

# ESL Content Teachers Collaborative

School of Teaching and Learning

## Letters from the Directors



Karen Newman  
Project Director

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**W**elcome back to another school year!

This past year saw ECTC team members, along with six ESL teachers, guide a cohort of 32 secondary content-area teachers through our program, with significant learning experiences resulting from our time together. Now, as we settle into the autumn quarter of 2009, I can't help but reflect upon other events of the past year, a year in which the economic downturn created new challenges for so many of us in education, particularly as schools and universities seek to limit any unnecessary expenses. The downturn brought hardship for many of our ESL students' families as well, with some having taken steps to leave Ohio for other states or, in some cases, return to their countries of origin. Despite the downturn, the need for ESL services in Ohio is as urgent as ever, and thanks to the generosity of our funding agency, the U.S. Department of Education, the ECTC is in good shape to continue the full scope of our services as we commence the new school year.

We are currently in the process of preliminary teacher recruitment with six additional districts and, of course, the continuation of our research agenda within the program. We hope you'll enjoy the contents of this latest edition of our newsletter! We look forward to welcoming our newest cohort—and to staying in touch with our graduates—throughout the coming months.

Warmly,  
— Dr. Karen L. Newman

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*Dr. Samimy writes:*



Keiko Samimy

Welcome to another year of our exiting program! My name is Keiko Samimy, professor in the Foreign and Second Language Education department in the School of Teaching and Learning. During the 2009-2010 program year, I will be teaching the TESOL Field Experience course in the spring quarter. I look forward to meeting all the teachers who will be collaborating with us this year.

Best wishes,  
– Dr. K.

*Dr. Romstedt writes:*



Kathleen Romstedt

Nearly every teacher in Ohio has had or will have English language learners in class at some point. This is no longer a phenomenon limited to big cities. Small towns and rural areas have also become home to some of our country's newest residents. While many teachers have had coursework that addressed culturally relevant pedagogy, few have had training on how to make the language of classroom—and content that it conveys—accessible to the learner. Fewer still have been exposed to methods of facilitating the development of English among these students. As the ELL population increases, so does the need for teachers who can maximally engage these learners. So far ECTC has trained over 70 teachers around the state, and we have been gratified by the success stories they have shared with us. We look forward to another exciting year of working with content area teachers as they become language teachers too!

Sincerely,  
– Dr. Romstedt

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## Promoting Stronger Collaboration: Workshop III

by Steven Wisnor

This summer was a busy yet extremely productive time for participants in this year's ECTC program. They can take pride in several major accomplishments achieved throughout the summer months: completing two weeks of intensive summer courses; re-examining and modifying their current classroom assessment practices for ELL students; creating ESL-focused educational programs to be implemented in their districts this school year; and participating in a full-day workshop with fellow teachers, administrators, Ohio State professors, and education specialists from around the country.



**Teacher-to-Teacher Activities**



**Teachers with Drs. Newman and Romstedt**

This final workshop of the 2008-2009 ECTC program year took place on July 1 at Ohio State's Language and Literacy Center—a part of the university's School of Teaching and Learning. Teachers from six districts teams (Copley-Fairlawn, Findlay, Fostoria, New Albany-Plain Local, Pickerington Local, and Reynoldsburg) attended the capstone workshop, marking their successful completion of the ECTC's nine-month professional development program. These teachers were joined at the workshop by several professors from Ohio State, ECTC staff, district administrators, and ECTC alumnae from South-Western and Whitehall City Schools (both from the ECTC's 2007-2008 cohort).

Teachers had the opportunity to listen to and dialogue with a number of guest speakers who addressed different aspects of ELL education. "The speakers were excellent," commented one teacher. "They were very informative and focused on real life and numbers and program implementation." Roger Rosenthal from the Migrant Legal Action Program presented at his second ECTC workshop, highlighting civil rights issues that all school personnel need to be aware of when working with ELLs. Dr. Katie Brooks, Susan Adams, and Patricia Morita-Mullaney—a team of Indiana educators who train in-service teachers in Indianapolis—challenged participants to consider how teachers can engage their district administrators to better serve ELL students. The theme of teacher-administrator partnership was well-received. "We need administrators to be involved in these programs," concluded a teacher. ☪

## News and Announcements

### ***The ECTC Is Recruiting!!***

Attention all district administrators and ELL teachers interested in ESL professional development for your content teachers. The ECTC is currently recruiting district cohorts for the 2009-2010 and 2010-2011 academic years. Applications for 2009-2010 are due in mid-October, and the program begins in the late-autumn (November/December). For more information, please contact Dr. Karen Newman by e-mail at [newman.301@osu.edu](mailto:newman.301@osu.edu) or by phone at 614-292-8046.

