

A Message from the President:

Dear Three Rivers TESOL Colleagues,

“Three Rivers at 22,” a history of our organization written for the fall conference folders, reappears in this newsletter as a reminder of how far we have come and where we stand. Since I work with a lot of 22-year-olds, it's natural for me to see some similar traits in our affiliate: all grown up, ready for anything and open to opportunities. It's a time of transition and potential.

Our affiliate has grown from a dedicated cohort of ESL professionals at a handful of local colleges and universities, to the strong, diverse group of 100 who came out for the Fall Conference: teachers of English language learners of all ages, researchers of second language acquisition and education, graduate students just starting out, teachers back in school for continuing education, program administrators, textbook authors, and specialists in areas from CALL to teacher education.

Our goal this year has been to grow in usefulness as well as size. The Fall Conference provided numerous talks and workshops, with a standing-room-only poster session. Dr. Richard Tucker shared an unforgettable recollection of the serendipitous events leading to important developments in his long and winding career. Dr. Tucker's talk was a refreshing perspective on our profession's place in a world of widespread – but easily threatened - bilingualism.

Many conference participants benefited from the new plan for institutional members professional development with reduced membership fees for individuals employed by a member institution. Another exciting development: our interest groups have re-formed. At the fall conference, members met to plan for a CALL group, an Administrators' group, and a K-12 group. None of this would have been possible without our newly updated Three Rivers TESOL website – stay tuned for more expansion and development.

The Spring Meeting is coming up in April. It will be hosted for the first time by Chatham University and feature a panel of experts on issues in writing instruction. This is also the time of year we hold board elections. If you have ever thought about taking on a leadership position in 3RT, or know someone you think could, please check out the details in this newsletter.

Spring is just around the corner – see you at Chatham!

Sue Todhunter, President

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Check us out at:

<http://3riverstesol.org/>

Three Rivers TESOL to Staff Affiliate Booth at TESOL

Join Three Rivers TESOL at the International TESOL Convention.

We'll be staffing the Affiliate Booth on Friday, March 30 from 9:00 - 10:00. If you are interested in volunteering to help out, contact Sue Todhunter at todhunters@duq.edu. We hope to see you there!

Three Rivers TESOL: 1989 to 2011

The first inaugural business meeting of interested ESL professionals was held at Point Park College on Nov. 17, 1989. About 25 people attended, representing schools and programs in the region. The draft constitution was discussed and accepted with some amendments. After discussion the name Three Rivers TESOL was chosen with the suggestion to add the words "Central and Western Pennsylvania and West Virginia" to announcements and correspondence whenever possible to show the geographic regions served by the association. The first officers of Three Rivers TESOL were Kim Bell of Point Park as President, Dan Tannacito of Indiana University as Vice president, Lionel Menasche of the University of Pittsburgh as Secretary and Missy Butler of Carnegie Mellon as Treasurer. The membership dues were set at \$15 for regular members and \$5 for students. The fall conference was free to members. The organization sent newsletters to its members and offered a fall conference and a spring meeting. The first ESL Fall conference was held at Indiana University of Pennsylvania on Nov. 10, 1990 with Plenary Speaker Alister Cumming. Since then conferences have been held at various

universities colleges and public schools in western Pennsylvania from as far north as Clarion to IUP to LaRoche College, to Carnegie Mellon to the University of Pittsburgh to Point Park College, to the Pittsburgh Public Schools to Franklin Regional School District, and as far south as the University of West Virginia,

Twenty-two years later Three Rivers TESOL continues to serve western Pennsylvania, drawing ESL professionals from post secondary, secondary and family literacy organizations. We offer a fall conference and a spring mini conference meeting annually. The latest in research and methodology is presented to members at these times. In 2003 we put our newsletters online and in 2007 we voted to add the position of Webmaster to our board of directors. Our website offers links to International TESOL, to which we are an affiliate, and to our institutional members. The dues are still reasonable, at \$30 for regular members and \$15 for students and our fall conference is free to members. Each year we seek ESL professionals to continue to promote excellence in ESL education, professional development and service.

Board Elections coming up at the Spring Meeting!

