotional Learning. (CASEL). The opening and closing videos help students and teachers understand how to use social and emotional skills to respond to challenges and conflicts throughout the day.



Students within my classroom worked to build and practice social emotional skills every day. The 5 skill areas MTW focuses on are: Self Awareness, Self Management, Social Awareness, Relationship Skills, and Decision Making. Move This World has helped me to create a common language within my classroom and across our school. By strengthening the social and emotional wellbeing of educators and students, we are able to create healthy environments where effective teaching and

learning can occur simultaneously.

As we progressed throughout the year, students showed positive improvements in their behavior and demonstrated stronger emotional intelligence. My students are now equipped with the ability to name the stressors that they're feeling. Once they have identified exactly what is causing them stress they are able to match it to a MTW emotional management strategy in order to help them calm down.

**"...students showed positive improvements in their behavior and demonstrated stronger emotional intelligence."**

After implementing the MTW program for a year, I would strongly recommend it to any educator who is looking for a program to help support the social and emotional well being of students in their classroom. The program is easy to use and there is no prep required. The videos are engaging, creative & interactive and are evidence-based. The curriculum is strategically scaffolded throughout the year and differentiated by grade-level (PreK-12). In addition, the ongoing support provided by the MTW team has been the most encouraging. They are constantly looking for feedback and want input from teachers, staff, and students to better their curriculum and instruction. Above all, I would strongly recommend this program based upon the positive responses from my students and their parents. My students are now equipped with the ability to interact and implement the skills learned from Move This World within Cleveland Elementary as well as within their lives outside of our school walls. ⚙️

## Making Conference Attendance Affordable

Tara Arntsen

With opportunities to network, learn new skills, rediscover methods you forgot somewhere along the way, present your best work, highlight the stories of your students, and connect with colleagues from near and far, conferences are an important part of professional development. Some educators are fortunate enough to receive full support to attend conferences as they choose, while others may receive only partial support or even none at all. In the past, I have experienced a wide range of employer support for conference attendance and gotten creative with making conference attendance affordable.

Volunteering can often reduce the cost of conference attendance. This might mean helping during the conference such as setting up or tearing down, presenting, providing tech support during sessions, or running the registration table. These might not be convenient options for those traveling to the conference location, but reviewing proposal submissions or serving on the planning committee or board may also be possibilities depending on the



organization. Volunteering certainly does not guarantee a discount on registration, but it is a great way to become more involved with an organization which makes the conference experience more meaningful.

Grants and scholarship opportunities are also something to explore. TESOL International Association, for instance, has several of each to help make attendance to its annual convention possible for more individuals with some of funding set aside especially for first time attendees and to offset the cost of travel. Dakota TESOL, in fact, offers a scholarship to teachers, aides and volunteers who are members in good standing with the organization. The application is available on the Dakota TESOL website and scholarship amounts up to a hundred dollars can be requested. While applying to some programs can be quite time consuming, outside funding can sometimes make the difference between attending or missing out.

As with any travel, cutting general travel costs can help significantly with the overall budget. Can you share a room with a coworker or other fellow attendee? While I doubt it is the norm, TESOL International Association has a roommate matching system that was handy when I was the only person from my organization attending the convention that year. Buying groceries instead of eating every meal out; staying at an AirBnB, hotel, or with friends or family; and using public transportation instead of cabs all help reduce your overall spending. Minor inconveniences are worth the savings, but it is important to weigh all your options. For example, staying at a more affordable place that is quite far from the conference location might not end up being the best choice because of the cost of transportation and the lost time.

Finally, try to negotiate. In the past, it was rare that an employer signed off on covering costs 100% by which I mean paid time, per diem, conference costs, and travel costs. If I wanted to attend a conference, I submitted presentation proposals, signed up to volunteer, applied for scholarships and grants, researched cost saving measures, and made a strong argument for attendance to my employer. The results varied. Sometimes I did not have to use vacation time but received no funding; other times, I was paid for the time I was gone and received a per diem but was personally on the hook for travel and conference costs. I have not yet had an employer ask me to use vacation time to attend such a valuable professional development opportunity, but I am sure it could happen and has happened to others. When requesting to attend a conference, make sure your position is solid. If you submitted a proposal or are presenting at the conference and can state what type of sessions you are looking to attend and why, you are more likely to receive support from your employer.

