



Three Rivers TESOL Newsletter

Spring 2019

Spring Seminar Highlights: Duolingo for TESOL

by Justin Goff, Duolingo

Justin Goff, a product manager at Duolingo English Test, works to make sure that the Duolingo team is learning quickly and that the product is evolving in the right direction. Justin presented Duolingo 101, Duolingo for schools, and Duolingo English test at the spring seminar.

The mission of Duolingo is to “make language education easily available to everyone” based on the idea of technology and the power of play. It has got popular with 300 million users worldwide and 25 million monthly active users. The platform provides language assignments and review lessons for schools. He also highlighted Duolingo English Test as its motto is to make English certification easily available to everyone, compared with TOEFL

and IELTS. Further, he explained how the test works, how it is scored, how it is used, and how it is certified with artificial intelligence and remote proctoring system. For more information, please contact him directly at justin@duolingo.com.



3RT members engage in the presentation by Justin Goff of Duolingo and Stephan Caspar of CMU.



Exploring Language & Culture Using Immersive Technology

by Stephan Caspar, Carnegie Mellon University

Stephan Caspar is an assistant teaching professor in Media Creation and Multicultural Studies, Modern Language, Carnegie Mellon University. He explored language and cultural learning through the use of virtual reality (VR) and immersive technologies.

He introduced the work of the Global Languages and Cultures Room where teachers can facilitate learning with the ideas of ‘play, reflect, and construction’ in immersive environments. By using Google Earth VR and creating 360 VR films, students can develop many skills including critical analysis of VR documentary, outreach skills, media creation skills, and reflective online

journal writing. He shared examples with ready-made experiences, games, and educational apps as well as tools for the lessons with immersive technologies. For more information, see Askwith Kenner Global Languages and Cultures Room from CMU.

Thank you, 3RT Executive Board 2018-2019!



Please thank Ying Zhao (2018-2019 Past President) for her three years of service, Suzanne Meyer (2018-2019 President) to the 3RT community and Greg Mizera for his time as the 3RT Secretary!

3RT VR Workshop at CMU's Kenner Room

3RT is planning to host a VR workshop in the Kenner Room where interested parties could visit the room, be introduced to virtual reality (VR) in theory and in practice as well as brainstorm VR-related lesson plans. The workshop will likely be about three hours on a Saturday morning at the end of August or beginning of September. More details – including how to register – to follow via the 3RT distribution list. More information will be announced to 3RT email subscribers.

Congratulations! 3RT Executive Board 2019-2020



At the 3RT Spring Seminar, April 13th, the 2019-2020 Board was announced.

President	Soyoung Burke
Vice President	Kathy Lipecky
Secretary	Megan Evangeliste
Treasurer	Michael Burke
Webmaster	Megan Reiley
Past President	Suzanne Meyer

Please welcome Kathy Lipecky (Vice President) and Megan Evangeliste (Secretary) to the executive board! Kathy is an ESL specialist of the ESL Program at Duquesne University. She has her B.A. in English and Journalism and a TESOL certification from Duquesne, an M.B.A. from South University. Megan is the International Admission Coordinator and adjunct faculty in ESL/TESOL Program at Duquesne University. She has her B.A. in Communications, M.S.Ed. in Early Childhood and Elementary Education, and M.S.Ed. in ESL/TESOL from Duquesne University.

3RT Membership & Conference Changes

■Beginning in 2019, 3RT Membership dues and Fall Conference fees are collected separately.

■Previously, individual memberships had been \$30 and student memberships \$20, with all conferences included (late registration fee additional).