Are you interested in becoming more involved in Three Rivers TESOL? There are 4 Executive Board positions open for 2012 – 13. Elections take place at the Spring Meeting. Get in touch with any current board member if you have any questions.

From the Three Rivers TESOL Constitution

<http://3riverstesol.org/about/const.html>:

Vice President

The Vice-President shall preside in the absence of the President and generally assist the President in the execution of business, especially program arrangements.

Secretary

The Secretary shall notify the membership of all meetings. S/he shall record and distribute to the Executive Board the minutes of all Executive Board meetings and maintain the Association's files and records. The Secretary shall maintain and distribute an accurate, current, membership list. The Secretary will be responsible for maintaining mailing lists and for reproduction, distribution, and mailing of announcements, newsletters, etc. to the membership.

Treasurer

The Treasurer shall be responsible for the financial affairs of the organization, including collection of annual membership dues, payment of all bills, and preparation of financial reports.

Webmaster

The Webmaster is responsible for maintaining the Association's website in consultation with the other members of the Executive Board. The Webmaster holds a two-year term.

Three Rivers TESOL Spring Meeting

When: April 14th, 8:30 - 12:00

Where: Chatham University

Why: Panel on Writing Perspectives; Business Meetings and Elections!

Who: You!

Check Website updates for details: 3riverstesol.org

Three Rivers TESOL 2011 Fall Conference Evaluations Help Future Planning

By Dr. Janet Pierce
Secretary, Act 48 Recorder

Have you ever wondered how an organization gets ideas and develops the programs they offer? If you have been at our Three Rivers TESOL conferences you will notice we always have evaluation sheets and survey for our attendees to complete. We do this for several reasons. First we are required as an Act 48 provider through the Pennsylvania Department of Education, to evaluate every program we offer in order to be considered an Act 48 provider. Being an Act 48 provider means we can offer instructional programs and workshops to ESL professionals who collect Act 48 hours to retain their teaching certification. ESL teachers, in grades pre-K-12, need to collect these hours on a five- year rotational basis. Right now Governor Corbett has suspended the regulation that mandates 180 Act 48 hours every 5 years while the PA Department of Education reexamines the certification and regulation of credentials for public school teachers. In the meantime, however, ESL public school teachers can still collect the Act 48 hours in their field by attending workshops offered by Three Rivers TESOL. The second reason we offer the evaluation surveys is to find out how to best serve the interests of our membership. We look at the results of the surveys which our secretary/Act 48 Recorder tabulates at our first board meeting after the conference and workshops. This helps us plan future conferences and workshops. Using this feedback we have planned our next spring conference and we hope you will attend. You can learn more about the Spring Mini-conference in this newsletter.

FYI:

If you are going to TESOL in Philadelphia, March 28-31, you are invited to attend various sessions led by Three Rivers TESOL Board members! Representing the varied skills and interests of your board, there are different workshops and sessions offered. For instance:

*Current Vice President Cindy Lennox with co-presenters Sue Todhunter, Kathy Barnard and Jeanette Clement are presenting a workshop on basic note taking skills, "From Theory to Practice: Attention Strategies for Basic ESL Learners."

***Current Webmaster Claire Bradin Siskin** will be presenting at TESOL. Her presentations are:

-- "Promoting Understanding Across Cultures in the EFL Classroom Through CALL" in the Intersection with English as a Foreign Language IS, Computer-assisted Language Learning IS, and Intercultural Communications IS.

-- "The ESL Writing Online Workshop (ESL-WOW) " in the CALL Interest Section Developers' Showcase with co-presenters Ethan Joella and Howard Pomann.

***Current Secretary and Act 48 Recorder Janet Pierce** will be presenting at the Affiliate Leadership Council Colloquium English Language Teaching Goes Mainstream on March 29th, as well as chairing the ALC Editors' Workshop Friday March 30th.

***Current Treasurer, Peter Kolenich** will be moderating a panel discussion: Culture, Language, and Sexuality: Critical Issues in the EFL/ESL Classroom, which is a forum academic session on 3/29/2012 from 1:00PM–3:45PM in 201-B of the convention center.

