The RI-TELLER

The Newsletter for Rhode Island Teachers of English Language Learners and ELL Professionals

Issue 2

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Chris Bourret / Joe Lopes
Editors

Deconstructing the Math Myth

The numbers don't lie. The majority of Rhode Island's public school students continue to struggle mightily in mathematics classrooms. This fact is disheartening enough, but making matters even more distressing for state educators is the realization that English Language Learners (ELLs) still lag behind their English dominant peers.

The latest New England Common Assessment (NECAP) scores indicate that only 55 percent of the state's students are proficient in mathematics, a slight increase over the 2009 scores. At the high school level, the proficiency rate is only 33 percent. Further compounding the problem is that achievement gaps are as large as 30 to 40 percentage points among minority, low-income, ESL and special education students, when compared to English dominant students.

The assumption of math being the universal language therefore remains a misguided myth. In fact, says Suzanne Irujo, who wrote in *the ELL Outlook*, "Lack of proficiency in the academic language of mathematics is one of the reasons that students who appear to be fluent in English still have difficulty achieving in mathematics."

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Tips ESL Teachers Can Use:

Talking with Elementary School Teachers about Math and ELLs

By Anne Goodrow
Associate Professor,
Elementary Education
Rhode Island College

Close your eyes for a moment and recall your own days of learning mathematics in elementary school. Did you sit in rows? Did you work alone? If you had this kind of experience, chances are you did not talk during math time. Today, elementary school mathematics has changed. Since the publication of the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics' Principles and Standards for School Mathematics (1989, 2000), communication has been recognized as integral to teaching and learning mathematics. In fact, the Communication Standard states that Instructional programs from pre-kindergarten through grade 12 should enable all students to:

• Organize and consolidate their mathematical thinking through communication;

Continued on page 2

Talking with Elementary School Teachers about Math and ELLs Continued

Dr. Goodrow is the Co-Principal Investigator on the Teaching and Learning Multiplication Through Lesson Study Project, which includes 27 teachers in grades K-8, in East Providence and Cumberland, RI (2010).

She is also a fellow in the Education Alliance at Brown, participating in Project BRITE, which aids higher education faculty in preparing new teachers to address the language and literacy needs of English language learners (2010)

Additionally, Dr. Goodrow facilitates a series of NCTM e-workshops offered for mathematics teachers in RI and sponsored by the RI STEM Center in conjunction with the RI Mathematics Teachers Association (2010).

Dr Goodrow is collaborating in the planning of the RI STEM Conference, noted in RI's Race To The Top proposal and scheduled for May 6, 2011 at RIC.

• Communicate their mathematical thinking coherently and clearly to peers, teachers, and others;
• Analyze and evaluate the mathematical thinking and strategies of others;
• Use the language of mathematics to express mathematical thinking and strategies of others.

While effectively integrating communication in the elementary mathematics class requires all students to become aware of their own mathematical thinking and learn to clearly express their strategies to other , doing so is especially challenging for English Language Learners (ELLs). In most elementary schools, the classroom teacher teaches math.

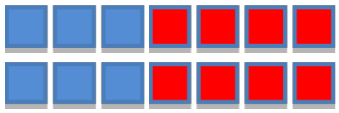
How can you, the ESL teacher, help the elementary classroom teacher find ways to meet the needs of ELLs as they learn mathematics concepts?

Collaborating with the elementary classroom teacher is critical. First and foremost, you might point out that like all students, ELLs need to construct mathematical concepts in meaningful ways. However, these students have an additional hurdle – they need to develop the language skills necessary for communicating their mathematical thinking. You can offer the following suggestions to elementary teachers:

1. Note how you yourself use mathematical language.

•Be accurate, use models and context. For example, many teachers use the expressions *turn-around facts* and *order property* rather than *commutative property.* However, mathematical terms can be used in context, along with the more colloquial phrases. (This is also important for all students, since the mathematical terms may be used in standardized tests.)

3+4 =7
4+3=7



"*Three plus four equals seven* is the same as *four plus three equals seven*.
The numbers are in the opposite order. We can call this *order property*. Mathematicians call this *the commutative property*."

• Provide sufficient wait time – many students need to understand your words and formulate a response in their own language first, before they can respond to you in English.

2. Become aware of the complexities of mathematics language.

• Even counting can be difficult. In other languages, the teen number words express their value, e.g. ten-five for 15. This not the case in English; the teen number words do not follow the language pattern of the other decades.