While attending a conference during the school year can be a challenge, making the trip affordable is often possible and well worth the effort. ⚙️

**SAVE THE DATE**

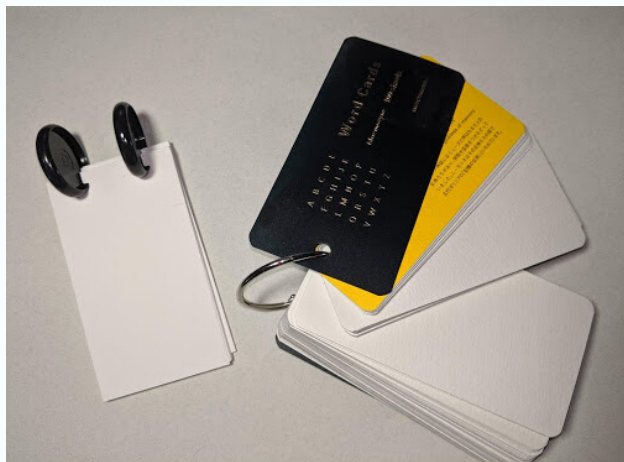
**TESOL 2020  
International  
Convention & English  
Language Expo**

**March 31 – April 3  
Denver, Colorado**

## It's In the Cards - Language Support in the Secondary Math Classroom

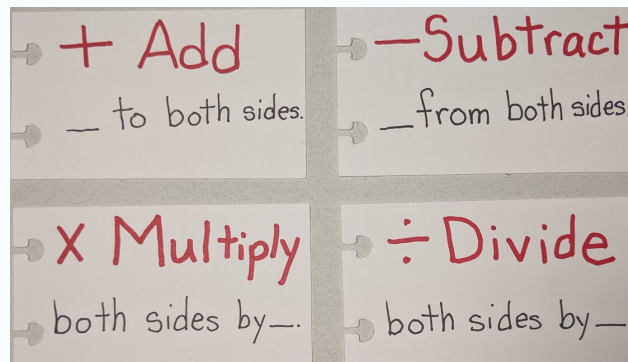
Pam Kallis

I am continually looking for ways to promote students' use of language to explain the processes used in higher mathematics. My husband introduced me to Col-O-Ring ink testing books. This "book" is actually a binder ring with high quality 2" x 4" note cards. The ring lets me store multiple sets of cards and mix and match cards quickly and easily. A quick Google search will present you several purchasing options. Of course, notecards can also be used.



Our Algebra 1 class begins the year with solving single variable equations. As always, the first question I ask myself is what language do they need to be successful. In other words, if I were to be a student in China, what would I need to communicate with my Chinese peers. After I explicitly teach how to follow the direction words such as solve and evaluate, I require that students be able to state the steps they use in order to complete the assignment.

Currently, all of my ELs, even level 1, can recognize +, -, X, and ÷, although they do not have the vocabulary to express those operations. Below you will see the 4 cards that we start with:



The four cards are placed on the students' desks and I have a magnetized, larger set on my whiteboard. Notice the use of prepositions and how it changes based on the operation.

The problem reads:

**SOLVE.**       $3x + 2 = 8$

I prompt the students that the first step requires a choice between the top two cards. What will "remove" the +2?

- In the earliest language level, the student may simply point to the correct card.
- Beginners can read the first word of the card (in this case "subtract").
- Emerging students can use the entire sentence frame and build confidence with prepositions.

Once we have applied the card, the new equation is  $3x = 6$ .

Again the student must choose the correct card and do the indicated operation. (Divide both sides by three resulting in  $x = 2$ )

We practice the same process for several problems. Often during this practice time, I

have non-ELs support their peers and check their work. For homework, I will transfer book problems to paper and write the steps to the side. Sometimes, I work the problem and I ask students to write the steps. Another option would be to have the student write the steps to the side as they solve the problem. As they gain confidence, I will announce that the answer is  $x=2$ , but ask that students explain the process to their partner. They must use sequencing words - FIRST, I subtract 2 from both sides and THEN I divide both sides by 3.

**"That is success - having all students "talk good math!"**

I also have partners do math dictation. They read the problem aloud to ensure that their partner has correctly written it on the whiteboard. While that seems to be a low language requirement, you would be surprised by the number of native English speakers who will incorrectly read  $7x^3$  as "seven times three" instead of "seven x cubed" Many will be unable to read  $x^4$  as "x sub four." Once the problem has been written, the speaker must give directions and the writer must follow them exactly as told. ELs needing scaffolding may read their cards. This allows practice with non-math words, like those pesky prepositions and builds oral fluency.

I maintain multiple sets of cards that contain nothing but calculator keys. A set of cards is issued to partners or small

groups when we begin work on the scientific calculators. Students must put the cards in correct keystroke order to successfully complete the operation. For instance when introducing non-linear functions we look at the shapes of various polynomial functions.

As an example, I want students to graph  $f(x) = 7x^3 + 2x$

I will start with asking them to pull the following cards, in a random order and then asked to arrange them in the correct order.

$$y = 7 \quad x \quad \wedge \quad 3 \quad + \quad 2 \quad x \quad \text{Graph}$$

I do calculator keystrokes with pairs/small groups to help speed up the process. I can circulate and make corrections. Once the cards are in place, students need to make the proper keystrokes on their calculators.