■2019-2020 3RT Membership Fees

Membership Type	Membership Fee	Conference Fee: Pay when registering (Sept./Oct.)
Institutional	\$150 (no change)	Early: \$15/person Late: \$20
Individual	\$20	Early: \$20 Late: \$25
Student	\$15	Early: \$15 Late: \$20
Publisher	\$75 (no change)	No additional fee

TESOL 2020 Call for Proposals

Submit your Proposal to TESOL 2020 International Convention & English Language Expo (March 31-April 3, 2020, Denver, Colorado). **The proposal deadline is June 10, 2019 at 5 pm U.S. Eastern time.** Please visit <https://www.tesol.org>

TESOL 2019 Convention Report from 3RT TESOL Travel Grant Recipients

Report 1 by Dr. Lilia Savova, Indiana University of Pennsylvania



Dr. Lilia Savova, Indiana University of Pennsylvania (IUP), is the MA TESOL program coordinator. She is also past chair of the TESOL Teacher Education Interest Section and one of the founders of the TESOL Graduate Student Forum (GSF), which is a one-day mini-conference preceding the TESOL Convention. Under her guidance, IUP students have hosted the GSF for three years.

I have had the rare privilege of attending and presenting at over 20 TESOL conventions. And each one has been a professional treat where leading accomplishments, publications, and presentations offer the perfect learning and collaboration environment.

This year was no different. A look at the over 1,000 presentations indicates a growing interest in the socio-cultural perspectives of TESOL. Along with a few presentations focusing on discrete language phenomena (e.g.,

phonetics, grammar, vocabulary), there is a growing number of presentations on the pragmatic aspects of language use (e.g., politeness, style, register) and discourse types (e.g., cover letters, formal invitations, corporate reports) with a special emphasis on ESP

(English for Specific Purposes). There is also an awareness of the emerging changes in the global and local contexts and of the resulting demand for higher proficiency speakers.

New jobs and job requirements have higher expectations for language users who can communicate on advanced personal as well as on highly specialized professional levels. The awareness, acceptance and appreciation of the multiple local varieties of English, or world Englishes, comes in tandem with an increased interest in the effective use of English for global academic and professional purposes. This marks the rise of two opposing yet complementary trends; that is the local versus global use of English.

Hence, the focus of this year's TESOL Convention on local vs. global trends in TESOL.

One of the most exciting venues for new ideas is the TESOL Electronic Village. For the past ten years, it has promoted a friendly informal environment for sharing apps and strategies for their classroom applications. In simultaneously occurring face-to-face discussions, attendees can see one or more computer presentations on several new apps. The open format of these sessions allows for informal conversations and contacts among presenters and participants. I have often used the separate programs of the Electronic Village as resources in teacher education.

The Publishers Exhibitions provide a unique opportunity for viewing the profession at a glance. Professional publications in linguistics, applied linguistics, methodology, second language acquisition, language assessment and curriculum design offer the theoretical knowledge about the profession of TESOL. Practical textbooks and supplementary manuals illustrate the classroom trends in TESOL. Most important, all can be seen, touched, browsed in the same room. Even the mighty Internet cannot match this.

Last but not least, the TESOL Convention offers the best networking and collaboration opportunities where one could find a kindred spirit, start a joint project, borrow ideas from others, share own work, seek ideas from colleagues, join or start a community of practice, avail oneself of publishing opportunities, all of this on a world scale. As one of the three founders of TESOL's Graduate Student Fora, I am proud to say that TESOL is the leader in offering affordable participation opportunities for graduate students and, thus, wisely furthering its role as the leader in ESOL professional development.

Report 2 by Dr. Soyoung Burke, Saint Francis University



Soyoung Burke, Ph.D., with her poster presentation entitled "Global Buddies: Intercultural Communication Competence for International and Domestic Students."

In the past years, I always went with my colleagues and co-presenters to the annual TESOL conventions in different cities including Salt Lake, Baltimore, Denver, Boston, Seattle, and Chicago. My focus was narrowed down to teaching four skills in English (reading, writing, speaking, and listening) for adult ESL learners in intensive English program settings. However, this time was different from the past years because I had new experiences in presenting a poster, meeting new colleagues, and learning other strands in various sessions from TESOL 2019 Convention, Atlanta, GA.

