



# HAWAI'I TEACHERS OF ENGLISH TO SPEAKERS OF OTHER LANGUAGES

## THE WORD - VOLUME 23 ISSUE 2

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*Hawai'i TESOL, the local affiliate of TESOL (Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, Inc.), is a nonprofit organization dedicated to building a community of professionals teaching English as a Second Language (ESL) in the state of Hawai'i.*

### How to Better Serve Micronesians Students

By Jill Tung-Loong

Did you know that Micronesia has approximately 2,500 islands and atolls within the Micronesian Archipelago? The indigenous people inhabiting these islands and atolls speak an assortment of Micronesian languages and dialects. Some people tend to assume that because students are from Micronesia, they all speak the same language. This stereotype is far from true.

In the summer of 2011, I enrolled in a professional development course entitled, "English Language Learners: Culture Equity & Language Training Module for Closing the Achievement Gap," which was offered in Hilo and sponsored by National Education Association (NEA) & Pacific Resources for Education and Learning (PREL). The culture equity information was shared by PREL Micronesian Culture Educator, Canisius Filibert.

Filibert spoke about his first-hand experiences growing up in Micronesia and the struggles he encountered when moving to the states. He provided us with cultural background of various Micronesian cultures. For example, he stated, "It is better to have Marshallese students to give their opinion, rather than call on them directly." Knowing this piece of information could be beneficial for many reasons. First of all, teachers will have a better understanding of how their Micronesian students function in a school setting. Ideally, the better you know and understand your students; potentially, the greater impact you will have on their learning. This could raise the ability of how successful our English Language Learner (ELL) students will be in their academic endeavors.



Rather than keep the rich, culture-based information to myself, I decided to make a brochure, which incorporated the newly learned information on the Micronesian cultures. Therefore, I knew it was my duty to make sure all of our teachers, faculty, and staff members were given a brochure. A compilation of the three most prominent Micronesian cultures were addressed in the brochure. Could you imagine the impact it would have on our Micronesian subcultures and their learning, if information like this was shared school-wide?

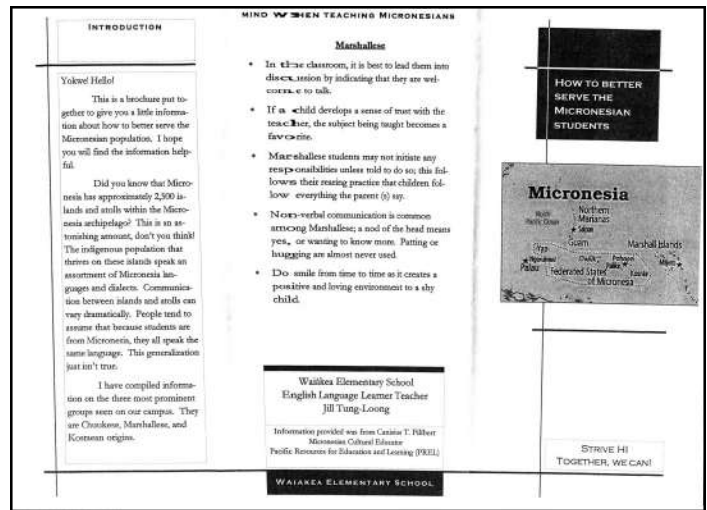
Personally, these tips and suggestions allowed me to help my ELL students. The knowledge gained from this one class has helped me over the past three years of teaching. I believe it has heightened my ability to effectively communicate with my students and their families. It has fostered our positive relationships and bonding experiences.

## How to Better Serve . . . (continued)

(Continued from page 1.)

Professional development courses of this nature should be offered and more readily available, especially because little information is published regarding Micronesian cultures. With the high influx of Micronesian students and families moving to Hawai'i, educators throughout the state should become well-versed in knowing how to service the Micronesian population. Don't you think?

**About the Author:** Jill Tung-Loong earned her Master's in Education with an emphasis in ELL from University of Hawai'i at Hilo (August, 2011). She is currently a full-time K-5 ELL teacher in Hilo. In her spare time, she enjoys traveling and visiting other countries, meeting new people, trying new foods, and learning about various cultures and traditions. For information about the brochure contact Jill at <jillei808@gmail.com>



## So You Graduated! Got a Job! Do You Know it All?

By Dr. Perry Christensen

There is a plethora of professional development activities that one can do without traveling to distant places or even down the road. The first one that comes to mind is joining an online group. One such group is [edWeb.net](http://edWeb.net). They email me messages about webinars in which I can participate from the comfort of my own home or office.

One webinar I attended was on January 21, 2014, entitled *Bring Your Own Device (or Technology) – BYOT*. Though it was not aimed particularly for ESL teachers, I did learn several ideas about the use of mobile devices in the classroom. Some of the key points I learned are:

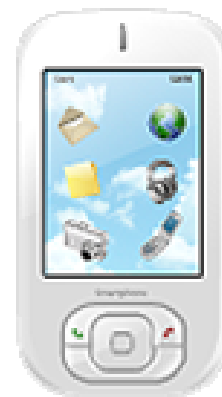
- The importance of teaching Digital Citizenship – copyright, plagiarism, cyber bullying
- “Every turned off device is a turned off student” [Read that again!]
- With their mobile devices, students are no longer consumers, but producers
- Technology doesn't improve grades, but technology improves engagement
- The goal of using technology in

education is to empower the student

- “21st Century content delivered in 21st context” [Something to ponder.]

These are ideas I had never really thought much about. It shook me up a bit to realize I probably should *get with it* and start using technology better with my teaching. Hence, the need for me to attend such webinars.

Another great professional development tool is [TESOL's Electronic Village Online](http://TESOL's Electronic Village Online) (EVO). This year there are 18 different sessions. The sessions run for six weeks starting in mid-January. The best part is that these sessions are totally free and one gets to engage with peers from around the world. This time I signed up to learn about the *Use of Mobile Applications in Language Classes*. The format of the session is that we read a few posted articles each week and then add our



comments to a discussion board. Towards the end of the week, we meet in an online classroom for a live discussion. It's very interactive. Besides texting in the chat box or drawing on the whiteboard, I even took the microphone and shared my views around the world—all

this while wrapped in a blanket sitting on my lanai with a wireless connection on a cold January night (it was morning in Turkey, where the moderators were from).