It is cumbersome in the beginning, but with consistent use, I find that all students begin to speak like mathematicians. Because we have practiced use of academic vocabulary, all students feel more comfortable in asking and answering questions. This has led to better peer relations in the class. Students possess the vocabulary to ask, but far more importantly they have the vocabulary to help without simply giving the answer.

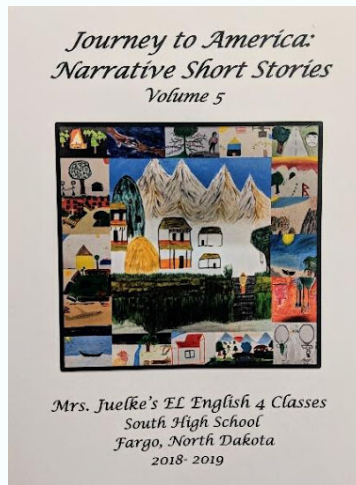
My favorite anecdote is a new to country student telling her English-speaking partner, "First, talk good math! I am not understanding the question." She did, however, understand the math, and once her partner asked "correctly" she was able to help him. That is success - having all students "talk good math!" 🌀

# Using Stories to Create Empathy and Cultural Understanding

Leah Juelke

For the last five years, students at Fargo South High have written nonfiction narrative short stories about their journeys as refugees or immigrants to America. During Leah Juelke's English Learner English 4 classes, students from 10 different countries were inspired to document their own journey after meeting Rwandan Genocide survivor, Daniel Trust, and other refugee and immigrant community members. Students also participated in a Narrative 4 story exchange with each other. Imagine Thriving Mental Health Specialists worked with students as well. During the writing phase, students drafted their own stories and went through multiple editing workshops to create a finished product. Volunteers from around the community provided technical writing support for the students during the workshops. Students also collaborated online with native English-speaking students at Buhler High School in Kansas during the editing phase. In

addition to stories, a poem by each student and a picture of their art work are featured. Educators from the RACE exhibit at the MN Science Museum held a workshop to introduce the students to poetry. During the project, the students visited the Plains Art Museum and created a canvas painting that depicted their journey. Students read their stories and poems out loud at NDSU and Concordia College in front of a public audience. This year, the National Teacher of the Year, Mandy Manning, was the opening speaker for the event. In addition to published ebooks online, over 700 books were then published and distributed to community members, legislators and educators across the U.S. The book holds the intriguing stories, poems & artwork of Fargo South High School refugee and immigrant students from around the world.



"I didn't feel sad leaving my refugee camp, but I did feel sad for leaving my friends behind. I gave them the only money I had, then said goodbye."

-Sagar G. (Arrived 2015 from Nepal)



"When Ebola surfaced, my aunt, who used to help my mom in the salon, got infected and died two days after. My mom was so sad. People stopped coming around us and stopped going to the salon to get their hair done by my mother."

-Diana G. (Arrived in 2015 from Liberia)

"I am from the tradition of Muslims, from a hundred mosques

I am from the art of old Arabs

I am from celebrating with my family

I am from the country of oil and gas"

-Ahmed H. (Arrived in 2017 from Yemen)





"I turned to my cousin and asked, 'Why is it so extremely cold?'

'This is just what happens at this time of year and soon there will be snow,' he said. 'What is snow?' I asked. My cousin explained to me what it was, but I still had no idea until I saw it for the first time."

- Neha T. (Arrived in 2014 from Nepal)



"I didn't go to school because my grandparents didn't have money to pay my school fees. I actually thought that my grandparents were my actual parents for the longest time. They always treated me well and they taught me to pray before I went to bed and before I ate. It wasn't until I went to Rwanda with my grandma that I met my real mom."

-Chance M. (Arrived 2014 from Congo)

"My dad told me that there are a lot of people in America that are really nice, but some people will kill you just because of your skin color, so be careful."

- Derick B. (Arrived in 2015 from Ghana)



"I spoke in Nepali with someone and she just stared at me. One of my friends told me, 'They are English people. They don't speak Nepali.' I was so embarrassed, and I could not even look at them again."

-Kabita R. (Arrived in 2012 from Nepal)



"When we went back to Fargo, my stomach started to hurt, I told my parents, then my father took me to the hospital. The nurse came and asked me some questions. My father and I didn't understand most of the questions, so we waited for my aunt to come and help us. It turned out that my appendix had broke, and that I had to have surgery to take it out."

-Ahmed A. (Arrived 2015 from Iraq)



After my parents died, my grandmother took care of us. Life soon started to get complicated. We didn't have enough money to buy our basic necessities. We didn't have enough money for food or school. It was also really hard, because we had no males at home to help with the harder chores."