This year, my poster presentation titled, "Global Buddies: Intercultural Communication Competence for International and Domestic Students" is about pairing one international (ESL) student and one domestic American student for them to converse on various cultural topics to increase cultural knowledge and communication skills. This program is similar to a conversation partner, but it is more organized by coordinators with structured materials. For example, it requires 10 hours of service learning, and it is monitored by faculty that all student participants are required to submit

weekly survey report and present about a new culture and their buddy. I received positive responses from the audience that some would plan to adopt the Global Buddies Program in their own programs. Some also suggested me to publish this and do a further survey if possible.

This time, I was able to make more personal connections. Since I went to the TESOL alone this year, three TESOL ladies and I shared an apartment on Airbnb. This was a great experience to get to know each other. All three have had EFL teaching experience. Two are currently teaching at university settings in Saudi Arabia and Bosnia, and the other one taught EFL in Cambodia for several years. It was really nice to share our teaching and life stories and encourage each other for our journey of teaching. Also, I met current graduate students and alumni at IUP Get-Together, hosted by Dr. Lilia Savova from the Indiana University of PA.

In addition, I were able to go to CELT 2019 (Christian English Language Educators Association) on March 12 and to network with like-minded TESOL professionals and see how their passions lead to their journey of teaching in various contexts (EFL settings and the US local communities and churches for international student's families, refugees, and immigrants).

My teaching areas are usually writing, vocabulary, and listening/speaking. Fortunately, I was able to learn new strands including Advocacy (based on OELA fast facts), intensive English program and administration. Also, I have got a better understanding of corpus research, technologies, and second language writing research.

In addition, Atlanta city was a great place to visit. Near the Georgia World Congress Center where the TESOL convention was held, there is a lot to see within walking distance. These include College Football Hall of Fame, Mercedes-Benz Stadium, State Farm Arena, CNN headquarter, World of Coca-Cola, Centennial Olympic Park, Georgia Aquarium, Center for Civil and Human Rights.

I am so grateful for the travel grant from the Three Rivers TESOL that I learned new things and met new TESOL professionals. If you have never been to TESOL convention or haven't been for a while, I highly encourage you to submit proposals for TESOL 2020 in Denver, Colorado (March 31-April 3) and get the TESOL International Convention Travel Grant from the Three Rivers TESOL! I hope you can enjoy the time of learning, traveling, and meeting new people.



Soyoung Burke, Ph.D., is the Coordinator of the Intensive English Program and Assistant Professor of International Student Programs at Saint Francis University. Dr. Burke is the President of 3RT.

TESOL's Six Principles

Principle 1: Know Your Learners

by Mariana Palade Syrotiak, Gannon University



Mariana Palade Syrotiak (syrotiak001@gannon.edu) is the Director of the Office of English Language and Global Training, Global Enrollment and Engagement Division at Gannon University.

The first out of the 6 Principles for Exemplary Teaching of English Learners is: Know Your Learners, which states: ***"Teachers learn basic information about their students' families, languages, cultures, and educational backgrounds to engage them in class and prepare and deliver lessons more effectively."***

I believe that this principle is not only about teaching better but learning better. Knowing the learner's linguistic background informs what language area may need the most attention, such as sound discrimination: /p/ and /b/, and understanding patterns of errors due to interlanguage. The linguistic background is part of the learner's

identity (Delpit, 2008) which in turn impacts the language learning.

It is important for a program to welcome students as whole beings and see them in their multi-dimensionality, not only as language learners. We start our orientation with George Lakey's Diversity Welcome (Training for Change) adapting it to include our students' identifiers. Also, students introduce themselves in front of a map. Placing stickers on the map to mark places of significance provides students the ability to share things that are most familiar. These activities create a common foundation, while highlighting the diversity. They also create the space for students to share who they are from the start. Zaretta Hammond (2015) says that we need to build a sense of community and connection in the classroom that supports the emotional needs of all the learners who are on their way to create their own learner identity (p. 142). George Lakey (2010) calls it strengthening the container, as it has to hold whatever is going on in the classroom.