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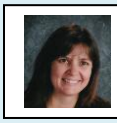
RITELL Spring Conference
Math 4 ELLs: Integrating Language & Content

April 9th, Rhode Island College
Student Union Ballroom
8:45-12:15
(Annual Business Meeting Follows-12:15 to 12:45)

RIDE CEUs Available

Sponsored by Pearson Curriculum Group and Pearson Longman



Featured Speakers:
Patricia Aube, ESL Curriculum Integration Specialist and Bonnie Baer-Simahk, ELL Director, Fitchburg Public Schools
Working Together to Improve Mathematical Outcomes for English Language Learners

Breakout Sessions:
Adult: Teaching Math in the Adult ESOL Classroom,
Sherry Lehane, Lead Teacher, Rhode Island Family Literacy Initiative (RIFLI) and Rhode Island Regional Adult Learning (RIRAL)

Secondary: *Designing Materials to Encourage Academic Language/Literacy Development in the Math Classroom*
Dina Silvaggio, ELL Middle Level Teacher & Specialist, North Providence School Department and Pamela Ardizzone, ELL Specialist, Hope High School, Providence Public Schools

Elementary: *Math and ELLs: A BRITE Combination!*
Anne Goodrow, Ph.D., Elementary Education Department and Nancy Cloud, Ed.D., M.Ed. in TESL Program; Project BRITE Fellows at Rhode Island College

Conference Registration:
Members $10
Students, Part-time Teachers, Retiree Members, $5
Non-member, $35

Become a RITELL Member:
Half-year membership fees:
Full-time Teachers $20
Students, Part-time Teachers, Retirees $12
Register Online at www.ritell.com

Talking with Elementary School Teachers about Math and ELLs Continued

• Some everyday words are mathematical terms with different meanings. For instance, a side of the three-dimensional solid is a *face*, a *table* is a kind of chart, and *operation* refers to working with numbers and symbols, not surgery.

• Some words are also unique to mathematics, e.g. *divisor*, *quotient*, *exponent*, and *scalene*. And, in some cases, phrases are used, e.g. *least common multiple*, *prime factor*, and *mixed number*.

• Some words derive meaning from context. In word problems, *more* can suggest addition, but it can also mean finding a difference. Consider the following examples:

John found 5 pennies.
His dad gave him 4 more pennies.
How many pennies does John have now?

Tom has 3 pennies.
Kate has 10 pennies.
How many more pennies does Kate have than Tom?

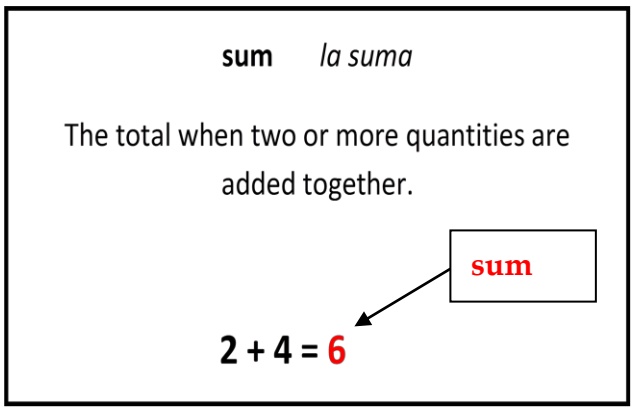
• And finally, the symbol system used in mathematics is quite sparse; the same symbols are used with different purposes. For example:

+ and – indicate operations, and also integers

A fraction can be read as a part of a whole, division, or a ratio.

How can you help the elementary classroom teacher support ELLs during math time? Let's take a look at some teaching strategies you can share with elementary teachers and encourage them to integrate into their teaching of mathematics.

1. Build a mathematics word wall and student vocabulary banks.
For each word, include an example and/or illustration. Cognates are helpful too.



2. Encourage students to use manipulatives.
Using objects such as connecting cubes, pattern blocks, and fraction bars not only helps students model concepts, but students can also use them to demonstrate their reasoning to classmates and the classroom teacher. This can assist in assessing ELLs' understanding.

3. Use sentence frames to help students build sentence structures and convey meaning.

-3 is a negative number.

It is less than 0.

4. Use choral response to provide students opportunities to practice word pronunciation, correct grammar and syntax.

5. Use literacy strategies during math time.
Implementing strategies such as *"Turn and Talk"* and *"Think-Pair-Share"* during whole class math discussions provides ELLs opportunities to practice putting their mathematics strategies into words with a peer, before sharing with the entire class.

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Talking with Elementary School Teachers about Math and ELLs Continued

6. For every lesson, include a language goal along with your mathematical learning goals.

Teaching mathematics to ELLs can be challenging, and perhaps overwhelming for a classroom teacher. The ESL teacher and the elementary school mathematics teacher working together is a partnership that holds promise — the promise for all learners to engage in and enjoy learning mathematics with meaning.