- Laxmi G. (Arrived in 2013 from Nepal)



"I am from a lush jungle like a paradise  
I am from the forest and the greatest Christmas celebration

I am from Mulenge, from black skin and brown eyes, and from a large family."

-Rebecca Nina (Arrived in 2015 from Burundi) ⚙



**Read the full stories & poems as free e-books here: [www.ellfargosouth.weebly.com](http://www.ellfargosouth.weebly.com)**

# The Hutterites Coming to South Dakota

Kathleen Wollmann

According to the Hutterian Brethren website there are 462 Hutterite Colonies in the United States and Canada. The majority of the Hutterite Colonies located in the United States are located in South Dakota. Many of us who live in South Dakota have lived around colonies most of our lives, but have not interacted with anyone from a Hutterite Colony and know little about the Hutterite Colonies.

One question that might be asked could be, "Why did the Hutterite people come to South Dakota?" The Hutterites lived in Russia and were granted special privilege to not participate in the military. Then in 1870, the "Czar began a program of Russianization, which meant an end to military exemptions for everyone. The state was also going to control the schools and local governing policies. The Mennonites and the Hutterites, banned together and went to St. Petersburg to ask the Czar about allowing them to continue having military exemption. They were told the Mennonites and the Hutterites would be exempt only from combatant services. Both groups did not want to conform because, "Their loyalty was to God and The Word as they understood and interpreted it." (History of Hutterite Mennonites). The Mennonites and the Hutterites decided to leave Russian and settle in a new land.

In the spring of 1873, a group of Hutterite men traveled to North America to investigate the frontier regions. To be able to reproduce the colony lifestyle, the men brought with them instructions that the new government had to guarantee before

they would purchase land.

1. Religious freedom and exemption from military service.
2. Land of good quality, in quantity sufficient to meet their needs, at moderate prices and easy terms.
3. The right to live in closed communities, have their own form of government, be able to use German language as they had been permitted to use in Russia.
4. To be desired was advance of sufficient money to cover transportation expense from Russia to America.

(History of Hutterite Mennonites)

When President Grant reviewed the petitioned, he informed the group that it was beyond the power of the president to grant these privileges, but that it was up to the individual states to do so. He also stated, "It would be unfair to favor one group of people more than another, but the constitution of the United States guarantees religious liberty". (History of Hutterite Mennonites). This last statement, ultimately promised the Hutterites these guarantees.

In the summer 1875 a group of 109 Hutterites from Russia, made their journey to the United States. They landed in Lincoln, Nebraska but found the land unacceptable, so a group of men started inspect other land that was available. The group traveled to Bon Homme County which is located along the Missouri River in South Dakota. Here they found the condition of the soil and the climate favorable for farming. The area reminded them of hills in Russia. The men also found, 2,500 acres of land they were able to purchase to build a colony. This colony is Bon Homme Colony, the first colony to be established in South Dakota.

This article is just a snippet of history of the

Hutterite people and their immigrating to South Dakota. I would strongly suggest reading History of the Hutterite Mennonites, which provides a plethora of information about the Hutterites journey to South Dakota. According to the Cedron website, a website dedicated to organizing Hutterite Colony data, currently in South Dakota there are 69 Hutterite Colonies. Most of the Hutterite Colonies are located in the eastern half of South Dakota, many along the James River. ☼

References:

Cedrontech, <http://www.cedrontech.com/directory/7D829A32A5C29738>. Accessed 11 June 2019.

“Graphic Location.” Hutterian Brethren, <http://www.hutterites.org/the-leut/distribution/>. Accessed 31 May 2019.

The Hutterite Centennial Steering Committee, History of the Hutterite Mennonites, Pine Hill Press, 1974.

**We have a student who rides his bike to school - in South Dakota winter! On a Saturday morning, no less. He is from Bhutan. Comes to class 6 days a week. Studies English at home every day. I check his homework every morning, which he does without me even**



**asking. We are all part of the fabric of a hard-working America, inspired by one another's dreams and dedication!**

**Laura Smith-Hill**

## Native American Educational Websites

Dawn Anderson

Access lesson plans, teaching videos, and other resources through the WoLakota Project. The project is a collaborative effort between the South Dakota Department of Education (SD DOE) and Technology and Innovation in Education (TIE) <https://www.wolakotaproject.org/> and visit South Dakota’s sister site in North Dakota <http://www.teachingsofourelders.org/>.

### Oceti Sakowin Essential Understandings (OSEU)

Oceti Sakowin [**oh-CHEH-tee shaw-KOH-we**] means “Seven Council Fires” and refers collectively to the Lakota, Dakota and Nakota people.



Combat the rise of intolerance and conflict in society by promoting appreciation and understanding of our differences. Oceti Sakowin Essential Understandings (OSEU) uses existing state standards in your content area. Discover time-saving free resources and lesson plans which make incorporation of the OSEU into your classes easier.

