

ESL Content Teachers Collaborative

School of Teaching and Learning

Letters from the Directors



Karen Newman

Dr. Newman writes:

Welcome to the inaugural edition of the ECTC Newsletter! As we move into early autumn here at Ohio State, we're looking forward to staying in touch with our first cohort of ECTC graduates as they return to their classrooms this fall, and to recruiting and welcoming the second cohort of Ohio teachers into our program. Our newsletter and new Web site will help us to achieve our aims of staying in touch with graduates and connecting with new colleagues who are interested in learning about ESL.

Our first year of the ECTC was a time of much learning for all of our teacher participants, who took a series of four graduate-level classes and three workshops with our team. Courses included an introduction to TESOL methods; a field experience focusing on Sheltered Instruction; language and society; and testing and assessment. Our staff worked hard to prepare and deliver quality courses and learning experiences, and we were overwhelmed to see the positive response and immense growth on the part of our secondary content teacher participants. We look forward to building on our experiences during this first year to help augment our services in the years to come.

I would like to offer a very special thank-you to everyone who helped us achieve our goals this past year, including our ECTC team of **Dr. Keiko Samimy** and **Dr. Kathleen Romstedt**, Project Manager **Steven Wisnor**, and Graduate Assistants **Michelle Ray**, **Sunyung Song**, and **Joy Zhang**, as well as the ESL coordinators in our five partnering districts **Bev Good**, **Sharon Esswein**, **Bonnie Weaver**, **Linda Wait**, and **Rene Phillips**, and all of our teacher participants who

Continued on page 2

contents

- Letters from the Directors.....1
- Final Workshop.....3
- News & Announcements..... 4
- Share Fair.....6
- Book Review.....7

**Volume 1, Issue 1
Autumn 2008**

Letters from the Directors, continued from page 1

delicately balanced a busy schedule of teaching, coursework, and home lives to participate in our program during the past year. We sincerely hope that the ECTC has made a contribution to your professional lives, and of course, to all of your students who are learning English as a new language.

Warmly,
– Dr. Karen L. Newman

Dr. Samimy writes:



Keiko Samimy

I would like to thank all the teachers who participated in my TESOL Field Experience during the winter quarter for their patience and understanding. Since it was my first online course, there were many novel situations for me to address to provide a quality learning experience for everyone. Our teachers' enthusiasm and persistence motivated me to forge ahead. This experience taught me a great deal, not only about distance learning, but also about myself as a teacher. Having taught one online course now, I am looking forward to new challenges for the coming year, and to working with our newest cohort.

Best wishes,
– Dr. K.

Dr. Romstedt writes:



Kathleen Romstedt

As we look forward to starting a new school year, I'd like to welcome the new teachers who will be participating in the ECTC. In this program, you will experience a variety of instructional contexts that will give you new ways to interact with other program participants. Particularly in the online classes, you will have the chance to explore topics in a much deeper way than would be possible in a traditional classroom and to learn not only from your professors, but also from other teachers across the state. I'm excited to be a part of such a dynamic learning community.

Sincerely,
– Dr. Romstedt



Final 2007-08 Workshop Is a Success By Steven Wisnor, Project Manager

After nine months of intensive coursework and study, 31 secondary teachers from across Ohio gathered in Columbus to celebrate not only their academic accomplishment, but also the successful conclusion of the ECTC program's inaugural year. The ECTC marked the event with a final, two-day "capstone" workshop held at Ohio State on July 2nd and 3rd, 2008.

The final workshop—held at the Hale Black Cultural Center—was also attended by faculty and students of the School of Teaching and Learning from the College of Education and Human Ecology (EHE). ECTC Director Dr. Karen Newman opened the event with congratulations for the in-service teachers, who participated in the ECTC program from district-based teams in five Ohio districts: Fremont, Hilliard, South-Western, Westerville, and Whitehall. Dr. Newman and

co-director Dr. Kathleen Romstedt presented the teachers with certificates of completion for their work, which involved four graduate-level courses in ESL methodology, instruction, and testing—each using online technology.