### ***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 30-31, 2009  
The Hilton at Easton Town Center, Columbus, Ohio  
<http://www.ohiotesol.org>
- TESOL: March 24-27, 2010  
Boston, Massachusetts  
<http://www.tesol.org>

### ***ECTC in D.C.!***

From May 28-30 at the International Conference on Language Teacher Education in Washington, D.C., Dr. Kathleen Romstedt and Dr. Karen Newman presented their paper (co-authored by Dr. Keiko Samimy) entitled, "What Content Teachers Want: Assessing and Meeting the Professional Development Needs of Secondary Teachers of English Language Learners." Co-sponsored by the National Capital Language Resource Center (NCLRC) and the Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition (CARLA), the conference provided the ECTC yet another opportunity to share research and insights into professional development with a national (and international!) audience of fellow educators.

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## News and Announcements, Continued

### *Changes to ECTC Staff*

Best wishes are in order for **Sage Thompson**, who served as a graduate assistant for the ECTC during the 2008-2009 academic year. Sage graduated with an M.A. in Foreign and Second Language Education in June and is currently teaching in her first year at Columbus Torah Academy. Her original ideas, creative perspective, and artistic touch will be missed!

As the autumn quarter begins, the ECTC would like to welcome **Kathleen Seyler** as our newest team member. Kathleen recently completed her M.Ed. in Foreign and Second Language Acquisition here in the School of Teaching and Learning. She is now continuing her studies by pursuing an M.A. in TESOL.

### *ECTC Graduates, Please Stay in Touch!*

As always, you can 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. Please e-mail your successes to [swisnor@ehe.osu.edu](mailto:swisnor@ehe.osu.edu).

### The ESL-Content Teachers Collaborative (ECTC) Newsletter

The ECTC Newsletter is a quarterly newsletter for participants and friends of the ESL-Content Teachers Collaborative—a professional development program in the School of Teaching and Learning in the College of Education and Human Ecology, The Ohio State University. The program is funded by a five-year, \$1.5 million award from the U.S. Department of Education's Office of English Language Acquisition (OELA).

*Project Director:* Karen Newman

*Project Co-Directors:* Keiko Samimy, Kathleen Romstedt

*Project Manager & Editor:* Steven Wisnor

*Graduate Assistants:* Kathleen Seyler, Sunyung Song, Joy Zhang

## Share Fair

by Maryann Miller—ESL Teacher, Pickerington Local Schools

### *Personal Culture-Grams*

My students and I are working on a wonderful way for academic teachers to develop a clear understanding about each ELL student's perspective using PowerPoint and audio podcasts. Each student will create and submit a personal Culture-Gram, which I will code and post on my web page for academic teachers to access. Since my web page is accessible to anyone on the web, I have instructed my students to write in the first person, to cut and paste images from the web to support information, and not to make reference to any personal identifiable information. I plan to email a master code breaker to the staff internally.

Lesson Plan: Discuss the big question—

**“How do our cultural experiences influence our perception of the world?”**

\* **Step 1—Pair:** Have students pair up and generate as many categories of cultures that they belong to. A question to think about could be, “How would you describe particular groups that gather in the cafeteria or the mall, or at parties, family gatherings, religious events, political events, and celebrations?”

\* **Step 2—Share:** Have students record their categories on the class chart paper, in order to create a large collection of cultural categories for each student to choose from for his/her project. Students can indicate duplicate findings using a check mark. (Possible cultural categories include religion, gender, age, athletics, education level, language, geographical region, country of origin, ethnicity, race, political affiliation, economical level, urban/rural).

\* **Step 3—Whole group:** Facilitate a discussion to positively affirm students' similarities and differences, as well as to brainstorm for additional cultural categories.