This night we discussed QR codes. I had heard about QR codes, but it wasn't until I heard how others were using them in presentations or in the classroom that I saw some practicality to using them. At a conference, a presenter can flash a QR code on

the screen in which participants in the audience can take out their mobile devices (smart phones, ipads, tablets) and using a QR code reader app (also free) instantly jump to a webpage, import the speaker's contact information, gain access to the PowerPoint presentation, or download electronic copies of handouts.

## So You Graduated! . . . (continued)

(Continued from page 2.)

For me, I'm starting to use web resources more in my classes. Now when sharing a website, I can project a QR code on the screen and my students can follow me on their smart devices without having to type in the web address.

A great site for making your own QR codes is <http://www.qrstuff.com/>.

Though I have over 25 years of teaching experience, I feel I'm just beginning to reach the minds of this new generation. After all, my class looks very much like the video which can be accessed through this QR code:



Remember, "Every turned off device is a turned off student." Or could we say, "Every turned on device is an engaged student."

**About the Author:** Dr. Christensen teaches TESOL, EIL, and Religion courses at BYU-Hawai'i. He has been the Hawai'i TESOL webmaster for over a decade. Though his body is getting upper middle aged, his mind is still young. Read more about him by following this QR code:



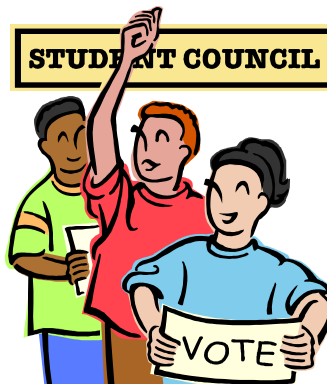
## Approaches to Building Student Leaders

By Chrysa Staiano & Michael Quinn

Nearly all teachers can agree that the demands of their profession are high and the question "What is being done to help teachers?" should be asked. Do mitigating factors exist that would offer teachers more free-time and less stress? If so, how could these possibly benefit students? One possible solution is for teachers to empower their students in the classroom. That is, armed with leadership techniques, students could share the chores of instructing, motivating and challenging each other. This paper contends that teachers and academic advisors are the best situated for developing student leaders.

### Perceptions of Leadership

Archard (2013) discovered that students believe that leadership is about being a strong representative, such as someone who can speak up for a group. A leader is also of service to others. These ideas about leadership are important, since they demonstrate fundamental ideas of the qualities of student leaders, thus, what kind of person a student leader should be. Bowman (2013) finds that leadership development is being "in influence" rather than being "in control."



Bowman (2013) asserts that memorable leaders change lives by thinking and acting collaboratively on good ideas to accomplish goals. Therefore, the best way to construct leadership in students is to allow students to engage in their environments naturally and feel fully seen, listened to, and trusted to contribute (p. 61).

### Leadership Development through School Activities

By encouraging involvement in extra-curricular activities, teachers help to build leadership within their students. Participation in a student government is a perfect way to achieve this because it allows students to directly affect their school environment. In this setting, members of the student government represent their peers, with no academic or social separation.

Torok (1999) notes four main responsibilities of student government leaders: a) student governments must follow their responsibilities as outlined in the government's constitution and by the institution, b) they must follow responsibilities delegated to them by the leadership of their institutions, c) they must follow through on responsibilities de-

(Continued on page 4.)

## Approaches to Building Student Leaders (continued)

(Continued from page 3.)

ferred to them by other decision-making bodies, and d) student governments are responsible for assigning students to committees and boards. Since the responsibilities affect an entire student body population, the student government leader must be comfortable in a high visibility role.

Mills (2011) reviews how student government leaders benefit from assistance by at least one official faculty advisor at their institution. As students become familiar and confident with their first advisor, they seek additional guidance from other adults. As students consistently witness their advisors' leadership traits, the students begin to emulate their advisors' behavior and strengthen their relational skills. Advisors also show students creative and "off the wall" solutions to problems that open new resolution possibilities for the students.

### Leadership Development through Mentoring

Students can also develop leadership skills through an intensive mentoring program. As mentorship is a transfer of information, it can exist between students and faculty members, but actually between any person who seeks information from another person. Students from all fields and level of study are eligible for mentoring and most enjoy it because of the individual attention. Mentoring can occur for short or long periods of time and is rarely contrived with specific goals.



Deaton and Deaton (2012) examines a mentorship program at a major university in the western United States. There, university undergraduate students were empowered in Supplemental Instructor (SI) programs to assist their peers struggling in courses previously labeled as difficult by the university ad-

ministration. The mentorship program was mutually beneficial because most of the SI leaders did "not have a background or extensive coursework in teaching, yet they [were] expected to be well versed in teaching and content" (p. 58).

In the case of Deaton and Deaton (2012), the mentor and mentee were both undergraduate students, as close as only two years apart in academic study. This increased the likelihood that both students would be of similar ages and hold common interests and concerns. Therefore, mentor and mentee were able to discuss (and solve) the challenges of actually leading peers. Social opportunities outside of the classroom lead to unofficial, or "accidental" mentorship but also introduced the students to the idea of professionalism and personal time. Understanding this division is of great importance today as leaders are constantly accessible and their actions so publicly scrutinized.

The benefits of the program were numerous, to include both the mentor and mentee improving their interpersonal and problem solving skills. Mentors also enhanced their instructional delivery and classroom management techniques because of their extensive experience. Finally, the program increased motivation for the participants as they streamlined their decision-making abilities (which affect fellow students) through professional development sessions. Motivation was then brought into the classroom by the well-intentioned SI leaders and reciprocated by the appreciative classroom students.

### Leadership Opportunities Close to Home

Various examples of leadership building opportunities exist at Hawaii Pacific University (HPU). Students can write for *Kalamalama* (the student newspaper), or join school-sponsored sports or clubs, such as the Intercultural Teachers Organization. Volunteer opportunities exist at the school and the community at large, such as serving as a conversation partner to a language learner. The joy of these opportunities is that they are available for all students and only require



participation- not leadership, initially. Once more comfortable in the group setting, students may gain the option to step into a leadership position. By providing these opportunities at the university, the school is promoting the responsibilities noted by Torok (1999) and group roles noted in Dörnyei and Murphey (2003). HPU student body president and respective advisors are exemplary of positions designed directly to give students experience in leadership positions.

