



Three Rivers TESOL Newsletter

Spring, 2018
Volume 28, Issue 1

IN THIS ISSUE

Spring seminar April 7 at RMU

Mark your calendar: Three Rivers TESOL will hold its spring seminar on Saturday, April 7, from 8:30 to 12 p.m. at Robert Morris University.

Seminar events will be held in Hopwood Hall, 6001 University Boulevard, on the RMU campus in Moon Township.

The theme of this year's seminar will be "Developing Writing Proficiency for Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students." The guest speakers and their topics will be:

_ Sara Cole of the Greater Pittsburgh Literacy Council: "Discussions of Writing Proficiency from a Literacy Development Perspective" (9 a.m.)

_Dr. Janet Pierce of the Franklin Regional School District: "A K-12 Writing Perspective" (9:40 a.m.)

_ Dr. Brian Carpenter of Indiana University of Pennsylvania, "Linguistic Socialization: More than 'regular talk,' 'paraphrase and stuff' (10:20 a.m.)

3R TESOL President Ying Zhang and others will provide updates on important issues and events, and results of the online election results for 3R TESOL board positions will be announced.

Doors will open at 8:30 and light breakfast refreshments will be served.

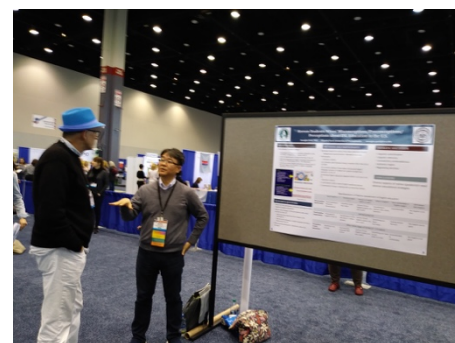
All 3R TESOL members, potential members and local ESL professionals and interested people are encouraged to attend.

See you at RMU!



Above: Students in Gannon University's ESL program took part in a Halloween escape room. They had to use their wits and learn about the holiday to get out.

Page 2



Above: 3R TESOL Past President Steve Park of Slippery Rock University explains his poster presentation at the TESOL Convention in Chicago last month.

Page 4

Halloween Escape Room

by Kathy Kehl, Gannon University

The Gannon ESL program seeks opportunities to unite students across levels, degrees and interests by creating a common learning platform. Last October, during a discussion of Halloween, I decided to create an Escape Room to encourage students to work together and also expose them to a new trend in our culture.

A colleague began the morning with his Prezi about the origins of Halloween. The students were then told they would be “locked” in a classroom and given puzzles to solve in order to escape. Each task would lead to a number that when added together revealed the

combination to the key box. The Celtic character Stingy Jack, who roams the Earth on Halloween, became their motivation to escape quickly.

Beginning 1 & 2 students assembled a jigsaw puzzle with a missing a piece hidden inside a pumpkin and containing their number. Intermediate 1 & 2 solved math equations where pieces of candy replaced some of the factors. Advanced 1 found letters in a pumpkin to complete a clue leading to the key box with their number. Advanced 2 completed a Stingy Jack poem using candy bars for text that also had their numbers.

The teachers watched through a window as the levels asked each other questions and negotiated meaning in English. A

light up scarecrow also appeared in the window to remind them of their time limit. Notecards were ready to provide last minute clues, but the students escaped the room in just under 50 minutes.

Below: Abdulrahman Taieb (center) and classmates look for clues.



Teaching the Present Perfect Using Kolb’s Experiential Learning Cycle

by Martin E. Sanger, Gannon University

First, **Notice**. Present a short text that uses the present perfect consistently throughout (without mentioning the present perfect explicitly). After the students have read and understood the context (very important), briefly explain how the present perfect is used: the auxiliary verb “have” combined with the past participle form of the main verb. Next, explain the two reasons (aka: time functions) why the present perfect is used: describing a FINISHED past action but is RELEVANT NOW; or an UNFINISHED action UP TO NOW. Next, the class as a group reviews the text, finds examples of the present perfect, and discusses the “How?”

(words/spellings used) and “Why?” (time function) of each example in the text.

Second, **Understand**. Ask each student for real-life examples from their own lives that represent the two time functions, focusing on one time function at a time. Work with the students to “negotiate a meaning” where everyone agrees that the time function is accurate and understandable.

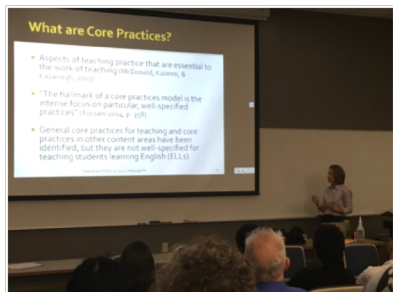
Third, **Coordinate**. Have each student create texts using one time function at a time. It must be realistic to the student.

Fourth, **Test**. Have the students work in pairs, reading their texts. Q&A should

follow to confirm that both the grammar (How?) and time functions (Why?) are accurately used.