The OSEU’s can be found at:

<https://doe.sd.gov/contentstandards/documents/18-OSEUs.pdf>

**Native American Books**

*American Indian English*, William A. Leap, University of Utah Press, ISBN: 0-87480-639-9

*The Sixth Grandfather, Black Elk's Teachings Given to John G. Neihardt*, Edited by Raymond J. DeMallie, University of Nebraska Press, ISBN: 0-8032-6564-6

*Mitakuye Oyasin, "We are all related", America before Columbus, based on the oral history of 33 tribes*, Dr. A.C. Ross, Published by Wico'ni Waste', ISBN: 0-9621977-0-X

*The Indian Tipi: Its History, Construction, and Use, 2nd Edition*, Reginald & Gladys Laubin, Norman: University of Oklahoma, ISBN-13: 978-0806122366, ISBN-10: 9780806122366

*Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee: An Indian History of the American West*, Dee West, Owl Books Henry Holt and company, LLC, ISBN: 0-8050-8684-6

*The Lakota way, stories and lessons for living, native American wisdom on ethics and character, and The Day the World Ended at the Little Big Horn: a Lakota history*, Joseph M. Marshall III, Penguin Compass, ISBN: 0-14-219609-6 and ISBN: 978-0-14-311369-0



**"Combat the rise of intolerance and conflict in society by promoting appreciation and understanding of our differences."**

*From the Deep Woods to Civilization*, Charles A. Eastman (Ohiyesa), University of Nebraska Press, ISBN: 0-8032-5873-9

*Waterlily*, Ela Cara Deloria, University of Nebraska Press, ISBN: 0-8032-6579-4

*Red Earth, White Lies: Native Americans and the Myth of Scientific Fact*, Vine Deloria, Jr., Fulcrum Publishing, ISBN: 1-55591-388-1

*Touching Spirit Bear and Ghost of Spirit Bear*, Ben Miksaeksen, Harper Press, ISBN: 978-0-380-80560-0 and ISBN: 978-0-06-009009-8

**Native American Movies**

- Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee
- Incident at Oglala, the Leonard Peltier Story
- Older Than America
- Flags of Our Fathers
- Black Robe
- A Thief in Time
- Skinwalker
- Coyote waits
- Smoke Signals
- ⚙️

# Effective Instruction for ELLs: Preparing Content Teachers for Success

Dyanis Conrad-Popova

On average, English Language Learners (ELLs) spend the vast majority of their day in content classrooms without an ESL specialist. Specialized ESL services are often offered once per day, and sometimes as little as once per week. For the remainder of the school day, most ELLs are interacting with native English speaking teachers and peers while preparing grade level content and trying to improve English language proficiency. Unfortunately, many of our content or mainstream classroom teachers indicate that they feel unprepared to provide effective instruction to ELLs (Tran, 2015).

In reality, many schools are only able to provide 30-60 minutes of specialized services weekly. When we eliminate school days used for testing, this leaves markedly little time for ELLs to make significant gains in English language proficiency, particularly when we consider that it takes on average 5-7 years to gain relative fluency in academic language. In order to maximize instructional time, it is critical that content/mainstream classroom teachers implement effective pedagogy so that ELLs are able to keep up with grade-level content, while still improving English proficiency. Relying on Instructional Aides or student teachers, which is often a factor when resources are limited, does not provide students with the comprehensible input and accessible content needed to succeed under today's English-centered

framework.

So, do all teachers in the Dakotas need extensive training and additional certification to work with ELLs? Although numbers of ELLs are growing in our region, this may be neither necessary nor realistic for our demographic and geographical profiles. We can, however, better promote the cultural awareness, considerations, and strategies teachers can use to provide the best possible learning experience for the ELLs in our schools. Toward this goal, I highlight 6 key aspects of instruction that can not only contribute to a welcoming environment and positive educational outcomes for students, but can also ease the anxiety felt by un(der)prepared teachers as they try to adapt lesson plans to fit the needs of all students in their classroom space.

**Modeling.** Show, don't tell. Particularly with ELLs with beginning English language proficiency, it is important to remember to keep a student's affective filter low by reducing the cognitive demand of complex academic content and vocabulary. Explaining an activity or project can be effective in specific contexts, but showing students how to fulfill expectations through modeled talk, examples, and visual guides, etc. significantly increases a student's chances for success.

**Scaffolding and Differentiation.** Many teachers who recognize the impact of scaffolding content categorize their efforts as being for struggling, average, or gifted students. Language scaffolding is rarely incorporated, often leaving ELLs at a disadvantage. Scaffolding and differentiation, although they work in different ways, share similar goals—comprehensibility, accessibility, efficacy, and equity. Both are critical to the success of our ELLs and whether scaffolding

teacher talk, differentiating assessments, or anything in between, teachers should develop confidence using common tools like word banks, gestures & visuals, sentence starters/frames, highlighting, leveled readers, realia, etc. to reduce a student's cognitive load and support a welcoming learning environment.