When Mrs. R. provided feedback on a particular grammatical form, one of her students had a differing opinion and reacted very strongly, first toward the teacher, and next toward a classmate. He was so upset that he stormed out of the classroom and stood in the hallway muttering to himself in his native language. He was angry and reactive toward everyone who tried to talk to him. He was hurt and rejected everyone who tried to approach him, no matter the intention.

Mrs. R. knew that the strong reaction had nothing to do with her or the grammar. Fortunately, days before she asked students to write her a personal letter. The student

revealed something about his family and his past that felt raw and painful. Knowing that, she did not take his reactions personally and was able to create the space that he needed at that time. In the moment the student said that he would drop the program, at first he said immediately, and then he said that he would complete this session.

Weeks later he changed his mind completely and returned to his wonderful, jovial self. That was because everyone knew his story and knew how to give him space and gently guide him back into our community of learners.

Principle 2: Create conditions for language learning: "Even Saturday and Sunday is Fine"

by Andy Decker, Kansai University



Andy Decker (adecker@kansai-u.ac.jp) teaches English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in Osaka, Japan at Kansai University, a partner of Chatham University in Pittsburgh, PA, where he taught English as a Second Language (ESL) for almost eight years.

I received an email from a student from a US culture-themed high intermediate reading class I taught at Chatham this past fall. It read:

*Happy new year. How are you?
I tried to search student ticket for
Hamilton on Chatham happenings
and student discount ticket home
page.
But I could not find it and that ticket is
very expensive and very popular.
Would you mind taking us to the
musical as a field trip?
Even Saturday and Sunday is Fine.
M.*

I had asked if the class had heard of the musical or person after sharing a story about how hard it was to get tickets for Hamilton on NPR. No one had heard of either. In my reply to M, I told her about In the Heights, a musical by the same creator in Pittsburgh and closer in price to the August Wilson play we attended as a class. M replied:

*Actually, N, Y and I are going to
Hamilton in January 25.*

*Honestly, that ticket is expensive, but,
we decided to go.*

I do not know which is more exciting, the class deciding that this cultural phenomenon was worth the cost and the process of getting the tickets and there and back, or that it was M, whose other classes were all at the intermediate level, communicating this to me. She wrote afterwards:

*I was very impressed about Hamilton,
but it was very fast, I could not
understand a lot. I enjoy that very
much. After, I listen to Hamilton
songs everyday.*

And she continued to communicate, sharing comparable experiences in Japan for families like mine. M had said very little in class until after the August Wilson play. On the bus back

to Chatham, she shared her interest in aviation and her plans to visit an aviation museum. Later, I learned there was an photography exhibit on early female aviators in town and gave her the information after class. Her final exam comparing Japanese and US airlines showed improvement from midterm and was memorable. Her last email ended:

*Thank you for informing me how to
understand Hamilton songs. I will try
to find lyrics.[...]
Yesterday, I told your daughter story
for my mother. She said that she got
this summer Little Mermaid ticket at
the Shiki Theatre, but she has promise
with her friends. I will not able to
watch it with her. I am jealously her.
Thank you.
M*

TESOL's second principle "for exemplary teaching of language learners" is "Create conditions for language learning." In their explanation, the phrase "conditions for language learning" is replaced by "a classroom culture so students feel comfortable." I had thought the most important thing we would do was to attend the August Wilson play: now, I think it was taking our time at the beginning and end of class to talk about what was happening this week and what they did on their own last week. I just bought tickets to The Little Mermaid at the Shiki Theatre for my daughter.