Examining English Language Teaching Standards in the USA

Dr. Janet L. Pierce

Recently I was asked to be on a panel that examines how English language standards are incorporated into curricula in the United States. Since I am an ESL teacher familiar with the use of English language standards in both ESL and Content area curriculum in Pennsylvania, I was asked to examine the way Pennsylvania and other states view and implement English language standards.

In the United States TESOL International Association produced English language proficiency standards in 1997. This was used in many states as the basis for the development of their own English proficiency standards. The history however, of English language standards was tenuous prior to 2001 when the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) became law. The NCLB Act of 2001 tried to establish guidelines for states to meet national goals or benchmarks in core curricula. However in the USA there are no national ESL curricula or standards for ELLs. States take individual action in regard to NCLB. They do use English language proficiency (ELPs) information. There are ELPs imbedded within regular English standards in the literacy and reading components of state guidelines for curricula in states like Ohio, New York, Washington, Florida, and Tennessee.

In contrast, in the 2005-2006 school year, Pennsylvania, ELPs became imbedded within the Core Curriculum. The WIDA Can Do Descriptors are used to help determine what teachers can expect ELLs to do at specific English proficiency levels within the content areas of science, history, math and English. Other states using WIDA Can Do descriptors and Benchmarks include Idaho, Maine, NH,

VT, DE, RI, NJ, VA, NC, GA, AL, MS, KY, WI, IL, MO, OK, MN, ND, SD, MT, WY, NM, HI and AK. States such as NV, UT, and CO use WIDA Proficiency Standards but no other activities from WIDA.

In Pennsylvania, the language instructional program must provide ELLs with meaningful, comprehensible access to instruction in all *content* areas required by Pennsylvania academic standards. The PA ELPS PreK-12 are an overlay to the academic standards and must be incorporated in planned instruction for ELLs by all teachers. The LEA must support instructional planning and evaluation efforts between the ESL/Bilingual teachers and the content-area teachers by providing common planning time as appropriate. As such at the post secondary level of education all preservice teachers are now being instructed in how to teach ELLs and how to make content meaningful to second language learners. In school districts the ESL teacher is to help the content area teacher with strategies and ideas to make the content area instruction meaningful through collaboration.

As a result of the use of ELPs in content area curricula, in science, math, history and English, ELLs stand to learn and gain more knowledge than they may have otherwise. Since this is still a fairly new process in Pennsylvania it will take time to see if imbedding the ELPs in Content area curricula is more effective than just implementing it through the English and language Arts curricula. I think it will.

To learn more about the PA ELPs go to this website:
PA ELPs-
http://www.education.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/measurements_standards_policies/7531/elps_for_ells/509513

Photo Gallery



Dr. G. Richard Tucker, our keynote speaker, addressed the topic “A Rationale for Developing Additive Bilingualism in our Students” at Duquesne University this past fall.



Attending sessions was informative and helped participants network.

Three Rivers TESOL Administrators' Group

by Dawn E. McCormick

Three Rivers TESOL is working to establish an Administrators' Group, similar to an Interest Group within TESOL International Association. The main purpose of this group is to establish a system of communication and support for those who work in administrative positions or have administrative tasks in the 3RT community. We first met at the Fall 2011 conference to express our interest, and hope to meet in the spring with a more formal agenda. Carnegie Mellon University, Chatham University, Duquesne University, LaRoche College, the University of Michigan, and the University of Pittsburgh were represented at the fall meeting, and we hope that representatives from other institutions will join us as well.

If you are interested in joining us, please email:

Dr. Dawn E. McCormick
English Language Institute
University of Pittsburgh
mccormic@pitt.edu

Three Rivers TESOL K-12 Group

Three Rivers TESOL is also working to establish a K-12 ESL professional group similar to an interest section within TESOL International Association. We started collecting names and email addresses at the fall conference for an ESL Café Interest Group for K-12 ESL professionals. Contact: Janet Pierce at jpgierce494@gmail.com to find out more information.

FALL Conference Preview:

Plan ahead now for a great 2012 Fall Conference!

When: Oct. 27, 8:30 - 4:00

Where: Duquesne University

Plenary: Steven Brown, "Listening Myths"

Conference details will be listed on our website with the call for proposals,
soon.