Several resources for teaching math to English Language Learners are available through the NCTM, including print and online articles (see references) and interactive math applets (http://illuminations.nctm.org). Some of the applets are accessible to English Language Learners (see for example, *Bobbie Bear, Groups and Grazing, Factorize, and Pan Balance — Shapes).* Included in links provided by NCTM is *Figure This* (http://www.figurethis.org/espanol.htm), which provides math activities for families in English and in Spanish.

Bray, W. (2009). The power of choice. Teaching Children Mathematics, 16, 178 - 183.

Bresser, R., Felux, C., Melanese, K., and Sphar, C. (2009). Supporting English Language Learners in Math Class: A Multimedia Professional Learning Resource. Sausalito, CA: Math Solutions.

Bresser, R., Melanese, K., and Sphar, C. (2009). Equity for language learners. Teaching Children Mathematics, 16, 170 – 177.

Fernandes, A., Anholt, C. and Civil, M. (2009). Mathematical interviews to assess Latino students. Teaching Children Mathematics, 16, 162 - 169.

National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (2000). Principles and Standards for School Mathematics. Reston, VA: NCTM.

If you have a teaching resource or link you find useful with your ESL or bilingual students, share the title or URL with everyone through RI-TELLER!

Attend the Bi-Annual RITELL Conferences held every Spring and Fall for practical tips, useful information and the building of Rhode Island's TESL teaching community!

Why Join RITELL?

Six Essential Reasons

RITELL is the only association in Rhode Island that maintains an affiliation with TESOL. Joining RITELL can help you present yourself as a serious professional who is a member of his or her professional association.

Highlight your membership on your resume:
There are few better ways to show your serious commitment to the field and distinguish yourself from others who don't join or participate in their professional associations.

Pay special member fees and use RITELL resources:
At RITELL Conferences in the fall and spring, pay discounted fees. Designed with our members' needs in mind, visit the RITELL website regularly to stay up to date in your field. ***www.ritell.org***.

Receive the association's newsletter--The RITeller:
Receive the ***RITeller*** twice a year and stay up to date on issues and developments in the field. Learn of changes in state policies, gain valuable information that can help you teach your students more effectively, and learn of professional conferences of interest to be held in our region.

Job Postings:
Receive job postings through ***RIWorks***, our e-bulletin that will notify RITELL members of ESL and bilingual/dual language positions as they are announced.

Networking:
Network with colleagues who can offer you ideas, strategies, resources and encouragement.

Advocacy:
Benefit from the advocacy efforts of RITELL on behalf of Rhode Island ESL and Bilingual professionals, as well as ELL students and their families.

Get involved!
RITELL members are the backbone of our professional association. If you are looking for a way to contribute, RITELL is a wonderful option for you. Join others and make a difference!

Don't miss out on the opportunities and benefits RITELL can bring!

Contribute to RI-TELLER!

We welcome book reviews, articles, lesson ideas, notices or relevant meetings and any other news of interest to ESL educators in RI.

For more information, contact Joe Lopes or Chris Bourret at either

westerlyjoe@hotmail.com

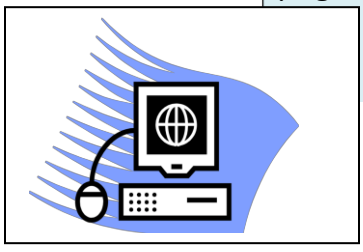
or

cbourret@verizon.net

See "Helpful Tips" for more information about submissions on the last page.

Check Out the RI-TELL Webpage!

www.ritell.org is up and running. In the coming months, the free site will contain event information, job openings, advocacy positions, educational resources where teachers can post ideas for lessons and other material, as well and other information for members. Visit it today!



Deconstructing the Math Myth continued

As a result, ESL teachers are encouraged to pay particular attention to the register of the language and to be particularly aware of word choice, sentence structure, and discourse patterns while instructing ESL students. And the most obvious difference between other registers and the language of math is its vocabulary because math has many complex, conceptually dense terms.

Consider the term *least common multiple*, for example. An ESL teacher may provide the following concrete example to help ESL students gain a nonverbal understanding of the concept:

Multiples of 4: 4, 8, **12**, 16, 20, 24, 28, 32, 36

Multiples of 6: 6, **12**, 18, 24, 30, 36, 42, 48, 54

Still, the obvious question remains. On a math assessment, how does the above example help the student explain or provide a definition for *least common multiples*?

Truth is, ESL students must overcome varying linguistic limitations in mainstream math classrooms while at the same time mastering concepts that go beyond simple computation. More precisely, mathematics competency also requires ESL students to attain both conceptual and procedural knowledge.