The highlights of the workshop were presentations by two guest speakers: Dr. Martha Nyikos of Indiana University (IU), Bloomington, and Roger Rosenthal, Esq., of the Washington-based Migrant Legal Action Program (MLAP). Dr. Nyikos, director of IU's Foreign and Second Language Education program, led a discussion

on the skills and strategies that ELL students use to acquire classroom content. Mr. Rosenthal, executive director of MLAP, presented current research on the rights of immigrant children and ELLs in Ohio's public schools, as well as the responsibilities all district educators and staff have to ensure these rights.

In the fall of 2008, the ECTC will begin the second year of its five-year, \$1.5 million grant from the U.S. Department of Education by recruiting teacher teams from six school districts across Ohio. District administrators or teachers interested in learning more about the ECTC can contact Dr. Newman (newman.301@osu.edu) for further information. ☞



Participants at the workshop



Roger Rosenthal, Esq.



Dr. Martha Nyikos

News and Announcements

Conferences

Mark your calendars for upcoming ESL-related conferences of interest to all teachers who work with English language learners. For more information, visit the individual conferences' Web sites. Check with your district about accruing professional development credits by attending any of these conferences!

- Ohio TESOL: October 31 – November 1, 2008
Easton Towne Center Hilton, Columbus, Ohio
<http://www.ohiotesol.org/>
- National Association for Bilingual Education: February 18 – 21, 2009
Austin, Texas
<http://www.nabe.org/conference.html>
- TESOL: March 26 – 28, 2009
Denver, Colorado
http://www.tesol.org/s_tesol/convention2009

ECTC Recruitment

Are teachers in your school district interested in professional development for ESL? Would your school district like to participate in the ECTC? Please share the news that the coursework offered through ECTC has a \$5,000 value. To discuss participation, contact [Steven Wisnor](#), project manager.

ECTC Staff

Best wishes to our departing ECTC staff member **Michelle Ray**, who served as one of our graduate teaching assistants during the 2007-08 school year. In June, she graduated with a M.A. in Foreign and Second Language Education, and now she takes on a new endeavor as an ESL teacher at Beechwood Elementary School in Whitehall City Schools. Our team will miss her dedicated service and camaraderie!

Continued on page 5

ECTC Graduates, Please Stay in Touch!

How is your school year going? Any updates you'd like to share with the ECTC? The ECTC team encourages our graduates to stay in touch! Send us updated information about your recent activities, conference attendance or presentations, and experiences working with ELLs, so that we can share your successes with colleagues. Click [here](#) to email us.

Google Newsgroup for ECTC Graduates

We invite all ECTC graduates to join our new, online ECTC newsgroup, a Listserv that allows you to continue to exchange information and ideas about ESL with your ECTC colleagues across Ohio. Since this is a "closed" group, meaning that only ECTC graduates can join, you will need to send an e-mail to the ECTC Webmaster, Joy Zhang, at zhang.598@osu.edu, to receive an invitation. You will also need to create a free Google e-mail account to access the newsgroup. Please e-mail Joy for more information. Her e-mail will contain a link to the online invitation, along with subscription instructions. We look forward to seeing you online!

The ESL Content Teachers Collaborative (ECTC) Newsletter

The ECTC Newsletter is a quarterly newsletter for participants and friends of the ESL-Content Teachers Collaborative of the College of Education and Human Ecology, School of Teaching and Learning, The Ohio State University.

Project Director: Karen Newman
Project Co-Directors: Keiko Samimy, Kathleen Romstedt
Editor: Steven Wisnor
Graduate Assistants: Michelle Ray, Sunyung Song, Joy Zhang

Help your English language learners (ELLs) become better questioners!

ELL students, like other students, want to keep pace in their content-area classes. Doing so often requires them to ask questions to clarify meaning. It's easy to forget, however, that ELLs sometimes need help formulating questions in English.

To assist your ELLs, try mounting a large poster or sheet of paper in your classroom that contains a T-chart listing common English questions and phrases your ELLs will need, and when/how these phrases should be used. Since each classroom is different, the questions that teachers post should differ based on students' proficiency. Additionally, you will most likely find that the questions need to be changed as students become more familiar with the content language of the classroom and develop higher-order questioning skills in English. The following are examples of possible questions and phrases that could be posted for the first several weeks of school. Adapt them as needed for your classroom:

- You did not understand what the teacher said...
Raise your hand and ask, "I do not understand. Will you please repeat that?"
- You did not hear what the teacher said...
Raise your hand and ask, "I did not hear you. Will you please say that again?"
- You did not understand a word or phrase...
Raise your hand and ask, "Will you please explain (word or phrase)?"
- You need to go to the restroom...
Raise your hand and ask, "May I please go to the restroom?"