Principle 3: Design High-Quality Lessons for Language Development:

Making Content "Real"

by Kathy Lipecky, Duquesne University



Kathy Lipecky, M.S.Ed. and M.B.A., is the ESL Specialist at Duquesne University ESL Program and is currently serving as Vice President of 3RT.

The key to creating high-quality lessons for language development is to make content comprehensible and meaningful for the learner.

Students should have a clear understanding of the language and content objectives for each lesson. It is important to recognize that communicating learning objectives is not and should not be a "one and done" activity but, rather, something that is reinforced multiple times throughout the lesson.

Making content "real" and relatable is integral to the language learning process. If students don't see how/why/when information learned in the classroom can be applied, that

content loses meaning and won't be retained. Choosing meaningful content requires us to really take the time to get to know our students, learn about their interests and what motivates them. This added effort makes a tremendous difference in enhancing the student experience.

To help students meet these objectives, educators must ensure the use of comprehensible input. We must realize that a lesson plan that has worked in the past for one set of learners may not have the same impact on a different group of learners. We need to be adaptive and ready to use various scaffolding techniques to enhance input and promote understanding.

Lastly, we need to make all of this relevant for students by providing opportunities to engage with authentic language. It's all too easy to get stuck in the monotony of textbook activities when trying to achieve learning objectives but a lot of the content provided in textbooks is contrived and, well, boring. We should seize opportunities to integrate culturally relevant and interesting content in the classroom. Using current media from the Internet to scaffold information we've learned in the textbook helps to make content "real" and feel important to the student. This helps to bridge the gap between the language concepts learned in the classroom and language use in everyday life.

Principle 4: Adapt Lesson Delivery as Needed

by Dr. Gregory Mizera, University of Pittsburgh



Greg Mizera, Ph.D., is the Linguistics ESL Coordinator at the English Language Institute, University of Pittsburgh.

A good teacher is like a good football coach. She needs to have a game plan but she has to be able to change that plan quickly if it doesn't work. In football, if your team is down 20-0 at halftime, it's time to regroup and rethink. In ESL education, when that excellent lesson plan that you slaved over all evening doesn't produce the expected results, you've got to be ready to change it up.

The first step is to realize when students aren't "getting it." That leads into Principle 5 (Monitor and assess students' English development), but it's worth noting here that assessment should be an ongoing process, not something that's left for the end of class (or the end of the course!). Teachers should constantly and consistently check their students' understanding of content, task, and purpose. Do they realize what they are supposed to be

learning, how they're going to learn it, and why they should learn it? If not, it may be time to take one step back in order to take two forward.

What does that mean in practice? Here are four suggestions:

1. Build assessment points into your lesson plan. Don't fill the period with so much teacher talk that students don't have a chance to show you that they're not following you. Stop and check. And really check. I've seen teachers toss out a half-hearted "everyone OK?" to a class (sometimes without even looking up), and that sends a message: *I'm ready to move on, don't ask any questions.* Call on individual students by name and make them demonstrate they're with you so far.
2. If students aren't getting it- whether "it" is the meaning of a new vocabulary word, or a grammar point, or something else- start thinking about a fix. That may be something as simple as repeating a phrase more slowly or using simpler language. It may entail paraphrasing a key point in two or three different ways, adding visual help if feasible, or providing alternate examples. Teachers rarely know why students don't make a connection, so give them multiple chances to connect in a different way. This comes with experience but even novice teachers should be aware of it. Good ESL instructors master the art of creative repetition and reframing.
3. Provide scaffolding and half-way steps. Suppose your students don't understand the main point of a reading passage because that point isn't stated clearly in one spot. Realize that you're asking them to engage in integrative thinking, something beyond "find the topic sentence," and that may be new. Maybe they need to first identify

the central idea of each paragraph or segment in the passage and then put those concepts together. Was there a missing intermediate step in your lesson? If so, it may help to take a moment to create a quick graphic organizer or other analytical device to bridge the gap.