Fifth, **Notice** (again). As the shampoo bottle states, repeat as necessary. The students have to use the present perfect in authentic situations repeatedly, and then notice the response (is it understood or not). They then use the responses to continuously hone their understanding of the grammar. Hence the circular pattern of this method.

FALL CONFERENCE 2017



Plenary talk

Prof. Meghan Madigan Peercy of the University of Maryland was the keynote speaker at 3R TESOL's fall conference at Duquesne University. Prof. Peercy spoke about core practices for ESL education.



Professor Peercy & President Zhang

Prof. Peercy met with 3R TESOL President Ying Zhang (above right) and other members after her presentation.

Fall conference at Duquesne

3R TESOL held a successful and well-attended fall conference on Oct. 21 at Duquesne University. Prof. Megan Madigan Peercy, an associate professor of applied linguistics and education at the University of Maryland's Department of Teaching and Learning, was the main guest speaker.

Prof. Peercy spoke on "Identifying and Using Core Practices for Students Learning English." Her talk addressed the concept of core practices in teaching and identifying core practices for teaching English as a second language.

The conference featured more than 15 shorter presentations, 7 poster presentations and a panel discussion on supporting refugees and immigrants in Pittsburgh.

Incorporating Experiential Learning into Research

by Ronald A. Fye, Gannon University

During the past three years, students in the advanced 2 reading – writing course at Gannon University have been introduced to an experiential learning activity that has been combined with introductions to the Amish culture of Western Pennsylvania. This project has evolved over time as students who frequent the local Walmart stores have inquired about individuals that they had seen. From the student inquiries, I began to bring together resources from Young Center for Anabaptist and Pietist at Elizabeth College based on their studies on the Amish, which then culminates with a two day visit to Springboro and Volant Pennsylvania visiting local Amish homes and businesses.

This has become a successful learning activity, where students learn about a sub - culture that they were unaware of before coming to the United States, drawing on their own culture to compare - contrast similarities and actually touring and speaking with Amish families at their farms and businesses. Since then, many of the families and businesses have come to know our visits and enjoy meeting students from across the globe. In the beginning, students are quick to find that there are no similarities, but as we continue with the

readings, discussions and visits to the community, students, especially from Saudi Arabia find that there are commonalities with family, religion and community.

This learning experience connects with their student learning outcomes (SLOs) in creating a written research paper. Students develop a research project based on an idea or concept that they have learned. For example, students have been intrigued with the idea that electricity and technologies are not recognized in the Amish community and have conducted their own research based on our increased dependency on electricity and technology. Other topics have included healthcare, organic gardening, and cell phone addiction.



Above: Fatimah Alsheba, an ESL learner at Gannon University, stands next to an Amish carriage.

Report from TESOL 2018 (1/2)

by Steve Park

The Three Rivers TESOL is offering two grants for the members, professional development grant and travel grant. I was fortunate to be given the travel grant, which is for a Three Rivers TESOL member who wishes to attend the BIG TESOL conference, a.k.a. the TESOL International Convention & English Language Expo.

This year the BIG TESOL conference was held in Chicago, IL from March 27, Tuesday to March 30, Saturday, 2018. I attended their “Leadership Appreciation Luncheon” as a representative of the Three Rivers TESOL. It was a great opportunity to meet and talk to people in the English Language Teaching fields. I had lunch with Dr. Lawrence Zhang from University of Auckland, New Zealand and Dr. Peter de Costa from Michigan State University. Dr. Zhang has been a member of TESOL’s board of directors and Dr. Costa is a member of TESOL’s Research Professional Council. It was not a long time of talk at the lunch but was a very good opportunity to get to know people in the administrative level of the BIG TESOL organization.

I visited this BIG TESOL conference not only as a representative from the Three River’s TESOL but also to give poster presentations about my research – studies on linguistic identity issues and revamping native-speakerism in TESOL. I like presenting at a conference but I do like poster presentations because it has a unique style of communication between the presenters and the attendees. Through the informal discussion and open communication, the presenter and the attendees share the ideas about the research topic and

oftentimes they see synergic effects through the informal and open talks and the real-time engagement with the people at the session. This year, even the neighbor presenters joined the talks at my presentation! I could develop the idea of my research on the topics and this, I believe, would be a great stimulus for further study for me.

Next I would like to share with the Three Rivers TESOL people about the BIG TESOL conference is their exemplary teaching principles. Many of you may already have heard of this, but for me it was a refreshing time to think again about the way I have taught/teach English language and it helped me get back to the basics of English language teaching. The Six Principles for Exemplary Teaching of English Learners are: 1. Know your learners, 2. Create conditions for language learning, 3. Design high-quality lessons for language development, 4. Adapt lesson delivery as needed, 5. Monitor and assess student language development, and 6. Engage and collaborate within a community of practice. When I saw these 6 phrases at the conference, I stopped and asked myself if I was following them. My answer was “honestly, not all the time”.

