

# ESL Content Teachers Collaborative

School of Teaching and Learning



Keiko K. Samimy  
*Project Director*

## Letter from the Director

Dear ECTC Colleagues,

It is hard to believe but summer is already here. As you will see, we had a very productive spring quarter thanks to you. I am excited and humbled by your continued support and commitment to making a difference in the lives of English language learners. As we all learned through our workshops and online classes, a classroom teacher with proper ESL training and sympathetic ears can make a huge difference to ELL students. We, the ECTC staff, look forward to working with you this summer. Do not hesitate to let us know if there is anything we can do to help.

Have a good summer!

Dr. KS

Keiko K. Samimy, Ph.D.

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## ECTC Attends ILTE Conference in Minneapolis by Karen Newman

**F**rom May 19-21, 2011, the ECTC team attended the 7<sup>th</sup> biennial International Language Teacher Educator (ILTE) Conference at the University of Minnesota, hosted by the Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition (CARLA), [<http://www.carla.umn.edu/>], one of 15 federally-funded, national language resource centers in the United States. About 300 fellow language teacher educators were in attendance, and the conference highlighted topics such as foreign language teaching, ESL, EFL, technology, practicum experiences, and second language acquisition. Our ECTC team presented three papers at ILTE, based on the work we've done with you, our ECTC teachers.

Our first paper, entitled “**Fostering Collaborative Practices with ESL and Content Teachers: Implications for In-service Professional Development**,” addressed the challenges and strategies for success that you've shared with us for collaborating with your colleagues. We've learned from you that in-school collaboration is fraught with a myriad of institutional difficulties, and that ESL initiatives often work well if they can be linked with other in-school initiatives.

Our second paper, “**Effect of Training on Teachers' Knowledge about Second Language Acquisition**,” featured findings from surveys you returned to us about popular beliefs about language acquisition (remember those pesky surveys from our workshops?!). We found that, in general, our program has helped you to debunk some of the myths about language learning that many people hold.

Our third and final paper, “**Becoming Virtual Professors: A Self-Study of Three Online Language Teacher Educators**,” explored how we perceive our in-person vs. our online teacher identities, based on our experiences of creating and delivering academic content to you in our online courses. We discovered how differently we perceive ourselves as educators in the online medium, based on situational, technological, and personality variables.

Altogether, we received supportive, positive feedback about our presentations, and we even met some new colleagues that we look forward to collaborating with in the future! ☺

CARLA CENTER FOR ADVANCED RESEARCH ON LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

## News and Announcements

### *You're Invited!*

Secondary teachers and administrators! You are cordially invited to attend the ECTC's third and final **workshop** of the 2010-2011 school year **on June 30, 2011**, at Ohio State! Listen and take part in a presentation about the **civil and educational rights of ELL students**, and learn about the laws that establish these rights. RSVP with your name and school district to Steven by June 20 ([swisnor@ehe.osu.edu](mailto:swisnor@ehe.osu.edu)).

### *Upcoming Conferences*

**Ohio TESOL (Ohio Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages):**

November 11-12, 2011, in Columbus, OH <http://www.ohiotesol.org/>

**NCTE (National Council of Teachers of English):**

November 17-22, 2011, in Chicago, IL <http://www.ncte.org/>

**NCSS (National Council for the Social Studies):**

December 2-4, 2011, in Washington, D.C. <http://www.socialstudies.org/conference>

**NABE (National Association for Bilingual Education):**

February 15-17, 2012, in Dallas, TX <http://www.nabe.org/>

**TESOL (Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages):**

March 28-31, 2012, in Philadelphia, PA <http://www.tesol.org/>

**NSTA (National Science Teachers Association):**

March 29-April 1, 2012, in Indianapolis, IN <http://www.nsta.org/conferences/>

**NCTM (National Council of Teachers of Mathematics):**

April 25-29, 2012, in Philadelphia, PA <http://www.nctm.org/conferences/>

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## News and Announcements, Continued

### *Social Network with the ECTC*

Attention ECTC alumni! Would you like a convenient way to stay in touch with your fellow content and ESL teachers? We have created **an invitation-only social network through Ning** ([www.ning.com](http://www.ning.com)) especially for teachers to join and continue the collaboration. Our Ning network has similar features as Carmen (chat, forums), and membership is limited just to graduates of the ECTC program. For more information and an invitation, ECTC alumni can contact Steven ([swisnor@ehe.osu.edu](mailto:swisnor@ehe.osu.edu)).

### *Interested in Participating?*

Attention district administrators and ESL teachers! Are you interested in ESL training for a team of content-area teachers in your district? Contact Steven about how you can participate in the ECTC in 2011-2012 ([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).

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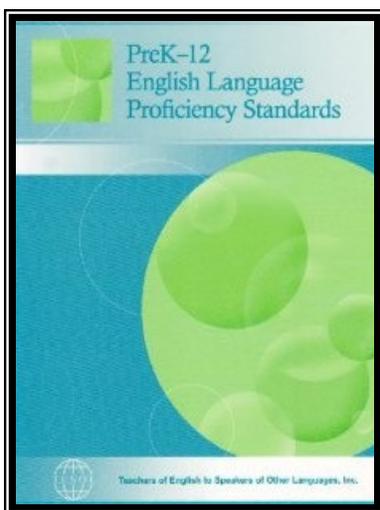
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## Standards Matter in the Classroom

By Dr. Edwina Carreon, The Ohio State University

At the end of each school year, teachers find out how their students do on state-wide achievement and proficiency tests. The occasion is not always a joyous one, particularly for content teachers who count their English language learners among those who do not demonstrate grade-level progress in content areas or who fail to graduate high school. Even more frustrating to many teachers who have worked hard to develop instructional practices geared towards helping all of their students may be the sense that these large-scale tests are strongly biased linguistically and culturally against ELLs, and as a result, do not really measure what their ELLs know or can do with the knowledge they have learned in the classroom. However, teachers feel powerless to do anything more and dread the future as NCLB's AYP (adequate yearly progress) requirement becomes reality in 2014.



