



# HAWAII TEACHERS OF ENGLISH TO SPEAKERS OF OTHER LANGUAGES

## THE WORD - VOLUME 22 ISSUE 1

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If you would like to contribute an article to *The Word*, please submit the articles via E-mail to Lisa Kawai at <lkawai@hpu.edu>.

We look forward to receiving your submissions!  
*The Word* Newsletter  
Committee: Lisa Kawai

### Apps for Language Learners By Cristiane Vicentini

(Continued from the February and May 2012 issues of *The Word*.)

Nowadays, smart phones and tablets are ubiquitous, creating new ways and means to study languages. This annotated bibliography was compiled in order to give your students technologically advanced options for studying English on their own. The apps in this list address all four major language skills as well as pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary. They include business English, comics, dictionaries, flashcards, games, idioms, learning communities (*Busuu*), music, picture search engines, story books, story archives (*StoryCorps*), TV shows and movies, TOEIC and TOEFL preparation, and tongue twisters. They are organized in

alphabetical order to facilitate the inclusion of additional apps as you find them. All are available on iTunes, and some might be available on the Android app market, too. At the time the list was compiled, most were lite (or free) versions with sample lessons or exercises making it easy for students to try them out. Further practice is generally available at a low cost.

This project grew out of a course assignment in the MA in TESOL program at HPU. I owe special thanks to Professor Jean Kirschenmann, for her support and guidance, Dr. Candis Lee, for the opportunity to work on this project, and my classmate Monica Smith, for suggesting several of the apps that have been included on this list.

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### The Importance of Locking in Students' Top Down and Bottom Up Knowledge By Michael J. Konig

One teacher walks into a classroom planning to do a reading lesson on the topic "Prehistoric Animals." He greets his students, pulls out copies of the reading selection, passes them out and instructs pupils to begin reading. After a few minutes, he asks the students some questions about what they have just read. After completing this reading activity, he then goes on to another separate lesson he has planned for the day.






Another teacher walks into a room next door and plans a lesson on the same topic. This teacher also greets his students and then does some light con-

versation about a movie called *Jurassic Park* that he watched the night before. He plays a short two-minute video clip from the movie and writes the word *dinosaurs* on the board. He then asks students what they know about dinosaurs and posts pictures on the board of different species of dinosaurs. After that, the teacher asks students to brainstorm any words that may be related to the topic. This teacher now passes out a worksheet identical to the reading one passed out by the first teacher. Students are asked to read the title and the first sentence of each paragraph and then are asked what they think the story will be about.

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## Apps for Language Learners (cont.)

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<p>25</p>	<p>SMART Speaking TOEIC</p> 	<p>This app provides practice for the TOEIC speaking section. You can get 9 different questions, record answers to them and then play them back to check on content and pronunciation. If you are not happy with the recording, you can record everything again, until you are satisfied.</p> <p>Notes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Free app – itunes (iphone, ipod Touch, and ipad);</li> <li>2) Even though the app’s main objective is to prepare you for the TOEIC speaking section, it can help you with general speaking skills too;</li> <li>3) Suitable for intermediate and advanced level.</li> </ol>
<p>26</p>	<p>StarMaker</p> 	<p>This is a <i>Karaoke</i> app for any English learner who wants to practice listening and pronunciation skills.</p> <p>Notes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Free app – itunes (iphone, ipod Touch, and ipad);</li> <li>2) Includes 5 free songs;</li> <li>2) Record your voice while listening to someone singing the song you selected (practice rhythm, intonation, and pronunciation);</li> <li>3) After you record the song, <u>only your voice</u> will show;</li> <li>3) Contains “Auto-Tune,” so your voice will always sound great!;</li> <li>4) Popular songs available for as little as \$0.25 a song: Bruno Mars, Adele, Pink, and Cold Play;</li> <li>5) New songs added on a regular basis.</li> </ol>
<p>27</p>	<p>Story B4 Bed</p> 	<p>This is a reading and listening app for bedtime stories. You can watch a video of a native speaker reading a children’s book to a child. The video shows the pages being read, as the story goes along.</p> <p>Notes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Free app – itunes (iphone, ipod Touch, and ipad);</li> <li>2) Only one demo story included – <i>The Frog Princess</i>. However, the site &lt;<a href="http://www.astorybeforebed.com">www.astorybeforebed.com</a>&gt; offers free books to read and record;</li> <li>3) Possibility for paid plans with access to over 300 books online;</li> <li>4) Suitable for children and beginner level students who wish to improve their listening and reading skills.</li> </ol>
<p>28</p>	<p>The Sherlock Holmes Collection</p> 	<p>This app offers 10 Sherlock Holmes short stories, available to read in customizable fonts, sizes, and background colors. Examples include: <i>The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes</i>; <i>A Study in Scarlet</i>; <i>The Hound of the Baskervilles</i>; <i>The Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes</i>, among others.</p> <p>Notes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Free app – itunes (iphone, ipod Touch, and ipad);</li> <li>2) Suitable for high-Intermediate or advanced learners who wish to improve their language skills or even for pleasure reading.</li> </ol>
<p>29</p>	<p>StoryCorps</p> 	<p>This is the smart phone and tablet version of the website &lt;<a href="http://storycorps.org">storycorps.org</a>&gt;. You can practice your listening skills by accessing more than 40 different interviews and/or stories from real people.</p> <p>Notes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Free app – itunes (iphone, ipod Touch, and ipad);</li> <li>2) Quick access - each story lasts about 1 minute 30 seconds;</li> <li>3) The app can be used as source for interviewing people (varied questions on different topics offered);</li> <li>4) Real stories – sometimes fast speed;</li> <li>5) Best for advanced learners.</li> </ol>