In the classroom setting at HPU, examples of faculty paving the way for student leadership can also be viewed. Professors will often step back and give students an opportunity to lead the class, either implementing the teacher's lesson or their own. The students of Groups Dynamics have seen this when Dr. Murphey assigns them a textbook chapter to discuss with their fellow classmates. He makes no requirements of how the information should be shared, only that it should engage the students, one of which he becomes. Roles defined in Dörnyei and Murphey (2003) naturally emerge in every group, but since classroom work-groups switch so often, everyone has the chance to change roles. In conclusion, students are also given additional leadership and learning opportunities, such as to work on a class publication or ask questions in class or on online via Blackboard at any time.

**Note:** This paper was first written under the direction of professor Tim Murphey,

## Approaches to Building Student Leaders (continued)

(Continued from page 4.)

Ph.D for the Group Dynamics class (AL6350) at Hawai'i Pacific University, summer 2013. Revised by the authors, winter 2014.

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## The Interpretation of Utterances and the Semantics/Pragmatics Divide

By Brent Laing

### Introduction

Everyone's life contains meaning. We live by it each minute. Within the fields of linguistics and philosophy, there is tremendous in-depth discussion and argument regarding the concept of meaning. In these discussions, the terms semantics and pragmatics are inevitably used.

Recanati (2005) described semantics as a set of language rules in which symbols contain meaning, and certain groupings of those symbols are sentences with meaning in which meaning is determined by the words of which they are made up and how they are strung together. Whereas, LoCastro (2012) said that pragmatics is the study of the relationship between utterances and their properties in social context, taking into account specific sociocultural aspects like social distance between speakers and perceived intentions, all for the purpose of answering the question "why did X say Y to Z in this context?" (p. 6).

While these two concepts are utilized to interpret the meanings of utterances, experts debate where to draw the line between the two. To contribute to this discussion, I propose a way to define and determine the divide, at least in part, which is through answering the following question: Can the meaning of utterances be properly interpreted without considering both semantics and pragmatics? If so, semantics and pragmatics must be so distinct to the extent that they can be considered and discussed without reference to or dependency on the other. If not, semantics and pragmatics must be complementary and inseparable. I will present both positive and negative responses to the above question and determine which argument is more compelling.

### Literature Review and Presentation of Arguments

Salmon (2005), concerning semantics, explained that we often use language which, if meant and taken literally,

would be offensive and indecent even in the least civilized societies and would not be used correctly "in the relevant non-semantic way," (p. 321). In mentioning that things we say are often not to be taken literally, and that in these cases meaning is implied, he acknowledges that pragmatics and semantics are both used in conveying and interpreting meaning. However, he also declares that when an utterance is made to convey its literal meaning, pure semantics deems it as correctly used. This implies that semantics is sufficient to cover the interpretation of utterances whose true meaning is literal (i.e., there is no difference between the semantic meaning and the tacit meaning). Furthermore, Carston (2002) implies that pragmatics is sufficient for interpretation in her defining it as a system for "interpreting . . . ostensive communicative behavior" (p.4), and stating that it is independent of and no more an adjunct to semantics.

## The Interpretation of . . . (continued)

(Continued from page 5.)

In contrast, there are professionals who express the need for both concepts in the interpretation of meaning. Stojanovic (2008) illustrated the importance of considering both concepts in understanding the meaning of the following example: *I have had enough* (p. 318).

Her explanation highlights, not only considering the lexicality or apparent meaning of the words themselves, but also the contextual elements of who the speaker is, when he or she said it, what is it of which the speaker has had enough, and what constitutes enough. All of these details, which are pragmatics, provide insight to the meaning of the utterance. Additionally, Jaszczolt (2010) explains that semantics does not differentiate between all possible meanings of an utterance. This notion led to the concept of *radical pragmatics*, which argues that semantic analysis reaches only partway in recovering utterance meaning, “and pragmatic enrichment completes this process” (p. 164).

### Discussion

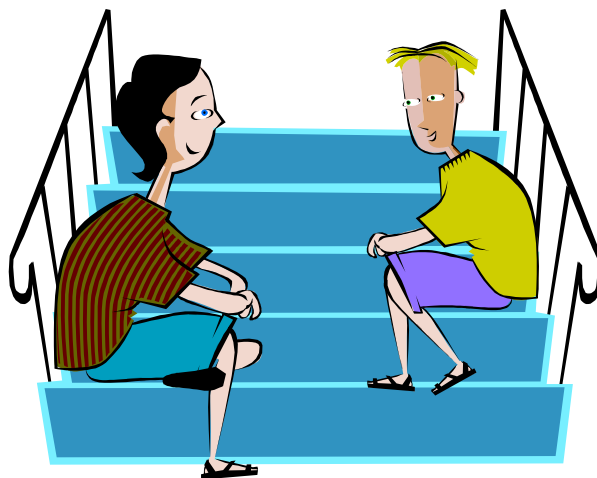
Observing a small piece of the existing semantics/pragmatics divide argument, I will, for sake of brevity, discuss only Salmon’s (2005) point mentioned above to determine which side provides the strongest argument. Salmon’s (2005) argument is a fairly convincing one. Why would semantics not be sufficient in situations where I mean what I literally say? Consider the following piece of conversation:

A: Hey, can you talk?

B: I’m eating lunch.

Imagine for a moment that B is truly in the middle of eating lunch. According to Salmon (2005), semantic analysis would say the meaning of this utterance is literal and thus interpretation is finished at this point, making semantics sufficient to understand the speaker’s meaning. I argue, however, that this interpretation is insufficient. Consider how the meaning of this utterance would change given the context that A is calling B during B’s lunch hour. B’s lunchtime allotment has been cut short, however, due to the demands at work, and thus B

is exceptionally busy. B answers the phone out of courtesy to A, but does not intend to carry on a conversation. What then is the meaning of B’s utterance? While B’s utterance is true and literal in a sense, it is not truly what B means. Grice would take into account the pragmatics of the situation to interpret this utterance as containing an implicature, and therefore stating that B’s utterance means something like *I’m busy and can’t talk right now*. From this example, we



can clearly see that while the *what* is semantics, the *who, why, when, where, and how* are essential to meaning interpretation. Furthermore, however, it is evident here that though B’s statement was true, there is a difference between the semantic meaning and the implicature. In other words, what B said was not in reality what he meant; therefore, B’s statement was not indeed literal.