Perhaps there is light at the end of this dark tunnel. I am referring to *standards*, which lie at the core of the whole accountability- by-assessment movement. Standards are part of federal, state, district, and organizational discourse on assessment, from the Title I statement of purpose (“proficiency on challenging state academic achievement standards,” “aligning curriculum, teaching, and assessment to state standards” (Mihai, 2010, 16) to state and professional organizations’ development of English language proficiency and various content standards and benchmarks. But are the standards real to content teachers? Do content teachers plan classroom activities, tasks, and projects around specific standards and benchmarks or objectives? Are they aware of standards for their ELLs?

Standards are not just abstract guidelines for policymakers, administrators, or textbook developers. Content teachers are at the front line, face to face with students throughout the school year, and thus held accountable for their students’ (including ELLs) academic achievement. Knowing where their ELLs are in terms of their language proficiency is an important step in helping them reach their language and academic goals. Thus, teachers need to be familiar with English language proficiency

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## Share Fair, Continued

standards, as they already are with content standards in their area of expertise. For example, the *Ohio English Language Proficiency Standards for ELLs* developed by the Ohio Department of Education and the *PreK-12 English Language Proficiency Standards* by the Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages organization (TESOL) are meant to and do provide specific benchmarks and indicators for classroom teachers in order that they may align their instruction to classroom assessment, as well as to district and state assessments. The benchmarks inform teachers on how to make content accessible to ELLs who are at various proficiency levels and to plan appropriate assessments. The TESOL guidelines, in fact, go as far as providing behavioral/performance indicators and objectives relevant to content areas like math, social studies, and language arts.

Knowing and incorporating both content area standards AND English language proficiency standards in lesson and assessment planning, classroom instruction, and feedback processes bring the academic targets to the forefront. This is a huge step in empowering teachers and preventing the feeling of helplessness when faced with the challenges of helping ELLs achieve academic success. ☞

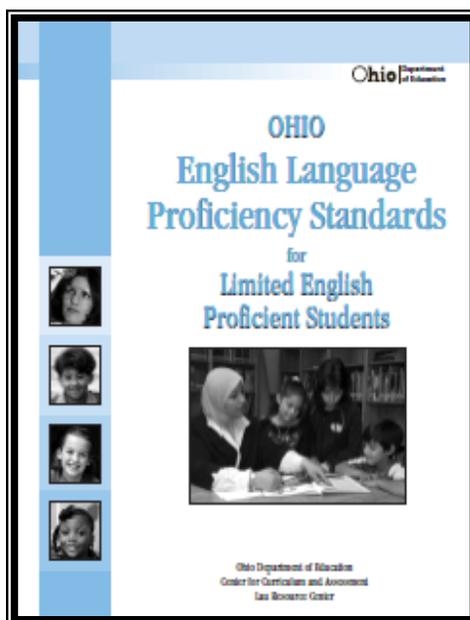
References:

Mihai, F. 2010. *Assessing English Language Learners in the Content Areas*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan.

*PreK-12 English Language Proficiency Standards*. 2006. Teachers to Speakers of Other Languages, Inc.

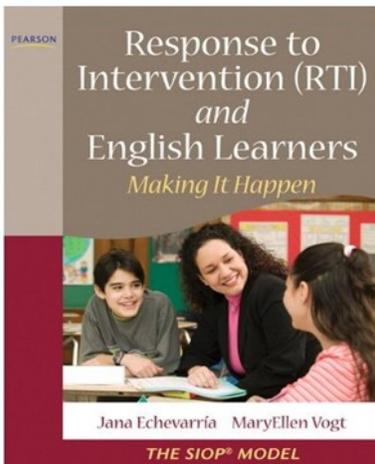
*Ohio English Language Proficiency Standards for Limited English Proficiency Students*. 2010. Ohio Department of Education.

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



**Echevarría, Jana & Vogt, MaryEllen. (2011). *Response to Intervention (RTI) and English Learners: Making It Happen*. Boston, MA: Pearson Education, Inc. Pp. 156. ISBN: 0137048904 (paperback).**

Many school districts have selected the Response to Intervention (RTI) process as one of their key professional development targets for their staff. But with limited time, multiple building commitments, and other district initiatives to address, teachers face the constant challenge of acquiring new knowledge from professional development and incorporating it into their everyday practice.



As one of the most recent titles in the ever-growing library of SIOP texts from Pearson, *Response to Intervention and English Learners: Making It Happen* (2011) offers teachers an opportunity to simultaneously enhance their professional learning in two critical areas of teacher training: RTI and TESOL. Authors Jana Echevarría and MaryEllen Vogt introduce readers to RTI and its three-tier “recursive” structure, define what qualifies (and does not qualify) as tiered intervention, and address RTI’s use with English learners. In particular, the authors describe how their SIOP Model provides an effective research-based approach for implementing Tier 1 (called the “universal tier”), which focuses on instruction and assessment to benefit all students.

The need for classroom teachers to collaborate with ESL professionals trained in second language acquisition is highlighted in Tier 2, when decisions are made about the most-appropriate types of supplemental instruction on a student-by-student basis. For the more-intensive and specific interventions called for by Tier 3, Echevarría and Vogt emphasize that cultural and linguistic factors must help guide the underlying data collection process. Importantly, the authors review what the term “learning disability” encompasses, the methods by which *teams* of educators can identify the causes of an individual student’s academic struggles (disability, cultural and linguistic difference, or both), and effective assessment strategies to use for a student. ☞