## Apps for Language Learners (cont.)



(Continued from page 2.)

30	<p>3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Reading I like Grandma</p> 	<p>This is an app for reading and listening practice. It contains the book “I like Grandma” and offers different reading and listening modes.</p> <p>Notes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Free app – itunes (iphone, ipod Touch, and ipad);</li> <li>2) In “Read to Me” mode, you can listen and see the words being read (text gets highlighted when words are spoken). You can continue listening to the same page for as long as you want, until you turn the page;</li> <li>3) In “Read by Myself” mode, you can tap on words to hear their pronunciation;</li> <li>4) In “AutoPlay” mode, the entire story is read to you.</li> <li>5) Suitable for children or beginner level students.</li> </ol>
31	<p>Tongue Twisters</p> 	<p>This app can help you develop speaking. It contains 100 tongue twisters, some in British English (ex. red lorry, yellow lorry).</p> <p>Notes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Free app – itunes (iphone, ipod Touch, and ipad);</li> <li>2) Use manual or random option to search for best tongue twister;</li> <li>3) These are native speakers’ tongue twisters (difficult vocabulary);</li> <li>4) No audio recording available so it is hard to know how to pronounce words.</li> </ol>
32	<p>tv.com</p> 	<p>This app helps you develop your listening skills. It gives you access to free TV shows from the following video channels: CBS, the CW, ClassicTV, Showtime, Cnet, CBS Sports Mobile, CBS News, Gamespot, Smithsonian Channel, Movie Trailers, ET, theInsider, Simon&amp;Schuster, Webshows, and Chow.</p> <p>Notes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Free app – itunes (iphone, ipod Touch, and ipad);</li> <li>2) No subtitles available;</li> <li>3) Best for high-intermediate or advanced learners.</li> </ol>
33	<p>Verbs Game Lite</p> 	<p>This app is a game to help you memorize irregular verbs in English. You need to write the appropriate form of the verb within a time limit (while the verb “falls down”).</p> <p>Notes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Free app – itunes (iphone, ipod Touch, and ipad);</li> <li>2) Lite version includes 20 irregular verbs; Upgrade to 100 verbs available for \$2.99;</li> <li>3) Verbs are randomly selected (sometimes the same verb appears twice);</li> <li>4) Verb pronunciation available in British English (ex. if the game asks for the past of have, you can click on the “sound icon,” hear “had,” and then type it).</li> </ol>
34	<p>Video Vocab</p> 	<p>This app is a podcast for ESL learners who want to learn and practice Business English vocabulary. Subscribe to Video Vocab through Itunes and get new lessons on smartphones or tablets.</p> <p>Notes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Free app – itunes (iphone, ipod Touch, and ipad);</li> <li>2) Business English videos teach vocabulary in context, and offer practice using the words presented in the video;</li> <li>3) Topics range from Accounting to Legal vocabulary;</li> <li>4) Best for high intermediate to advanced learners.</li> </ol>

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## Apps for Language Learners (cont.)