In response to this concern, I provide the following example: D: Tom helped me move the couch. Considering this statement, I argue that, though a speaker literally means what he or she says, pragmatics is still needed to determine that the statement’s meaning is indeed literal. Considering the *how* here is also vital. Bearing in mind the prosody of language (stress and intonation patterns), it is clear that this utterance would need to be said in a neutral manner, using no particular shift in stress or intonation, to be interpreted literally. If the speaker were to place heavy emphasis on *Tom*, then it would be clear that D is meaning

to clarify who helped him. Therefore, the meaning is modified to be something like *I said Tom helped me*. Staying on the topic of *how*, perhaps D used a sarcastic tone while signaling air quotes with his hands as he said *move the couch*. This would suggest he is speaking in code or making a joking or insulting reference about Tom. Therefore, the context of *how* must be observed and must observe that the statement is uttered in a prosodically neutral manner in order for the utterance’s meaning to be defined as truly literal. Thus pragmatics is needed to identify the *how* and complete the interpretation of meaning.

### Conclusion

Considering the presented argument between scholars and the above discussion, it seems that the best answer to the research question governing this article is no, utterances cannot be properly interpreted without considering both semantics and pragmatics. In fact, both semantics and pragmatics play significant roles in the interpretation of seemingly all utterances.

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# Layering Language Skills Through Video Storytelling

By David Lewis Brooks

This article illustrates an instructional use of video as text and tool in the classroom for building language mastery. It introduces a teaching activity called video storytelling. This technique is useful for building students' mastery of action verbs, cognitive and emotional vocabulary, sequencing words, voice, and presentation skills through the oral language technique of narrative layering.

## Definition of Video Storytelling

A video segment, when carefully chosen, is a holistic, meaning-focused genre of linguistic discourse, which can be used to great advantage to teach lexical, syntactic and discursive features of the language. Often its full range of interpersonal communication (style, non-verbals, mood, register and voice) in an authentic cultural context affords the teacher and the learner a wealth of additional language learning opportunities. The purpose of this short article is to introduce video storytelling, a method for using video as text and tool in the classroom for building language mastery. This description will focus on the instructional process for video storytelling called cumulative layering, a method for helping students develop mastery of narrative discourse at multiple levels of English proficiency.

Language teachers often rely on and recognize the importance of storytelling. Yet, how often do we really challenge our students to master this form of discourse? Video storytelling is an instructional technique for helping students develop narrative skills and polishing the telling of their stories. A simple definition follows. Students watch a brief video segment full of action and dialogue. They are guided to fully comprehend both the linguistic, social and visual content. Then they are coached by the teacher to challenge themselves in five main ways of retelling this narrative: 1) summarization; 2) description of the action and setting; 3) description of the speech, thinking, and the emotions of the characters; 4) description of the events in linear or logical sequence with discourse markers; and 5) the combination of all of the above. There are many opportunities for creative

expression within a linguistic framework that is challenging and attainable for all students at any level.

## The Process of Layering the Story

To begin, the students watch a carefully chosen brief video segment a number of times and are guided to fully comprehend the linguistic, social and visual content. The students are then coached over several sessions to pull out (or the teacher may provide) the main story elements, which they will deal with in telling their own version of the story. After the students can smoothly recount the basic events (summary) of the story, they select another linguistic or content element to add to the retelling. Then, they practice retelling the story with this new layer. With continued additions of elements and an increase in sentence length and complexity, the story becomes more entertaining and complete. Next, the teachers will have the students listen to each other's telling and give specific feedback about mastery of that element. When possible, the students should record their live re-telling (from memory without notes), so that they can individually or in pairs listen and assess their progress.

The teacher can give specific feedback by "listening in" or reviewing the recordings or conduct a random group storytelling. In this way, the teacher picks five students and shuffles them. Then the first student begins to tell the story, at any random point, the next student is called on to continue the narrative, and then is followed by the next students. Further, the storytellers should be taught to increase the complexity of sentence structure by getting them to combine sentences in various ways, including the use of coordinating and subordinating conjunctions. Finally, the students add discourse markers to the narrative to aid the listener. Once a benchmark is achieved, the students can be challenged to vary the storytelling by altering the point-of-view, tense, use of reported speech (actual dialogue), and their spoken acting voices.

Depending on the level of students, the amount time allotted for the project, and the goals of the (Continued on page 8.)



## Layering Language Skills . . . (continued)

(Continued from page 7.)

storytelling project, the teacher can consider any or all of the following criteria in planning a video storytelling as a classroom activity or major performance project.

Analysis of Story and Language Elements	
a. summary of the main events	b. descriptions of action/ setting / situation
c. description of the characters' appearance, attitudes, and behaviors	d. use vocabulary to describe their speech and communication behaviors
e. description of the emotions	f. significant time / cause/effect relationships
g. cultural dimensions (social roles non-verbal behaviors, values and perceptions)	h. plan for relating sequence, perspectives
i. plan for language variations (tense / voice, point-of-view, etc)	j. find opportunities for creativity and fun

What qualities does the teacher consider when choosing a video for storytelling? Hollywood movies can be used, but they are often too long and complicated. In addition, the students may already be familiar with a well-known movie and may have seen it in their native language. Therefore, it is useful to make use of English language educational videos that provide some conflict situations, and which may create the need for interpretation.

In conclusion, the video storytelling project can be integrated into ESL courses at various levels. It can be done as individuals or as a group or team performance.

**About the Author:** David L. Brooks is a long-term resident of Japan, where he teaches English classes at a medical and health sciences university.

## Japanese Students' Experiences of Learning in High School

### By Yuki Hasegawa

#### Introduction

Have you ever had a very quiet Japanese student in your class? You wonder why because the student is a very diligent student who takes notes, completes homework, and listens to the teacher and classmates carefully. However, the student does not speak up in class or is very shy in participating in discussions. You keep wondering, in almost exasperation, why the student is so quiet!

I have heard many of my colleagues talk about, or almost complain about, this kind of students. They would ask me for an answer because I am Japanese who grew up in Japan and went through the Japanese education system. In order to answer the question in more depth and clarity, I decided to research the experiences of Japanese students in their high school English classes.

#### Background and Procedure

I conducted this research with 27 freshman students who are majoring in English and also in one of the following languages, Chinese, Korean, Spanish, Indonesian, Thai, Vietnamese, or Portuguese, at Kanda University of International Studies (KUIS), Japan. I chose to focus on freshman students because I thought their memories about high school are still fresh.