4. Let your students learn from each other. We often link group work to practice and production, but grouping students earlier than you originally planned can help in the presentation and learning of new material too. It may produce a sort of social scaffolding that benefits everyone. If one student in a group sees a sticking point that you missed, he/she may help others (even if it means dipping into a shared L1 for a moment). Don't take it personally- not all knowledge has to come from you!

Principle 5: Monitoring and Assess

by Dr. Suzanne Meyer, University of Pittsburgh



Suzanne Meyer, Ph.D., is an Assistant English Instructor at the University of Pittsburgh English Language Institute and the 3RT Past President.

Principle 5 of TESOL's 6 Principle's for Exemplary Teaching of English

Learners, "Monitor and Assess Student Language Development," focuses on seeking feedback from students, informally or formally, to determine student progress in achieving curricular goals as well as to inform instructor plans for future class work. The principle includes ideas of regularity of assessment as well as systematic data gathering (vs. relying on perception). The impact on course work should, according to the principle, be timely and strategic, including, for example, immediate error correction for formative purposes, formal assessment for summative purposes, with results returned promptly, and/or "mini-lessons" for re-teaching when necessary.

My response focuses on formal means of assessment but is otherwise not context specific. I appreciate TESOL's including assessment as one of the principles of "teaching." In my experience, teaching and assessment are often considered as separate ideas, as in "I taught 'X' last week, so now it's time for assessment" rather than "Since we studied and practiced 'X' last week, we'll take a quick quiz and see what we need to review, if anything, before moving on." These two statements may not at first seem significantly different, but the second, for me, hints more at the yin and yang of study and review, the cyclical nature of teaching. Similarly, as when helping students develop skills, I look for every opportunity for students to achieve their best results when reviewing.

To give my students every opportunity to succeed, it is essential that class and assessment activities mirror each other. If the test isn't mine to craft, I plan learning activities that will familiarize students with test formats and tasks, not in the sense of taking "practice

tests," but during the actual study and practice of content. Additionally, I organize the test in the easiest, most logical fashion possible.

Just as activities are scaffolded in class, I organize questions to help students anticipate what they should demonstrate next, moving from general ideas to specific details, perhaps, or factual data to critical response, or ensuring the assessment tool follows the order of an included text, for example. Since the assessment is meant to highlight a student's achievement, I also review the format in detail, and sometimes provide examples, as a class activity. None of these activities 'give away' the answers; students still make mistakes that demonstrate the extent of their proficiency and their progress toward curricular goals. In fact, the better the test preparation, the more confident I am that the results mirror the student's proficiency rather than test-taking (in)abilities.

A teaching tip for such a comprehensive topic is difficult, but creating the assessment tool in advance or analyzing provided materials in advance provides a great starting place. To better assess students is to better incorporate assessment as part of each lesson plan so that study and assessment are complimentary factors of classroom work.

Principle 6: Engage and Collaborate within a Community of Practice:

Why Should Teachers Engage and Collaborate Within a Community of Practice?

by Grazzia Maria Mendoza, M.Ed.,
M.A., TESOL International
Association Board of Directors



Grazzia María Mendoza, Master's degrees in International Education and TESOL, is a U.S. State Department Alumna, recognized for project development for teachers' professional growth and a certified teacher trainer by the U.S. State Department and SIT. Founder of the Honduran English Language Teacher Association (HELTA), Past President for the Association as well as for the Regional TESOL Group for Central America and the Caribbean. She has worked in the TESOL field for 26 years. TESOL Member and active leader since 2007. Awarded in 2018 the Virginia French Allen Award for Scholarship and Service. Her research interests include Competency Based Language Teaching and Methodological Improvements for Professional Development. At present she develops teacher training projects and projects to improve education in Honduras and is a member of the TESOL International Association Board of Directors.