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35	<p>Vocabulary Bubble</p> 	<p>This is a vocabulary matching game that uses college level vocabulary words and definitions. You have 30 seconds to click on the bubble that matches the definition provided. If you click on the “wrong bubble”, the definition continues to be shown until the “right bubble” is clicked on.</p> <p>Notes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Free app – itunes (iphone, ipod Touch, and ipad);</li> <li>2) The game does not tell you which answer is correct – when you click on “right bubble”, a new screen appears with new question;</li> <li>3) Best for advanced learners of English (fast speed and level of vocabulary).</li> </ol>
36	<p>WordPower – Lite</p> 	<p>Learn a word a day. At the end of one year, 365 words will be stored in this app. This will go on indefinitely, until the app is uninstalled.</p> <p>Notes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Free app – itunes (iphone, ipod Touch, and ipad);</li> <li>2) Pronunciation in American English available;</li> <li>3) Record function – you can listen to the word, record your voice, and compare it to the native-speaker pronunciation;</li> <li>4) Word bank available to store new words;</li> <li>5) Flashcard function – test if you know how to pronounce the words you are learning;</li> <li>6) Study function – learn sentences and phrases showing vocabulary in context;</li> <li>7) Images available for each new word.</li> </ol>

**About the Author:** Cristiane Vicentini is pursuing her MATESOL degree at Hawai'i Pacific University and will graduate in December 2012. She has been an English teacher since 1995. Her experience includes teaching at a variety of language schools in Brazil and in the United States. She is currently teaching at ELS Language Centers Honolulu.

## The Importance of Locking in . . . (cont.)

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In the two cases above, which teacher would have a more successful and meaningful lesson? Which group of students would enjoy themselves more? Which group would have retained more knowledge of the lesson a week later? It could be argued that the students in the second group would have a more meaningful experience because of the time and care taken by their teacher to lock in their preexisting knowledge of world situations and linguistic knowledge. Also, the time taken by the teacher of the second group to warm up his students to the topic and relate the new information to that already known can be the difference between a mediocre lesson, where students are bored, and one where students are engaged and active participants in their learning.

It is very important to warm up our students' minds before going into the main lesson for the day. In fact, doing an ESL / EFL lesson can be a lot like running a marathon. When you go to run your race, you do not just get out of your

car, walk to the starting line, and begin your long distance run. Ideally, you might want to get out of your car, walk around, do some light and deeper stretches and some strides to warm up your body before embarking on your marathon. In doing a lesson for a group of students, it is good practice to ease students into an activity with a variety of advanced organizers, pictures, brainstorming activities and other assorted tasks to prepare them for what they are about to experience.

Having taught EFL in Japan for the past 14 years, I have seen the importance of a good warm up firsthand. In fact, the teacher in the first example above resembled me when I first began teaching having absolutely no experience with teaching theory. The teacher in the second example would be me after several years of EFL experience and going to many seminars, doing many EFL / ESL courses, including a master's program, and taking many classes in the “School of Hard Knocks.”

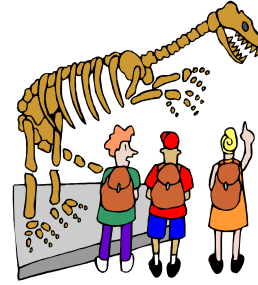
## The Importance of Locking in . . . (cont.)

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The two examples above show us the importance of accessing the prior world, linguistic and discourse knowledge of our students and relating it to what they will study on a given day. This method of warming up students can help them make sense of the new information coming in and make it easier to add it to their existing storage house of knowledge. Without this pre lesson, any information that comes in is useless and disorganized. Therefore, it is imperative to have this warm up time in all of our classes. This goes for any age, gender or level of student. For example, before teaching a group of kindergarten students about animal vocabulary, we may first show them a video of different animals, ask them what their favorite ones are, ask them what sound each animal makes and, finally, teach them the animal name in English. For a group of adult learners getting ready for a lesson about different problems they may experience at a hotel, you may begin by having a discussion about good hotels and ones that do not quite measure up. You may then ask them about some of the problems people encounter in hotels before teaching them the vocabulary they will need for the lesson for that day.