The students were taking a course for learning how to conduct self-directed studies which I was teaching. In class, I only used English with the students and the class materials were also English only. The students entered the university mainly in the interest to improve their elective language, and not English. Most of their classes are related to their elective language and they did not have much of a chance to use English other than 1 or 2 mandatory English classes per



## Japanese Students' Experiences . . . (continued)

(Continued from page 8.)

week. However, their motivation to learn English was not so low and most of them claimed that they do like studying English.

First, I administered a questionnaire in which the questions were written in Japanese and students were allowed to write their answers in Japanese. I made the questionnaire in Japanese so that students could express themselves freely as it is their mother language. Then, after analyzing their responses, I chose 3 students for a follow-up interview.

In the questionnaire and in the interview, I asked questions about types of high schools they attended, kinds of English classes they had experienced in their high school, what those classes were like, and how they were asked to behave in those classes.

### Findings

When asked about the number of students in an English class, 17 students out of 27 students answered that there were about 31 to 40 students. Because of this experience, many students were surprised by the small-size English classes of less than 25 students at KUIS. All the students answered that their main English teacher was a Japanese person.

When asked about the use of language in English classes, 21 students answered that the teacher used both Japanese and English. In addition, 19 students answered that there were no classes that required them to use only English. Interestingly, only 15 students were asked to be active in English classes while 12 students were told to remain quiet like in most of their other classes.

When asked about the differences in English classes at KUIS and in high school, students did notice that they were being asked for active participation and to use mainly English in class. One of the students answered that, "In high school, I was just writing down what my teacher wrote on the board. I wasn't asked to be active or speak in class." Another student answered, "I was so surprised that my teacher was a foreigner in my English class at KUIS. That made me very nervous. I was so nervous that I couldn't understand what my teacher was saying in the beginning. I wasn't used to hearing English or seeing a foreigner, let alone speaking, until I entered KUIS." (Original quotes in Japanese)

It could be inferred from their answers that they were not asked to speak or participate in English classes very often and that they were passive learners in class. Ten students answered that they had chances to speak English in their class, but this included reading a sentence out loud from a textbook or giving a short answer when a teacher asked them a question. Only 1 student who went to a special government-recognized high school called SELHi (Super English Language High school) had a chance to practice giving a presentation, speech, or discussions. In short, it could be inferred that they are not used to taking part in group work which requires them to communicate with other members

actively. They may not even know the vocabulary to express their opinions in class discussions or even to ask a question of a teacher.

### Implications and Limitations

This was a very small-scale study and the results cannot be generalized to the whole population of Japanese students. Results may differ if another researcher conducted the same study with a different group of students. Each student has different backgrounds and personalities, so the reason for students' quietness and shyness could be due to something else other than their past learning experience at high school.

Still, I believe there are some points I could remind myself of or advise other teachers of if they have quiet Japanese students in their class. It is not that those students don't want to participate, but rather, they do not know how to participate. Maybe they are trying to overcome a culture shock of how they are expected to act in a language class or nervousness of seeing a foreign teacher. Teaching students some vocabulary or phrases for expressing opinions or asking questions may help some of those students to speak up. Telling the students clearly about what kind of behavior is expected in class and making a relaxed and comfortable environment may also help. Looking back on the results of this study, I believe that some guidance and support would be the key to helping those quiet students to engage in group work and other interactions in class.

**About the Author:** Yuki Hasegawa is a Lecturer/Learning Advisor at Kanda University of International Studies, Japan. She received her MATESOL from Monterey Institute of International Studies and is a member of JASAL (Japan Association of Self-Access Learning). Her interests lie in areas of learner autonomy and student writing.



# Student Blog in a Third World Country as Means for English Fluency

By Michelle Stacey

Is there a county in the world that has not been influenced by technology? As a college student pursuing my teaching degree, I learned that creatively using technology and the digital world could motivate young English learners to improve their English fluency. I was fortunate to have the opportunity to travel to the Kingdom of Tonga this past summer to teach at Havelu Middle School. This internship provided a rich experience that I will carry throughout my teaching career. Teaching non-English speaking students was especially helpful for me, as I had just earned my TESOL certificate.

While there, I taught Form I-III (6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade equivalent) English, tutored students one-on-one and conducted teacher trainings once a week. Perhaps one of the most important things I learned while teaching in Tonga is the importance of tracking student progress. Teachers cannot simply ask students if they understand and expect to get an accurate answer. Testing is one way to track progress, but it is certainly not always the best or only way. Another method of tracking progress and improving English proficiency can be done through a project similar to one I created called the Havelu Middle School Student Blog. This blog provided students with the opportunity to

showcase their writing and English abilities by creating a collection of blog pages which included Havelu Middle School news, classroom success stories, experiences and stories from friends of Havelu (interns and volunteers), as well as stories from mentors of Havelu that worked with students and instructors.

According to Schmar-Dobler, “New forms of literacy call upon students to know how to read and write not only in the print world but also in the digital world.” The school blog had students practice writing in the print world during the drafting phases of the writing process, but also in the digital world when their individual work was published – thus deepening their literacy and fluency skills. The school blog reinforced the students' learning experiences through sharing stories of success in the classroom and it also helped them become effective English learners at a level that allowed them to communicate their experiences using proper English. The blog created an opportunity to track the progress of students' English skills without the students feeling like they were being tested. In addition, the blog provided students practice with the different stages of the writing process as they were able to work and improve their English fluency because they were excited and motivated to write for the blog.

In order to facilitate the creation of the school blog, students were divided into groups and a leader was selected for each group based on his/her computer access, English skills, and leadership abilities. The leader was responsible to oversee and gather input from all the students in the group. The group leader was ultimately responsible for submitting the pages to be published on the blog. Because the blog was successful, I also appointed a teacher mentor to oversee the blog after my departure. The teacher mentor would serve as the final editor for student submissions. I believe this project and

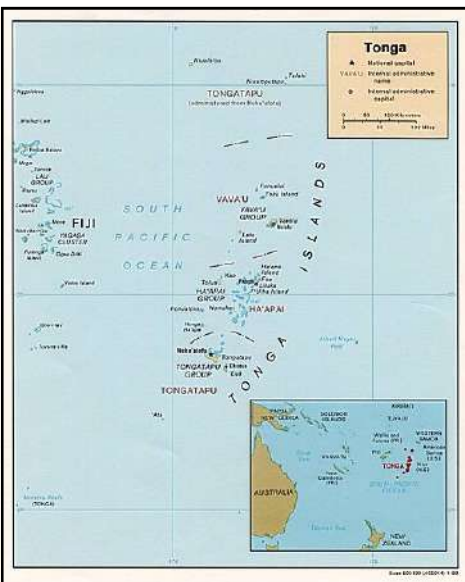
method tracking student progress was extremely effective because it provided an engaging and relevant learning environment for the students to demonstrate and improve their English fluency.