The combination of the good feedback at the presentations and the self-reflective moments by the 6 principles gave me inspiration for the next step for me in a TESOLer’s journey and the attendance at the BIG TESOL conference was valuable. I strongly recommend that people, especially the members of the Three Rivers TESOL people take time and make time to go to this biggest event in English language teaching fields and emerge themselves in the newest trends and the happy crowds. It will give refreshing energy and help professional development as an English language educator.



Above: Steve Park at the TESOL 2018 International Convention in Chicago.

Report from TESOL 2018 (2/2)

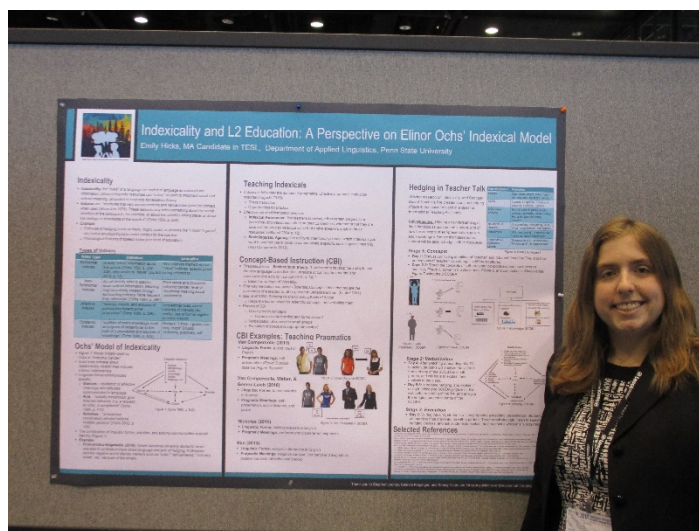
by Emily Hicks

I had an amazing experience at TESOL. It was fantastic to be able to gain teaching ideas, network with colleagues, and share my research. As I am graduating with my Master’s degree in the spring and do not know yet what my permanent teaching context will be, I took the opportunity to explore sessions in a variety of interest strands including International Teaching Assistants, IEPs, and K-12. I got to hear research on topics such as differentiating between language difficulties and learning difficulties, use of music in the L2 classroom, and use of videos in ITA classrooms. I gained concrete ideas about how I could use role plays in the classroom, design better writing rubrics, utilize a focus on form approach in the classroom, more effectively teach pronunciation, and teach articles more effectively. I was also able to view posters on various topics including incorporating identity issues into beginner language classrooms, developing religious literacy amongst language teachers, and even using Disney to develop language proficiency!

Although I “filed away” some of the ideas for my future teaching, I was able to apply some of the ideas into my plans for the class I am teaching now: a speaking and listening course in an IEP at Penn State. I utilized the session I attended on using role plays to tweak how I organized a role play we were doing this week, and I am planning on using a session on focus on form in the speaking and listening classroom to change how I give feedback as students prepare for an upcoming presentation. As I continue to teach my course and go into my future teaching context, I am sure that I will be able to continue to incorporate the teaching insights I gained at TESOL.

Sharing my research through my poster session was a great experience as well. The project I presented was my Master’s Paper, “Indexicality and L2 Education: A Perspective on Elinor Ochs’ Indexical Model”. In it, I take Ochs’ model of indexicality discussed in “Indexing Gender”, and consider how it could be adapted for practical use in the L2 classroom. My conclusion was that Ochs’ work could provide a theoretical basis for a Concept-Based Instruction unit surrounding a pragmatic concept. Then, I used my research on indexicality and Concept-Based Instruction to create a unit on hedging for a class for International Teaching Assistants. Even though I was nervous to present my project, presenting it was actually a lot of fun! It was encouraging to see colleagues

who were interested in my research and to hear colleagues say that they could take the unit that I developed for ITAs on hedging and apply some of my ideas into their contexts. I also gained useful insights into how I could take my research further.



One of the best parts of TESOL was simply getting to network with colleagues. It was inspiring to see how seriously my colleagues took their profession, and hearing about the ways they were sharing resources, ideas for program development, and professional development suggestions. I am incredibly grateful to my colleagues at Three Rivers TESOL for presenting me with the Travel Grant to make my TESOL experience possible.

Professional Development Grant deadline approaching!

3R TESOL is currently accepting applications for its first-ever professional development grant. The deadline for applications is April 20.

Anyone working in the ESL or EFL field who is seeking funding for a project or activity that will benefit ESL/EFL professionals in our area is invited to apply. Applicants do not have to be a member of 3R TESOL; if they are not, they will be offered a free one-year membership in our organization.

The maximum grant is \$500.

For more information, go to our website: <https://threeriverstesol.org/wp/grants-awards/>

Got something you'd like to share with your ESL colleagues? Send your submissions for the *Three Rivers TESOL Newsletter* to: secretary@threeriverstesol.org