The main point of this article is that, in order for our students to get the most out of their lessons, it is important to have a variety of pre lesson activities, including ad-

vanced organizers and pre-discussions to prepare students for what is to come, so they can more easily accommodate their newly acquired information into their existing world knowledge. Doing this can make the difference between a mediocre lesson where students dread coming to class and a great one where students are fully committed to the tasks at hand.



**About the Author:** Michael J. Konig is a former resident of Honolulu. He grew up in Nanakuli, graduated from Damien High School in 1985, and graduated from the University of Hawaii at Manoa in 1993 with a degree in Broadcast Journalism and a minor in Speech. He moved to Japan in 1998 and has worked in English conversation schools as well as in the public school system. In 2010, he received his Master of TESOL from the University of Southern Queensland in Australia.

## Why Some Thai Students Don't like to Read By Varaporn Jamklai-Mann

The lack of reading interest and skills among some Thai students has been a matter of concern for parents, educators, and policy makers for many years. This concern is often increased in international and English language classrooms where the Thai language is not the medium of instruction. Interviews of nine American teachers working in several Thai universities revealed that this issue was one of the teachers' main concerns and obstacles for teaching Thai students. This report presents several reasons and the rationale behind why some Thai students may not like to read and, as a result, may be at a disadvantage with developing their English language skills.

From the interviews, most of the teachers were frustrated when they could not get their T students to read. For example, one teacher commented that

Thai students, they don't like to read. You really have to fight with them. It's just not part of the culture . . . I know [Thai] friends that don't like to read. They don't like to read text books and stuff. They do it 'cause they have to. It's not a natural thing for them.

Considering the importance of reading as a primary tool for

language and comprehension development, the lack of, or at a minimum a reduction in, reading interest and skills among some Thai students is worthy of consideration. From my interviews, the apparent "lack" of interest in reading among some students seems to stem from a variety of reasons. The most obvious is the students' limited English language proficiency. All of the teachers in my study, for example, described their Thai students as having low English language skills, which played a significant role in their reading ability and motivation.

Generally speaking, developing proficient reading skills is fraught with difficulty, especially for non-native speakers of a second language. Strauss (2008), for example, stated that reading requires a reader to use numerous skills including "decoding of words, the development of phonological skills, syntactic parsing, knowledge of text structure, the development of automatic processing, and use of metacognitive skills" (p.19). Considering having to integrate these complex processes, reading is often regarded as one of the most difficult and demanding skills to obtain, even among native speakers of a language.

In the case of the Thai students in this study, gaining

## Why Some Thai Students Don't like to Read (cont.)

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sufficient reading skills was extremely challenging, considering the many obstacles that they had to overcome and master. For example, the decoding of meaning in the Roman alphabet can be both challenging and frustrating, as the Thai language is rooted mainly in Bali and Sanskrit, a totally different writing system. The grammar and sentence structure between English and Thai are also different, which causes great difficulty for many Thai students. Strauss (2008) also mentioned that a person's reading ability often coincides with one's oral language proficiency. For example, a native English speaking student can sound out the word *cat* and can quickly link it to a specific type of animal, while a Thai student may not be able to do so as easily. Additionally, reading enjoyment typically can only develop when reading is "reasonably fluent and effortless" (Strauss, 2008, p.19). The difficulty and frustration that some Thai students experienced due to their limited English language skills and language "distance," may prevent them from enjoying reading English. This difficulty and dissatisfaction, possibly combined with other variables, may make them bored, unmotivated, or even resistant to reading in English.

Besides linguistic challenges, there are also unique cultural factors that may play a role in one's reading behavior. Based on Hofstede's (1989) research, for example, Thailand is considered a collective and relationship-oriented culture in which the emphasis is on group harmony, togetherness, and relationship building over individual interest. Considering these cultural traits, it is probably reasonable to stipulate that some Thai students put more effort into socializing rather than reading. Some may even consider reading as an anti-social activity that separates them from the group (*The Nation*, 2007). When faced with the option of reading and the resulting "time away from the group," many Thai students may choose not to read, leaving them with time to socialize and be "with the group."