To aid in comprehension, you could also include visual icons next to the questions, such as a question mark or a picture of an ear. This method of posting a visual aid for ELLs to reference will encourage them to ask questions and clarify ideas when they do not understand classroom concepts. It also helps to establish procedure and routines for all students, both native and non-native English speakers.

In each issue, the ECTC team presents a brief teaching idea for you to use in your work with English language learners.

Echevarria, J., & Graves, A. (2007). *Sheltered content instruction: Teaching English language learners with diverse abilities* (3rd ed.). Boston: Pearson, Allyn & Bacon. Pp. xv + 183. ISBN: 0-205-49325-4 (paperback). US \$33.99

Recent years have witnessed a burgeoning number of ELLs (English language learners) who are learning English at the same time as they are learning standards-based content. Teachers frequently report that they struggle to accommodate the diversity of abilities and skills of these students in their classes. These varying student abilities are even more difficult to understand for those teachers who lack adequate training and knowledge about second language acquisition and related issues.

Sheltered Content Instruction: Teaching English Language Learners with Diverse Abilities is designed to prepare teachers to deliver content area instruction to ELLs with diverse abilities using a sheltered instruction (SI) approach, defined in the book as “the teaching of content area knowledge and skills in a more understandable way while also developing students’ English language proficiency” (p. xiii). Drawing upon a wealth of theory, research, and practice from the areas of second language acquisition, multicultural education and special education, well-known authors Jana Echevarria and Anne Graves provide the most current information about ELLs and the implementation of sheltered instruction in the K-12 classroom.

The third edition, which has been fully revised and updated, is organized into eight chapters. The first chapter defines the target student audience in terms of their native language knowledge, English language proficiency, academic background and school experiences, as well as learning and behavior patterns. The chapter is also interspersed with brief discussions of instruction and assessment. The second chapter, most useful for non-ESL practitioners, reviews the historical foundations and theories of general learning and second language teaching. The section on factors that affect second language acquisition is particularly useful for practitioners who face a multitude of student linguistic/cultural backgrounds and proficiency levels.

Chapters 3 through 8 provide specific information for the effective teaching of ELLs. Chapter 3, the only chapter devoted entirely to the specifics of sheltered content instruction (SI), illustrates the distinction between “effective” and “sheltered” instruction. Descriptions of a well-planned sheltered lesson, as well as a comparative case study of three teachers who taught the same content to ELLs using the two different approaches, provide useful information about the characteristics of SI that make it more than “good” or “effective” teaching. The chapter also includes a discussion of SIOP, a research-based model of SI that is currently used in schools in all 50 states and several other countries.

Continued on page 8

In Chapter 4, the authors give readers useful information about providing psychological and emotional support to ELLs. Teachers concerned about creating a learning environment conducive to the emotional and intellectual growth of ELLs will find the discussions on ten affective issues particularly valuable. Learning strategies are the subject of Chapter 5, where the authors offer specific tips on how to decide which learning strategy is appropriate, how to select the best strategy for the content, and how to implement these strategies in a lesson. Since the explicit teaching of learning strategies is essential to optimize learning in both second language and special education, this is a particularly important section.

Chapter 6 and 7 address the issues of curriculum adaptation and adjusting courses, two important aspects of providing accommodations to ELLs. Sound guidelines as well as lesson examples adapted for ELLs are offered to help teachers analyze and adapt material so that students learn language as well as content. Also useful is a detailed description in Chapter 7 of an instructional conversation model (p. 156), the goal of which is to create language-rich opportunities for ELLs to practice using academic language in meaningful and productive ways.

Chapter 8 presents a framework for self-evaluation based on an overview of the material presented in the book. Some examples of processes are also offered for teachers to engage in goal setting, reflection and collaboration in order to teach more effectively in today's diverse classrooms.

Overall, the book provides teachers with the support and direction needed to undertake the sheltered approach and should prove to be a useful tool for anyone teaching and preparing to teach students whose first language is not English. The book is concise, practical, and easy to read. Every chapter starts with an introduction and ends with a brief summary and suggested activities. Its reader-friendly layout is sure to engage every interested reader. ☞