**Spiraling.** Spiraling is another common pedagogical approach that, with ELLs, should be particularly intentional. It is a purposeful curriculum design that intends to stimulate recall and improve retention. Sometimes it can be incorporated through simple questioning: "Do you all remember when we talked about X? What did we call it?" Other times it can be a fully integrated lesson meant to revisit key concepts and/or vocabulary. Often, it is a combination of both throughout the school year.



**The Integrated Approach.** It is important to recognize the positive impact of integrated domains (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) even when content is intended to be domain specific. Teachers can adapt existing pedagogical knowledge to integrate domains with the explicit goal of improving retention and recall. For example, even in a reading class period, students can reinforce learning by discussing with their elbow partner (speaking/listening) or completing a conceptual map (writing). A presentation, as another example, already has the

speaking domain built in, but the others can be integrated by listening to classmate's presentations, creating a handout or completing a graphic organizer, etc. (writing), and gathering information for their presentation (reading). For each additional domain, we increase retention of the related language and content.

**Teaching in Context.** Connecting content to student learning in meaningful ways is key to the success of ELLS as we work toward improved proficiency, retention, and recall. Everything from sight words to complex abstract concepts can be made more comprehensible and accessible through their contextualization. This helps students make connections between prior learning and new content, and can also help teachers create new learning anchors to which new information can adhere.

**Free Resources.** Content teachers often have limited awareness of the tools available to help them make the above adjustments/enhancements to their content. In my research here in South Dakota, I have met many teachers who are unfamiliar with easily accessible resources like WIDA. Many others indicate that although some resources were mentioned during training for certification, they had not had an opportunity to apply those concepts in their classrooms. In one school district with an above-average ELL population, the utility of the WIDA CanDos—which highlight what students are able to do at any level of proficiency, by domain and grade level—is summarized into a single paragraph in the Handbook. We must place greater emphasis on access to and the effective use of WIDA, SIOP (Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol), and even general resource websites like Colorín Colorado to help teachers achieve their instructional goals.

By and large, these instructional considerations are considered aspects of best practice and work well in all classrooms, even those without any ELLs! Notably, they are critical in classrooms with ELLs because they help teachers create more effective lesson plans that enhance learning without penalizing students for their developing English proficiency. This by no means summarizes all the knowledge a teacher must have to work effectively with ELLs, but highlights ideas that can help teachers make immediate adjustments to planning and teaching. Our region is in dire need of ESL specialists but until those needs are met, we need to focus on providing the teachers with whom our ELLs spend the majority of their day with the tools they need to achieve their teaching and learning goals. ⚙

Reference:

Tran, Y. (2015). ESL pedagogy and certification: Teacher perceptions and efficacy. *Journal of Education and Learning*, 4(2), 28-42.

## How to Support Immigrant Students and Families: Strategies for Schools and Early Childhood Programs

Tanya Vitek

As the demographics of our schools and classrooms change, one question that arises is: How can we support the educational success of our immigrant students? In response to this question,

**¡Colorín colorado!** has composed a comprehensive guide to help educators find ways to effectively support these students and their families. For instance, here are a few examples of the strategies you will find within the guide.

- Help families keep emergency contact information up to date.
- Ensure that all staff understand immigrant students' rights.
- Let all students and families know that they are welcome.
- Create various ways for communication in families' home language.
- Become aware of relevant immigration policies so that you can answer questions.
- Connect families with resources and provide opportunities for them to ask questions.
- Build partnerships with community organizations that can serve families by providing valuable support.

Each strategy includes features such as:

- Why it matters: gives a brief overview of how the topic relates to immigrant students and families
- Tips for getting started
- Recommended resources: guides, books, articles, and other materials
- Recommended videos: that can be utilized for staff training
- Examples from the field

To access the complete guide and other support materials go to:

**Guide:**

<http://www.colorincolorado.org/guide/how-support-immigrant-students-and-families>

**Other support materials:**

<http://www.colorincolorado.org/ell-basics/special-populations/migrant-farmworker-students-families> ⚙

# Believing in Your Brain

Lindy Obach & Angela DeBoer

“With realization of one’s potential and self-confidence in one’s ability, one can build a better world.” Dalai Lama

Angela DeBoer, LSS Center for New Americans ESL Instructor, wanted to try something different with her adult ELL students. After attending a workshop on brain research by Minnesota ABE instructor, Andrea Echelberger, last summer at the Summer Summit conference, DeBoer

learned all about how pathways and neurons and, to put it simply, self-confidence, made for more effective learning. She thought this



would be the perfect concept to introduce her advanced literacy students to. This concept of Growth Mindset was first pioneered by Dr. Carol Dweck roughly 30 years ago, whose ideas boil down to this: when students believe they can get smarter, they understand that effort makes them stronger. Therefore they put in extra time and effort, and that leads to higher achievement.