As teachers we constantly face a variety of challenges in the classroom. Many of these challenges are not isolated, they are not unique and they are not to be solved on one's own. Why? Because there are many others just like us who are facing these same challenges and have come up with a variety of solutions to the same problem. So, why should teachers engage and collaborate within a community of practice (CoP)? There are many reasons I could give you, but the ones I will present here have to do with my personal experience, my promotion of CoPs in the Honduran context and because this is part of being a well-rounded teacher in the field.

From my personal experience as part of CoPs for teachers of English, Gender, Human Rights and several others I have found that being part of a network creates an environment of support where I can share challenges and triumphs. I have experience how I feel enabled to be more open to other's ideas and perspectives and be more tolerant with what happens in my own context. It has favored my feelings of not being alone and understanding that there are others who at the same time are facing issues and success in pretty much the same way as I am. The reader might think that when I speak of these communities of practice, these are integrated by peers of the same background, context and country, not necessarily, I have been part of CoPs with members from developed countries where we have discussed how we share the same challenges and same issues. These CoPs are in different countries, living different experiences, coming from different backgrounds and most importantly possessing different perspectives. The fact that I have decided to be

part of these communities has enabled me to grow and to understand that there is still so much for me to learn. After 26 years in education, 2 advocating for human rights and gender and social inclusion and 2 in the area of development, I have realized there are things I have yet to think about and so much work that I can do to contribute to make changes and impact improvement. However, not only have I come to this realization but also, I have seen how these exchanges impact my personal experience and my professional expertise. For me, it has been a win-win situation, and this is why I highly recommend CoPs. Just like Lave & Wenger (1991) express, by sharing information and experience we have an opportunity to develop in a variety of ways.

As a consequence of this experience I decided 5 years ago this was to be promoted in Honduras as this is a not a usual "trend" in our country, but it is surely a need. Our work started by creating a FB group to simply share materials. After these teachers started sharing experiences and anecdotes. Finally, this became a virtual place of exchange where teachers could come up with solutions together and build community. What was the real challenge we encountered?

Administrating the group and getting other volunteers to transition into the administration. After a while the group dissolved, but the lessons learned which we are putting into practice for our next Virtual Community of Practice is creating a set of rules where we discuss how volunteer and leadership transition will occur, when will this occur and how these leader-volunteers will be selected. Our previous community lacked certain commitment to lead and this is what we are building right

now, the value of volunteerism to lead! So, you see, this was something that was a learning that resulted from a CoP.

Finally, why would a CoP make a teacher a well-rounded individual? Simply because a CoP brings engagement and motivation to move forward and improve our profession, and contribute and influence the life of our learners. Engagement is: "a dynamic relational process that facilitates communication, interaction, involvement, and exchange between an organization and a community for a range of social and organizational outcomes". Being engaged means you are socially involved and it leads to an approach where ethics, reflection and social responsiveness are at play. This translates in approaching the community you are in considering the needs, expectations and interests in order to meet those to the best of everyone's ability and most importantly in favor of the common good. It makes us think in a collective manner and helps us become less egocentric or continue with an individualist approach. Usually, the result of engagement

implies the movement towards positive change that affects many, investing in social capital and building stronger networks.

So, in sum to answer the question in my title, a teacher should engage and collaborate within a community of practice in order to be able to find education, support, cultivate social opportunities, find encouragement to move forward and be a part of a group that will build on each other's strengths to make their weaknesses an area of opportunity for growth. It will allow connectivity, sharing a similar context and building understanding, promote an open and safe dialogue, stimulate learning, and bring the existing knowledge to a peak of transformation to increase new knowledge and promote consistent collaboration. In a world of education where problems become more complex and there is a need for new ideas and diverse ways of teaching and learning, a community of practice is the best human resource to access in order to understand that continuous, ongoing learning is part of our every day job!

Correction:

The following byline was listed incorrect in the Winter Newsletter. "Successful Collaborative Writing Requirements" was written by Ahdab Saaty, Ph.D, Assistant Professor at University of Jeddah, Indiana University of Pennsylvania.