Additionally, Thailand has another unique cultural perspective of viewing education and all things related to education as formal and ceremonial. The view toward education as a serious activity, that is full of ritual, may even extend toward textbooks. For example, it is common among Thais to think of textbooks as Holy Scriptures or sacred objects that are viewed with great respect. Many Thais will *wai* (a praying gesture with the hands) a textbook before or after reading it. As a result, most Thais would never sit or step on a textbook as it would be considered highly disrespectful. When students perceive books and the reading of books as formal and serious activities, the desire to read for fun and pleasure may be reduced, especially among young students.

Another possible factor that can reduce the motivation to read among Thai students is that some textbooks, especially those that are Western oriented, may not be relevant or applicable in a Thai context. Many of the teachers who were interviewed in this study recognized that their textbooks were not applicable to the lives of their students. One teacher, for example, described the books in her reading



class as Western oriented books, including classic American and Western literature such as *Great Expectations* by Charles Dickens. Many Thais are not familiar or aware of the significance of this and other popular books and may have a hard time relating them to their lives as Thais. Another teacher expressed his concern by describing his textbooks as follows:

Most of the English books and academic books are from America . . . if you're from America and you read American books you know what they're talking about, like Boeing Corporation. In my class there are only two kids that have ever flown, so most of them don't know what Boeing is. You can talk about phone companies, or maybe certain TV shows, like Mr. Bean, or . . . you have a business book that talks about companies like CBS or General Motors. Thai students didn't know what these companies are. You know American kids, they have the advantage of being in the same environment with the people that write the text books.

This comment revealed that a mismatch of some cultural contexts may have been a factor in reducing reading interest and motivation among some Thai students. Another possible reason may be that assigned textbooks may not have been age appropriate. For example, one teacher described the books in her college-level reading classes as graded reader books designed for students with low English proficiency. These books often contained simplified and easy words with big pictures and only one word or a short sentence per page.

At first glance, easy reader books may be appealing. However, books that are simplified and presumably "easy" to

## Why Some Thai Students Don't like to Read (cont.)

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read may actually pose unexpected comprehension difficulties, especially for adult learners (Strauss, 2008). For example, easy words and short sentences may quickly become monotonous and even confusing, as the details and all imagery have been removed. Such "easy readers" may become boring for both young and mature readers. Books, therefore, must be carefully selected to fit a student's reading and comprehension level, as well as being age appropriate.

In conclusion, my interviews revealed several factors that contributed to why some Thai students do not like to read. These factors include limited English proficiency, the language "distance" between Thai and English, unique Thai cultural patterns, and the mismatch of context and age appropriateness of reading materials. Although these factors were drawn mostly from the experiences of American teachers in Thai classrooms, they are likely applicable to other educators in culturally diverse classrooms. Cross-cultural teaching and learning truly are multi-faceted endeavors that are dependent on variables and factors that are rooted in differing cultural norms and practices.

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### About the Author:

Varaporn recently graduated with a doctoral degree in Education from the University of Hawai'i, at Manoa. Her research interests include cultural diversity in classroom settings, cross-cultural and multicultural education, and comparative education, especially in the Thai and American context.



## Using Videos and Photos to Teach the Reaction Essay By Julie Sagliano and Michael Sagliano

"Write your personal reaction to the assigned reading." "Write your reaction after viewing one of the paintings at the museum." Sometimes this type of assignment given by college professors produces interesting but often rambling and disjointed writing from an ESL student. Since many ESL students lack the background in writing reaction essays in their home countries, and most ESL writing textbooks do not address this writing style, the students lack formal instruction in writing a reaction paper and are left to fend for themselves. Teachers can guide ESL students to excel in writing a well-formulated, coherent, and personal essay reacting to an academic topic.

ESL students have a wealth of interesting, diverse backgrounds and experiences which can be reflected on and highlighted in this type of assignment if they are given the tools to express themselves. At Leeward Community College, we teach the reaction essay in advanced ESL writing classes and have developed active learning tasks to engage students to observe, emote, and reflect on surprising and inspiring video scenes and thought-provoking images from the Internet.