DeBoer’s learners, a wide and intricate mix of educational backgrounds, cultures, and personalities, were game. It took DeBoer a few weeks to develop the curriculum for her Growth Mindset lesson, taking ideas from Echelberger and Dweck, and putting in her own ideas.

She began the lesson by general discussion questions on learning, having the students

take a quiz about the brain, watching brain-related videos, and using images to help with some of the more academic vocabulary a lesson like this will utilize.

“I was pleased with how engaged my students were and continued to be. The further we got into it, the more they really started understanding growth mindset and started applying it and understanding it as something not just theoretical,” says DeBoer.

Some of the more tactile and unique activities she did with her students include making pipe cleaner neuron samples. “This was pretty fun for all of us!” laughs DeBoer. She also had the students show their understanding through drawing. “I could tell they were building on content each time we stepped forward in the lesson. It wasn’t difficult for them to recall previously-learned information.”

A lesson on growth mindset can easily be adapted for students of all ages, as DeBoer suggests using modeling clay and drawing for younger learners. She also recommends teaching useful phrases students can say to themselves and their classmates to encourage their abilities and belief in themselves. Of course, lots of vocabulary can be taught, followed by assessments like spelling tests and short responses.

The impact of this lesson was felt by many of DeBoer’s students: “I benefited a lot from it and it helped me a lot special when I started doing my reading at my work break time. I found out that my mind got a bit expanded and empowered within my memory muscle,” one student wrote on his year-end survey about his classes.

“This lesson really came full circle for me when one of my students was asked to speak at our year-end celebrations at



school, and he talked about the benefits of this lesson and how it empowered him,” says DeBoer. “Not only could I hear it in his words, but I could see the confidence he had in himself as he spoke in front of the student body and faculty.”

The goals of a growth mindset lesson are for students to embrace challenges, understand that trying hard leads to success, find inspiration in themselves and their classmates, and persist even when confronted with a setback. This is a lesson all of us, students and teachers alike, can take to heart.



\*Since the publication of this article, Instructor Angela DeBoer has moved to Kansas for a new job opportunity. The students and teachers at the CNA will miss her. ⚙️

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## EL's Need SEL!

Erica Boomsma

“I can't do this, Ms. Boomsma. I just can't.” said one of my students to me while we worked in the back of the room. “Jose can, but that's because he's just smarter at this kind of stuff than me.”

Have you ever been in a situation like this?

Our kids think this way sometimes - believing that intelligence is almost like a mist surrounding only those “chosen” students. Our at-risk students may believe this. Our students in poverty and EL students may believe this. And, rather than allow them to continue interpreting intelligence as a characteristic that some people are “born with” we must teach them that intelligence is an active effort that everyone can achieve.

Because EVERYONE can learn!

I am a teacher to 27 fantastic 4th grade students. They are truly wonderful and incredibly talented. Many of my students are immigrants and refugees, who in many cases would not have had the opportunity to go to school in their homeland. My students are all at different language acquisition levels, learning levels, and have different learning styles. But, they all participate in and benefit from Social Emotional Learning with brain focused strategies.

We start every week with Social Emotional Learning and mindfulness - emphasis on the MIND. In this class, we learn all about our brains and how they work. We discover the science behind how we learn. My students are captivated by every single detail about each area of the brain and its



## Up for a Challenge? Making SLOP Teaching Presentations More Useful for Teacher Education Students

Heidi Sackreiter

function. But, what I find most incredible about my students is that after this class, they are almost relieved.

That's right! Relieved.

It's as if you can see a cloud of confusion lift as a clarity for how learning actually occurs sets in. Suddenly, every student understands! Intelligence is active. Intelligence is attainable. Intelligence belongs to everyone – including them. They see themselves as equal to others!

We use our brain vocabulary and knowledge of how an idea is learned all day in every subject. When a student is having trouble, their classmates will lift them up by explaining that the dendrites are growing and not to give up! My students take risks that they never would have until now. They are understanding of failure. And, they have grit to continue to work. Why? Because they know that learning WILL occur. For them, it is fact. And, they can tell you all about it! ⚙️

A big component of teacher education coursework includes opportunities to prepare and present lessons that would be intended for children or adolescents in a realistic classroom setting. This is true regardless of the grade levels or diverse populations one wishes to teach. The student teaching experience is usually the most lengthy, rigorous, and valuable event in which teacher education students can really practice planning and teaching in a school setting. However, other university-required field experiences are sometimes shorter than what is preferred, and the time allowed is more for observation and work with small groups of learners. These quicker and less formal experiences do not allow for ample authentic planning and teaching opportunities. Other means must be used in university class meetings to help prospective teachers practice planning and implementing instruction in front of groups of students. These opportunities are still of great importance, but making them as realistic and useful as possible is sometimes difficult.