\* **Step 4—Individually:** Each student chooses seven to ten categories of cultures that answer the question, “Who am I?” Then each student creates his/her own PowerPoint Culture-Gram with audio pod cast, with the goal of helping academic teachers better understand him/her as a unique individual.

Remember, PowerPoint presentations must be in first person narrative, using the pronouns “I,” “we,” and “us.” Do not include full names or any personal identifiable information in PowerPoints or audio podcasts.

Students may order the cultural categories based on the importance in their lives.

Please have students include any examples of differences within cultures that may clear up misconceptions or generalizations (e.g., “Amharic is the national language of Ethiopia although my family speaks Oromifaa.”).

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

**Carter, M; Hernandez, A; & Richison, J. (2009). *Interactive notebooks and English language learners*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann. Pp. 136. ISBN: 100325026114 (paperback).**

When evaluating new strategies and tools to help English language learners (ELLs) acquire content and language, teachers often face a particular dilemma: “I only have so much prep-time; can I make this strategy work for all my students?” Teachers may find that the modifications and strategies they spend time developing indeed benefit ELLs in their classroom, but the strategies do not adequately address the learning needs of some of their native English-speaking students. What tools, therefore, can teachers use that efficiently and actively engage all students in classroom learning at the same time?

One tool that can help is a type of student portfolio called the “Interactive Notebook” (IN). In the new book *Interactive Notebooks and English Language Learners*, a trio of educators and former high school teachers describe how INs can benefit a teacher’s instruction by meeting the needs of both ELLs and non-ELLs. Using INs not only provides opportunities for authentic assessment, but they can also be easily integrated into the curriculum.

Carter, Hernandez, and Richison define an IN as a student-centered, teacher-directed notebook organized to promote active student engagement both in classroom content and in their own learning (p. 3-4). Using a spiral notebook or partitioned binder, students gather, define, and summarize information on the right side of the IN via note taking or teacher-designed worksheets. On the left side of the IN, students respond to their notes through a variety of teacher-designed activities such as text-based responses, personal reflections, and in-class project assignments. This left side is considered the “output” section, where “students work with the information they have input on the right side...in creative, thought-provoking, and colorful ways” (p. 48).

The authors of *Interactive Notebooks* have created a brief, introductory text to creating and implementing INs into everyday instruction and assessment. A wide range of details are discussed—from small but necessary details like page numbering and dividing INs into sections, to major issues such as how teachers can use INs as ongoing authentic assessments which can record student cognitive and meta-cognitive processes.

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## Book Review, Continued

For teachers who have used portfolios and INs with native English-speaking students, the benefits of implementing a student-centered compilation would be well-known, and this text provides a general review of the strategy. However, the book focuses significantly on the principle of *scaffolding* content for ELLs. Using interactive notebooks alone, the authors state, is not sufficient for accelerating content and language acquisition, but scaffolding the content and language used in IN assignments create “powerful lessons that promote scholarship and independence” for ELLs (p. 81).

This emphasis on scaffolding gives the book its value by describing how to modify an important tool for the benefit of all students. The authors explain the seven types of scaffolding (modeling, bridging, contextualization, schema building, cognitive and meta-cognitive development, text re-presentation, and linguistic and meta-linguistic development), and in Chapters 6 and 7 they share examples of each drawn from INs. The authors also present complete lesson plans which use INs to illustrate where and how to incorporate scaffolding in an instructional sequence. Chapter 8 includes several more complete lesson plans with procedures, worksheet templates, and teacher instructions for helping ELLs use INs.

Assessing the work done in INs is another important task, and the authors spend Chapter 5 illustrating how IN can be used successfully as a multifaceted evaluation—specifically, as a formal evaluation, an informal assessment, a student self-assessment, and an opportunity for parent review. Basic instructions and grading templates are provided.

Though the book is grounded in research-based literature in education, it is a straight-forward, practical, how-to manual for designing INs and structuring how students use them in content-area classrooms. For teachers new to INs or for those who want to learn how to better adapt INs for ELLs, this book serves as a useful resource. Carter, Hernandez, and Richison have written a guidebook for teachers that focuses “on how to serve the ELL population in particular so that you can be effective in serving any learner” (p.3). ☺