We begin teaching the reaction photo by showing a brief excerpt from a movie. We select a video clip that is interesting and/or surprising, that is able to elicit a range of student emotions and promote reflection, and that is open to interpretation and different points of view. We choose scenes that provide a concise but sufficient glimpse into the personality of the characters, so that the students can relate to them personally and be able to respond to the situations that ensue. The scene(s) in the clip should be about 5-7 minutes in length. Often opening scenes from movies can be employed as a prompt, such as the attack on an African village from *Blood Diamond*. However, the scene should appeal to the instructor's own likes and the potential effects on the students in the class.

In our case, a scene from *Meet Joe Black* was selected because of its romantic but tragic elements. In these scenes, a young female doctor encounters a handsome lawyer (Brad Pitt) in a coffee shop. Although initially reluctant to converse with the man, she finally falls to his charms, and they engage in an enjoyable conversation. However, despite

## Using Videos and Photos . . . (cont.)

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the positive interaction, they hesitate to develop their relationship further and part, each walking separate ways to work. They fail to notice each other's regrets as each one turns back to look at the other. Then suddenly, the lawyer gets hit by two cars and is killed at an intersection, without the doctor seeing the accident.

After the showing, we immediately break the class into groups of three or four students and tell them to discuss their reactions: opinions, reflections, and feelings. Next, we ask volunteers to share their reflections aloud to the rest of the class and then to write their individual reactions to *Meet Joe Black*. For the writing task, we advise them to imagine they are writing to someone who has not seen the movie, to explain what happened in the scenes (one-third of their response) and to give their reaction (opinions, feelings, and reflections) in the rest for their letter. The paper need not be longer than a page and a half and 20-30 minutes is adequate for its completion. In this instance, students expressed in writing their excitement and anxiety about the two people meeting, commented about the manner in which the man engaged the woman in conversation, and their shock of his sudden death. Some students reflected on their own missed opportunities with the opposite sex. Others mentioned the uniqueness of the plot. Their reactions were quite varied and insightful.

For the next class, we read all their responses and compiled a sample of their opinions, feelings, and reflections. We provided a summary handout, read and discussed some reactions aloud, and differentiated between the three types of reactions: opinions, feelings, and reflections. We introduced a textbook format for the reaction essay: an introduction whose "hook" is either a narration of the scenes from a movie or a description of a photo and the thesis, the body paragraphs (one for an opinion, a second for a feeling, and the third for a personal reflection) and a conclusion. To practice the essay, we divided the students into groups of four to

five students, provided a handout that had four photos on it and another handout to guide the discussion of their reactions. (See **Group Discussion and Individual Writing**). Photos, for example, can depict childhood, romantic situations, social problems (homelessness, poverty), highlights in sports, war scenes, or any content the instructor feels would be appropriate for eliciting deep emotions, prior experiences, or strong opinions. The group chooses one photo and each student decides to write an introduction, a reaction body paragraph, or a conclusion. After every student is finished, the group stands up, and individuals read their parts of the essay to the class. After class, we examine their writing and provide feedback as to how detailed and organized students described the photo, or wrote a particular reaction, such as a feeling, without mixing reactions in the same paragraph. We aim for separate reactions in the body paragraphs (See **Feedback Form**).

Individual students are now prepared to write a multi-draft, 500-word reaction essay for homework by themselves. We begin by requesting that they provide three photos of their choosing; we stress that the photos cannot be offensive to others. In the next class, we examine them and approve or disapprove their finds. There is peer feedback on the first draft on completeness and clarity. We provide additional feedback for their second draft. Later in the semester, we also have students write an in-class essay by reacting to a photo or a film clip.

Through the use of video and photos, we can activate student interest, encourage students to share their individual reactions with others, and provide ways for students to express their personal reflections, feelings, and opinions orally and in writing. An introduction to reaction essays will be useful for them throughout their academic careers.

**About the Authors:** Julie Sagliano is an ESL Assistant Professor at Leeward Community College. She has taught EFL in Peace Corps Ecuador and Peace Corps Tunisia. She has also taught EFL/ESL in Spain, Bahrain, and Japan. Michael Sagliano is an ESL Professor and the ESL Coordinator at Leeward Community College. He has taught EFL/ESL in Japan and Bahrain.