Students were given wide parameters for acceptable blog topics; however, the students had to produce quality work in English before their entry was accepted. For each entry the students completed, they participated in the general writing process, which included: prewriting, drafting, revising, editing and ultimately publishing. Through each stage of the process, the students planned objectives for their writing piece, focused on vocabulary development, researched and strengthened their background knowledge on the topic, and practiced their oral fluency in English as they communicated with their peers through peer editing.

It is beneficial to provide English learners multiple means of exposure and practice with English to help aid in retention, comprehension and ultimately application. It is exciting to see that the Havelu Middle School students continue to maintain and update the blog. Anyone can view the blog by visiting the website: <http://havelumiddleschool.weebly.com/>.

I will continue to use similar teaching techniques in my future classes because I know it helps students work cohesively, provides necessary practice with the writing process, and improves English proficiency and fluency.

My experience at Havelu Middle School was life changing. The real-life experience gained working and serving the Tongan people will always be remembered and used in my career. I accepted this internship opportunity to help teach students English; but I was the one who ended up learning more than expected. I gained increased knowledge, passion, and love for helping students learn.



## Student Blog . . . (continued)

(Continued from page 10.)

### References

Schmar-Dobler, E. (2003, September). Reading on the Internet: The link between literacy and technology. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 47(1), 80.

**About the author:** Michelle Stacey is a senior in Elementary Education at Brigham Young University – Hawai'i and has recently received her TESOL certificate. Michelle has had several opportunities to foster and cultivate her skill set in teaching and working with second language learners in and out of the classroom. Her research interests include: word retention in young learners through musical instruction and fluency through technological advances.



Prefects at Havelu Middle School – the leaders of the blog were selected from this group with a few exceptions.



One of the Form 3 English classes.

## Students Thinking Critically About What They Read on the Internet

By Jay Tanaka

These days so much communication takes place on the Internet. ESL students are reading and writing in English on Facebook, Twitter, blogs, and websites. In many ways this is good for their language learning, but both students and teachers know intuitively that a lot of what we read online is quite biased, and in some cases, completely untrue. The problem is that much of the information out there is presented rather professionally, with impressive graphic design and sometimes with sophisticated academic prose, so it can be tempting for readers to take in what they read without questioning it. Yet we know that it is impor-

tant to think critically about what we read, and not simply accept what is on-screen.

Critical thinking is an important element of education, and it is especially important that teachers facilitate reading critically in ESL classrooms. Generally speaking, many ESL reading classes focus only on comprehension, but comprehension skills don't aid the student in questioning the validity, bias, and implications of what they are reading. Certainly, critical thinking is a useful and valuable skill for our students to have. In my EAP class last year, a student commented: "I thought about the importance of critical reading

written by English. If I do not read critically, deeply, I can follow the writer's belief blindly because I am a Korean who cannot comprehend the text perfectly."

Critical thinking offers our students a systematic way to analyze what is written and evaluate it against a set of criteria to discern its quality. Paul and Elder (2001) explained critical thinking as a set of universal intellectual standards that aid in recognizing and evaluating biased, distorted, or uninformed ideas or messages. By raising vital questions and problematizing what is written, students can begin to read more critically and deeply.

(Continued on page 12.)

## Students Thinking Critically . . . (continued)

(Continued from page 11.)

### Example Lesson

- Recommended Level - Academic English courses, (Intermediate +)
- Aims - Critical Thinking, Academic Reading/Presentation skills
- Class Time - 2 hours (excluding student presentations)
- Materials - online articles (preferably representing multiple viewpoints)

Below is part of an article, which originated from [lifhack.org](http://lifhack.org) and then gained popularity on [forbes.com](http://forbes.com). The article discusses the characteristics of mentally strong people. (<http://www.forbes.com/sites/cherylnappconner/2013/11/18/mentally-strong-people-the-13-things-they-avoid/>)

### “Mentally Strong People: The 13 Things They Avoid

[Mentally Strong Individuals Don't:]

**1. Waste Time Feeling Sorry for Themselves.** You don't see mentally strong people feeling sorry for their circumstances or dwelling on the way they've been mistreated. They have learned to take responsibility for their actions and outcomes, and they have an inherent understanding of the fact that frequently life is not fair. They are able to emerge from trying circumstances with self-awareness and gratitude for the lessons learned. When a situation turns out badly, they respond with phrases such as “Oh, well.” Or perhaps simply, “Next!”

**2. Worry About Pleasing Others.** Know any people pleasers? Or, conversely, people who go out of their way to displease others as a way of reinforcing an image of strength? Neither position is a good one. A mentally strong person strives to be kind and fair and to please others where appropriate, but is unafraid to speak up. They are able to withstand the possibility that someone will get upset and will navigate the situation, wherever possible, with grace.”

**Step 1: Problematize - In what way(s) could this possibly be wrong?**

One of the most important skills in critical thinking is the ability to consider alternative and opposing viewpoints. In order to do so, students should get in small groups to discuss the deeper meaning of the statements and the writer's overall intentions.

### Questions for discovering alternative and opposing viewpoints

- Is it possible for the exact opposite to be true? In what situation?
- What type of person would agree with these statements? Who would disagree?
- Is there a stereotype? What type of person is being praised?
- What type of person is not being praised? Why not?
- What does the writer/speaker seem to value most?
- What are some values that are not included?
- Who is the actual person who wrote this? What are their motivations?
- Would someone with different motivations write this differently? How?



There are no limits to the questions teachers and students can raise in class. However, the important thing is that alternative viewpoints must be discovered and evaluated. Students must be able to examine the text in opposing and varied ways. This task can be quite challenging, and it is the role of the teacher to guide the students to discover alternative ways of thinking. If the students are having difficulty, the teacher can provide hints or counter-statements to open up the discussion.