When teacher education students present or “teach” their lessons to an audience of their peers in methods and other on-campus education courses, they do have a major opportunity to practice qualities like eye contact, clear and correct speech,

professional dress, and an enthusiastic demeanor. They are able to apply methods to spark interest and introduce lesson topics, ask questions, and explain procedures step by step. They even have special chances to read aloud from some quality literature selections. But no matter how sincere their intentions are to take as much as they can from these mini-teaching presentations, their classmates' intentions are even better in that they do not usually allow for something close to a realistic experience. In most methods courses, teacher education students usually enjoy watching their peers present lessons. It can be a fun and refreshing event that allows them to gain additional ideas for their future teaching and hopefully consider learning through the eyes of a child or adolescent. However, because they enjoy these in-class mini-teaching experiences and they want to be supportive of their peers during these graded presentations, they are often eager to participate in a very active way. And they easily and readily volunteer answers, which are almost always correct, and they never cause any type of issue. This is usually not representative of most classrooms in elementary, middle, and high schools. In particular, future teachers of English learners are not going to benefit from continual teaching experiences in which students always answer immediately and without any errors either in content or speech. They must consider what it will be like when a child does not wish to participate in activities, does not say a word when called on, or completely misunderstands directions to a particular task.

While these university students know how to be good students (which means that perhaps they are just naturally inclined to follow rules and engage actively in the lessons) and they want to genuinely encourage their friends, the mini-teaching

lesson presentations end up being almost too easy. Everything goes as expected and there are no complications. After a few semesters of observing this and wondering if the teacher education students were really getting a meaningful learning experience from the mini-teaching presentations, it was decided to add specific challenges to this assignment. The challenges are presented to the pre-service teachers as "scenarios". These scenarios allow pre-service teachers to pay attention to and think about how they will explain concepts without being too wordy and attempt to adjust their rate and volume of speech. They can consider how they will handle error correction and motivate their learners with compassion and enthusiasm. It also helps them to look out for those students who are not readily participating or seem withdrawn, instances that might sometimes be overlooked in a very busy and full classroom.



The teacher education students are instructed to write a formal lesson plan that follows SIOP guidelines. Next, they are allowed class time to "teach" as much of their formal lesson as possible. On the day

of the mini-teaching, each teacher education student is given a scenario regarding something he or she must address during the lesson. These scenarios are a surprise; the students are not told of these challenges when they are designing their formal lessons, and they are told their specific scenario only moments before they actually teach their lessons. In addition, a few of the other university students in the audience are given their own secret instructions on how to act or behave with respect to the particular scenario.

All scenarios represent particular implications connected to teaching linguistically and culturally diverse learners. An example scenario given to the pre-service teacher relates to error correction. A few audience members are secretly told to purposefully make speaking and pronunciation errors as well as offer incorrect answers to questions asked by the teacher. The teacher's scenario (given a few minutes before the lesson begins) lets him or her know to expect that at least a few learners are going to make errors and he or she must address these errors in an appropriate, clear, and kind manner, as well as decide which errors are most urgent to be corrected and which errors could be addressed later. Another example scenario relates to lack of participation. Again, a few audience members are told to deliberately refuse to answer questions or volunteer to participate, and to speak very little or not at all during the lesson. The teacher is to take note of those who are quiet and disengaged and find ways to encourage the learners to increase their confidence and help them feel comfortable speaking in front of others. Even more scenarios encourage pre-service teachers to consider other misunderstandings that sometimes occur in classrooms due to differences in language and culture. These scenarios not only make the lesson

presentations at least a little more realistic, but because they are given at the scenarios last minute, the teachers must think on their feet and make decisions quickly as there is little time to imagine what to do or say to these particular learners before the lesson begins. Most importantly is the increased awareness of the confusion likely experienced by some English learners, and the realization that an intentional effort must be given to supporting and motivating these learners in specific and personal ways.

After the mini-lesson concludes, the pre-service teachers have the chance to revise their original SLOP lesson plan draft based on what they discovered during the mini-lesson presentation. The instructor also provides timely feedback to each pre-service teacher regarding whether or not he or she addressed the specific needs of those learners during the lesson and how effectively the learners were supported. These challenges offer a better teaching experience for these pre-service teachers when they cannot present the lessons in real-life classrooms. And their peers can also begin to think more about some of the potential issues that might arise in a classroom. Hopefully, this allows them to be more intentional and reflective educators, able to anticipate some of the difficulties that learners will have, plan appropriately, and react in an inclusive and thoughtful manner.☺

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