## Using Videos and Photos . . . (cont.)

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### Group Discussion and Individual Writing

What do you see in the photo? Describe it objectively.

What do you feel?

What do you think of this photo?

Does this photo relate to something that you have experienced, or something that you have observed in your life? Explain.

### Feedback Form

#### The Hook

Descriptive (photo) or Narrative (video)?

Objective (no reaction included)?

Concise?

Complete (reader can understand plot)?

The Thesis (included?)

The Body (reaction)

Topic Sentence?

Organized (no mixing of reaction types)?

Referred reaction specifically to aspects of photo (or video)?

## Study Tips for Language Learners By Cristiane Vicentini

### Acknowledgments

First of all, I would like to thank Hawai'i Pacific University students of AL 4720 in the Spring of 1997, whose ideas provided a springboard for this project.

I would also like to show my deepest gratitude to Professor Jean Kirschenmann, who coordinated the project, guided me, and gave me precious feedback throughout the whole process.

My appreciation also goes to Dr. Candis Lee, my Practicum I professor, for giving me the opportunity to work on this project.

### To the Teacher

This collection of tips was originally drafted in 1997 to help answer common questions such as: What can I do to improve my listening? Can you give me some suggestions to improve my writing? With the fast advance of technology throughout the years and the availability of more self-access strategies for language learning, there was a need to update the list to include useful software, such as Skype, and websites such as Pandora.com to the original collection. This update resulted in the current version of Study Tips for Language Learners.

The study tips are divided into 5 different sections:

- 1) Tips for improving oral fluency and pronunciation;
- 2) Tips for improving listening;
- 3) Tips improving reading;
- 4) Tips for improving writing;
- 5) Tips for improving all language skills.

Each section contains an average of 20 tips accompanied by a picture to better illustrate the information. Tips with odd numbers have their pictures on the left, whereas even-numbered tips have pictures on the right. The topics are spread over two pages, to make it easier for printing front-and-back, if so desired.

It is our hope that this collection can help you share these useful tips for language learning with your students as a whole class or when giving them individual support. Please feel free to share it with your colleagues, students, or anyone interested in getting further English language practice.

## Reading

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## Writing

(Continued on page 10.)

# Study Tips for Language Learners (cont.)

(Continued from page 9.)

## Improving Oral Fluency and Pronunciation

1) Ask friends and classmates small talk questions just for fun.



2) Talk to yourself. For example, sit in different places and describe aloud what you see.



3) Use your camera or phone to keep an oral journal; ask a teacher to give you feedback.

4) Record yourself and listen to your voice. You can use applications in your cell phone, Ipad, or tablet.

5) Call a number in an ad. Ask questions just for fun. These numbers are usually toll-free.



6) Make a plan with your classmates. Call each other frequently and talk for fun.

7) Leave messages on your friends' voice mail. Ask them if they can understand.



8) Ask a new question in a new place every day.

9) Watch a talk show and try to answer the questions yourself.



10) Go to English karaoke bars. You can also use apps for karaoke singing such as StarMaker.

11) Before sleeping, recite aloud what happened that day.

12) Help someone else with English.



13) Form a discussion group. Choose a different topic every week.



14) Say "hello" to people at the bus stop; maybe they will talk to you!

15) Greet your classmates in English before and after class.



16) Visit the tutoring center for conversation and pronunciation practice.



17) Practice talking aloud to yourself.

18) Imitate voice rhythm in people you hear on the bus, in class, on TV, etc.

19) Try to volunteer in class more often.



20) Help listeners understand you by speaking slower, louder, and clearer.

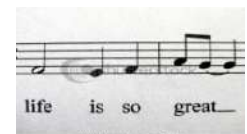
21) For pronunciation, read aloud short stories or dialogs for a tutor to hear.

22) Use Skype to talk to people in other English speaking countries.



## Improving Listening Skills

1) Listen to music and read the lyrics at the same time.



2) Talk to classmates or friends over the phone.

3) Listen to podcasts (you can either download them or listen to them directly from your Ipad).



## Study Tips for Language Learners (cont.)

(Continued from page 10.)

4) Watch 2-3 TV programs regularly. Little-by-little, you will understand better.