For this particular article, there happens to be an opposing response on [psychologytoday.com](http://www.psychologytoday.com). ([http://](http://www.psychologytoday.com)

[www.psychologytoday.com/blog/market-mind-games/201311/the-errors-in-13-things-mentally-strong-people-dont-do](http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/market-mind-games/201311/the-errors-in-13-things-mentally-strong-people-dont-do)) Below is an excerpt.

“Despite the widespread appeal of the message, I can't help but wonder: says who and based on what? How do we actually know what so-called mentally tough people (whomever that is and whatever the standard is) do? There isn't a shred of psychological research referenced. It appears to be an opinion grounded in the rapidly deteriorating cases for positive thinking and intellect's superiority over emotion. Sure there are a few valuable truisms like “don't give up” but the undercurrent of stoicism running through the list is as likely to harm as to help.

Take the reader who is feeling any form of “bad” over a challenging economic situation. What's the net effect? Does the idea that they are weak if they can't always suck it up make them feel better about themselves? *Does it make them feel more like they can go out and create a new economic opportunity?* I actually suspect that deep-down, this list makes them feel more inadequate - or in other words, weaker. “

### Step 2: Build Criteria - What assumptions am I making to decide my opinion?

Once multiple viewpoints are discovered and discussed, students can begin to form opinions which they prefer. It's important that students don't just emotionally side with one perspective. Students should be encouraged to create a list of criteria to explain the rationality or reasoning of their opinions. Below is a list, based on Lipman's (1988) work, of factors that we can use to understand our own reasoning, and explain it in a structured and consistent way. For example, students should be aware of the credentials or qualifications of the writer. However, everyone has different beliefs regarding what credentials are “good enough.” Students should make clear what their position is regarding sufficient credentials as one part of judgment criteria. The great thing about this activity is that the students will use language in an

## Students Thinking Critically . . . (continued)

(Continued from page 12.)

authentic way to negotiate and express their own values and beliefs amidst various viewpoints.

### List for building criteria:

- standards / norms - What standards do I adhere to?
- laws / rules - What rules do I believe must be followed?
- definitions - How do I define the key words/concepts I use?
- goals / ideals - What ideals do I believe are inherently correct or good?
- credentials / reputation - What value do I place on certain credentials?
- methods / procedures - What do I consider the proper way to do things?

### Step 3: Formulate a critical viewpoint: Interview and Presentation Project

After the students have had sufficient time to discuss the content of the articles, the teacher may ask the students to interview other people in the community to find out what they think. This is another great opportunity for meaning-focused language practice. Students can create interview questions to help discuss the Internet articles as well as the alternative viewpoints brought up in the class discussion. In addition, students can give presentations to share their experiences interviewing people and also to report their findings.

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**About the Author:** Jay Tanaka is an instructor at the Hawai'i English Language Program at the University of Hawai'i at Manoa. He is also a master's candidate in the Second Language Studies Department at UHM. His research interests are in reading and vocabulary pedagogy, critical thinking, and critical literacy.

## The Poster Talk: Using Research to Integrate Skills

By David Lewis Brooks



The Poster Talk is a powerful technique for getting ESL students to read non-fiction with eagerness and cumulative understanding, while further integrating all four language skills. A poster talk session by students at almost any age and ability level can serve as an exciting culmination of independent reading and writing, directed toward a meaningful integrated research project.

Getting ESL and EFL students to read a variety of genres is essential to their development of reading skills. Moreover, expanding the breath and quantity of reading materials and broadening their avenues of response to the materials give the students opportunities to utilize and polish the other literacy skills as well. With the use of appropriate children's fiction and young adult literature, the narra-

tive itself will usually draw students into the story, especially when cooperative, interactive and holistic language learning activities are involved. However, how can we get our ESL students with limited proficiency to read non-fiction with as much eagerness and with the cumulative understanding that enables them to achieve multiple literacy learning experiences?

Capitalizing on students' individual interests for content-area research to create and present an oral poster presentation is a great project for achieving the integration of reading with the other language skills. Either as individual research projects or as part of an integrated thematic unit or over-reaching project, students can select an area of interest and importance, such as "how safe are imported foods," or "why do some whales and dolphins appear to kill themselves."

To give the research project a strong focus and a meaningful goal, the students need direct their efforts on finding and reading materials that can help them formulate, and also an-

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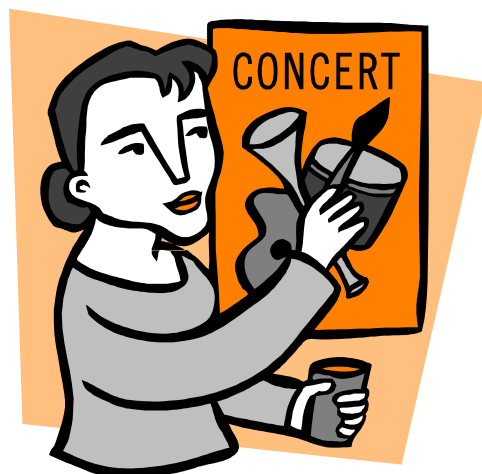
## The Poster Talk . . . (continued)

(Continued from page 13.)

swer, the essential questions related to their chosen topic: the core questions. Generating four main core research questions about the topic and making complete, but succinct, answers to each of these questions, gives each student a directed purpose and a manageable goal. Because they will present their research during a poster session, students will need to summarize core ideas, design a stimulating visual display, practice giving an oral talk about the most important findings of their research, and also to act as good listeners and engage in asking questions to other poster presenters. By way of performance, multiple poster session

presentations can occur simultaneously with one set of students making a rehearsed summary of their work in English while other 'visitor' students listen and ask questions. Later, their roles are reversed. After the Poster Talk session has concluded, the completed posters make an exciting and memorable wall display that continues to highlight the students' learning.

In conclusion, the Poster Talk provides for maximum effective integration of language skills with content-area learning.



**About the Author:** David L. Brooks is a long-term resident of Japan, where he teaches English classes at a medical and health sciences university.