5) Watch or read news in your native language. Then, listen to the same story in English.



6) Watch TV and movies, with or without subtitles.

7) Listen to the radio, or use online radio sites such as Pandora.com.



8) Eavesdrop on conversations on the bus, in stores, and in class.



9) Try to take notes during class.

10) Show interest in other people by asking them questions and then listening carefully to them.



11) Ask people to repeat or slow when you do not understand them.



12) Go on guided tours of museum, parks, or companies.

13) Many textbooks have audio material. Ask if you can borrow them.



14) Ask tutors, teachers, or your English speaking friend to talk about themselves. Try to repeat what they say.



15) Ask your tutor to give you dictation.

16) Join a class to learn hula, diving, yoga, art, cooking, etc.



17) Form a discussion group with people from different countries. You can learn to understand various accents.



18) Practice listening using ESL websites such as [www.esl-lab.com](http://www.esl-lab.com); [www.ello.org](http://www.ello.org); and many others.

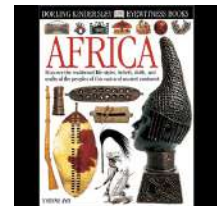


### Improving Reading Skills

1) Use the public library to find books on your independent (easy) level.



2) Read picture books. You will learn information and English.



3) Read nonfiction books for young readers.

4) Read for pleasure, not just for school. It will increase your reading speed.

5) Use audio books to read and listen. You can get them at local libraries.



6) Use websites such as [www.audiobooks.com](http://www.audiobooks.com) or [www.audible.com](http://www.audible.com) to listen to books online or download them to your phone.



7) Read a simplified book for a movie you have already seen.

8) Read the same book as someone else. Then, discuss it together.



9) Before reading, examine the book without really reading. For example, read the titles and highlighted text. Pay attention to each chapter's introduction and conclusion.

10) Read summary, synopsis, or review questions first.



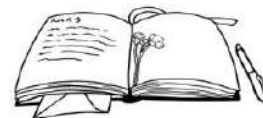
## Study Tips for Language Learners (cont.)

(Continued from page 11.)

- 11) Annotate as you read.
- 12) Take breaks when you read.
- 13) Practice ignoring unknown words. Often you will be able to understand.
- 14) Try to understand difficult words from prefixes and suffixes (ex. science, scientific, scientifically).
- 15) Read English versions of stories that you already know from your culture.
- 16) Read one part of the newspaper regularly (ex. advice columns).
- 17) Practice speed reading. Set your watch for two minutes. See how far you can go. Repeat every day.
- 18) Try reading for the main ideas without a dictionary the first time you read.
- 19) Use a card to pull your eyes down the page. It can help you read faster without rereading.
- 20) Read simple things: ads on bus, signs on window, banners on the internet. Ask questions when you don't understand.



- 3) Be a writing partner with a friend. Exchange emails as often as possible.
- 4) Keep a journal, start a blog, or join Facebook using English.
- 5) Draw pictures or put postcards or photos in your journal; then write.
- 6) Use your journal for many types of writing: summaries, stories, reports, observations, descriptions, etc.
- 7) Use a journal to try out new vocabulary. Write funny, wishful, or true stories about yourself.
- 8) Try to write everyday things, like shopping lists, in English.
- 9) Use a thesaurus. You can use the book or Smart Phone applications.
- 10) Freewrite regularly for a certain number of minutes.
- 11) Write fun notes, text messages, or e-mail to your friends, roommates, and teachers.
- 12) Get an English speaking e-mail (or snail mail) pen pal.



### Improving Writing Skills

- 1) Use a calendar to list your daily activities as a simple diary.
- 2) Make a list of unique life experiences; then, write about them, one at a time. Show a tutor.



**About the Author:** Cristiane Vicentini is pursuing her MATESOL degree at Hawai'i Pacific University and will graduate in December 2012. She has been an English teacher since 1995. Her experience includes teaching at a variety of language schools in Brazil and in the United States. She is currently teaching at ELS Language Centers Honolulu.

**Note from the Editor:** Cristiane Vicentini's list of tips is fairly extensive and therefore, **will be continued** in the next issue of *The Word* coming out in February 2013. Stay tuned.