## Submission to

## *The Word*

### Topics

We welcome any topic which would be of interest to HITESOL members or ESL professionals in Hawai'i. We are interested in, for example: recommended internet sites (or a tech type column), book reviews, a grad student's perspective, field trips/learning outside the classroom, reports from members working overseas, content-based teaching ideas, using video and music in the classroom, online teaching, CALL, a "gripes" column, DOE news/concerns, K-12 news, neighbor island news, applying theory to practice, interview with someone in the field, etc. This list is by no means exhaustive. Please feel free to send any articles about these topics or others that you consider interesting to ESL educators in Hawai'i. (You do not have to be a member of HITESOL to submit an article).

### Format & Style

Articles should be no more than 4 pages, double-spaced, Times New Roman font, 12 point, attached as an MS Word document. Accompanying photos or clip art are optional but welcome. Please also include a short biography statement about the author (email address optional). In general, articles are written in a fairly informal, non-scholarly style. Please refer to previous issues of *The Word* to get a sense of the types of articles which appear in the newsletter, or contact the editors with questions.

### Submission Deadlines

Please note that the next deadline for submissions will be posted on the website. 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

Keep up to date with Hawai'i TESOL events online at  
[www.hawaiitesol.wildapricot.org](http://www.hawaiitesol.wildapricot.org)



## Hawaii TESOL Executive Committee

### Elected Positions

President	Aaron Faidley
Past President	Jennifer Hickman
Vice President	Andrea Childs
Membership Secretary	Vanessa Balagtas
Treasure	Ericka Swanson
Program Committee	Peter Castillo
Socio-Political Action Chair	Shawn Ford
The Word Newsletter Committee	Lisa Kawai
Members at Large	Mark Wolfersberger
	Stephen Peridore
Big Island Chapter Liaisons	Carrie Mospens
	Julie Mowrer

### Board Appointer Positions

Conference Chair	Jennifer Hickman
HITESOL/TESOL Ukraine Liaison	Jean Kirschenmann
Social Media Chair	Peter Castillo
Webmaster	Perry Christensen

If you are interested in becoming an executive committee member, please go to the HITESOL website to see what opportunities are available. The committee is always happy to hear from interested people and welcome new members aboard.



## Hawai'i TESOL Travel Grants

The Travel Grants are intended to help members of HITESOL attend conferences on neighboring islands and conventions on the mainland. Hawai'i TESOL members who are currently practicing ESL teachers or administrators, or students earning a degree in an ESL-related field are eligible to apply for the grant. Preference however, is given to those applicants who have been accepted to present at a conference/convention and/or who have never attended a TESOL conference/convention before.

Five grants of \$150 to attend the 2014 Hawai'i TESOL Conference on Oahu and one \$500 grant to attend the International TESOL Convention in Portland, Oregon will be awarded. If you are interested, please go to the HITESOL website to see the application requirements and deadlines.

Please note that recipients are required to write a short article for *The Word* and are invited to share what they have learned at the conference/convention at a later Hawai'i TESOL event for the benefit of other HITESOL members. Unfortunately, recipients of a Hawai'i TESOL Travel Grant is not eligible for the same grant within a two year period.

This year MinHye Kim from Boston University Modern Languages and Comparative Literature was awarded a travel grant to attend the 2014 Hawaii TESOL Conference on Oahu. Congratulations. **The \$500 grant to attend the International TESOL Convention in Portland, Oregon is still available.** To apply, go to <http://hawaiiitesol.wildapricot.org/>.



## Events at Hawai'i TESOL

By Jennifer Hickman

We opened the year with an Activity Exchange/Round Table discussion at Global Village in Honolulu. Discussions covered a variety of topics including high impact learning environments, project-based learning, and online education. During the second part of the event, we reviewed activities submitted by our members. In small groups, we discussed various aspects of the activities and evaluated their overall effectiveness. The TPR Movie Director Listen and Do submitted by Jean Kirschenmann was a popular activity. In this activity, a teacher (or a student) pretends to be a movie director and gives students commands associated with various jobs or situations such as cleaning a house or grocery shopping. Alice Lachman's Starbuck's chant pronunciation warm-up was also a favorite. If you would like to see what activities were submitted, please go to the HITESOL web site to view all of the lesson plans.

Our professional development workshop focused on online education. Diana Oshiro shared with us her work with the Myron B. Thompson Academy. We learned that online classes have allowed the DOE to reach out to schools on other islands and offer them classes that they may not have access to otherwise. Diana also shared with us information about the New Zealand Assessments. These exams provide a solution to issues that often occur with online exams by challenging students to think critically and apply information, rather than simply answer multiple choice questions. She finished her presentation by discussing her work in online education in other countries and how online classes can help address the issues of educational inequity throughout the world.

Thanks to all of the board members who have worked hard to make these events happen. We couldn't do it without them. We also couldn't have our workshops without you, our members. We look forward to seeing all of you at our language experience in May and all of our future events.

For the 2014 conference, we have a lot of exciting changes. For the first time, we are providing you with 2 days

of sessions. On Friday, we will have a plenary address from Dr. Ken Beatty of Anaheim University. In addition, we will have round table discussions, an electronic village, and a conflict management workshop with Dr. Bruce Barnes. On Saturday, we will have our traditional conference format, but with over 35 sessions on topics as diverse as service learning, technology in the classroom, and writing grant proposals. This year we had a record number of applicants from all over the world including Saudi Arabia, Sweden, Puerto Rico, Korea, Japan, and China. Every year we seem to be growing and offering our members more options for professional development. Finally, the two-day format has allowed us to partner with Southern Utah State University to offer graduate credit for our sessions. By attending selected sessions and writing a synthesis paper, our members can now obtain one graduate credit. HPU has also offering partial credit toward a post baccalaureate course or a graduate course.

I want to give a special thanks to all the individuals who helped with the organization and planning of this conference. Dre Childs and Peter Castillo were instrumental in obtaining our plenary speaker, the venue, vans for transportation, and the food. Tyson Umberger and Yukiko Oki worked on logistics for our Saturday and Friday venues including organization of technology and volunteers. Vanessa Balagtas created the program, worked on registration, and all aspects of pre-conference communication with individuals. Stephen Peridore was instrumental in helping us obtain sponsorship from Ce-engage, graduate credit from Southern Utah State, and in reaching out to all of the K-12 teachers in the DOE.

We hope you enjoy our conference this year. We couldn't do this without all of you. Thanks for your participation

### Up-Coming Events:

National TESOL Convention: March 26-29, Portland, Oregon

HITESOL Business Meeting: April

HITESOL Language Experience: May