Consider the following example:

$$\begin{array}{r} 3330 \\ \underline{-\ 296} \\ -\ 370 \\ \underline{-\ 370} \\ 0 \end{array} \qquad \begin{array}{r|l} & 74 \\ \hline & 45 \end{array}$$

What math concept is being practiced, and how is the procedure different than what is traditionally taught in American classrooms? The concept is division, and the procedure, foreign to students in this country, is very common to many Latino pupils.

Here's another example. If an Arabic-speaking student is asked to write *65*, the student may write *70*, which are the two Arabic symbols for 6 and 5.

One final example: a beginning ESL student is asked to determine *how many feet are in a yard*. Simple enough, correct? After all, the linguistic register in this problem is simple as is the required computation. But just imagine the images that may pop up in the student's mind, leaving the student to wonder what a person's feet in a home's back yard has to do with math. The lesson here, of course, is that most ESL students come to the United States from countries where the metric system is the norm.

Procedural differences, of course, can be corrected in relatively short order. The academic language involved in mathematics, however, is much more daunting and at times overwhelming, especially at the secondary level. Mathematics not only has its own specialized language, grammatical patterns, and rules, it also demands that ESL students learn the unique meanings that some English words have in a mathematical context.

So, what can be done to help ESL students overcome these academic language obstacles? Irujo suggests the following: "Teach it. We can't wait for students to 'pick it up' on their own. Not even native speakers pick up academic English on their own; it has to be taught, explicitly and comprehensively."

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Deconstructing the Math Myth continued

Echoing Irujo's recommendations is the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, which advises schools to provide second-language learners with support in their dominant language and English language while learning mathematics. While dual-language instruction for many school districts is not feasible or even practical, sound mathematical teaching strategies can be easily developed.

All teachers need to do, explains bilingual consultant Minerva Coyne, is to "exercise caution when planning math lessons for a classroom with students from other cultural environments."

Coyne adds that it's vitally important for math educators to acknowledge an ESL student's past experiences in math. Coyne advises, "Help them make a smooth transition to the different processes, symbols, and vocabulary used in the teaching of math in the United States."

If not, the achievement numbers that are so important to our educational system, those numbers will continue to remind our state's educators that changes need to be made.

Coyne, Minerva. Math the Universal Language? Midwest Resource Center.

Irujo, Suzanne. So Just What Is the Academic Language of Mathematics? The ELL Outlook, May/June 2007.

NCTM Position Statement. July 1998.

Teach Math Vocabulary

ESL students face the dual task of learning specific **content** vocabulary and expressions along with acquiring a second language. Listed below are some helpful activities to directly teach math vocabulary to ESL students.

- **Topical Terms –** For each assigned activity in the classroom, make sure to identify and teach specific vocabulary that must be understood for that lesson.
- **Common Math Terms -** Teach the meanings of common math terms that have other definitions outside of the context of math. Some examples include root, face, mean, and prime.
- **Visual Aids -** Visual aids, multiple examples, and using student explanations are possible techniques to help ESL students understand unfamiliar math terms.
- **Note Cards –** Encourage ESL students to organize note cards of common math terms and vocabulary in their own words. These note cards should be used as a reference tool, especially as an ESL student's understanding of a particular topic grows.
- **Math Journals -** Math journals are useful to practice and strengthen new language skills and math terms in a nonthreatening manner. Some ESL students may feel comfortable using their native language in their journals as a way to help solidify their understanding of math concepts.
- **Use Prior Learning as a Starting Point -** In order to develop appropriate instructional activities, it is essential to take into account an ESL student's unique prior learning experiences and individual strengths.

African Voices: Focus On Cape Verde

As noted in the last issue of the RITELLER, the percentage of English Language Learners of African origin is rising in numbers in Rhode Island. The majority of these students are originally from the Cape Verdean Islands. Most of these students were born in the United States, but have a home language and upbringing very much attached to the culture, customs, and traditions of the mother land. So we thought we would share some information about the cultural, linguistic, and socio-ethnic background of Cape Verdean students that may offer teachers a better understanding of their students.

Location, population, and languages

Cape Verde comprises ten Islands situated 375 miles off the cost of Senegal, West Africa. Its population is estimated at 430,000 inhabitants with an additional one million Cape Verdeans living abroad. Cape Verde is approximately the size of Rhode Island. Because of the Islands' proximity with Senegal, there is also a large community of Cape Verdeans established there. So many of the Cape Verdean immigrants in Rhode Island were actually born and raised in Senegal, and speak Wolof and French instead of Creole.

The official language of Cape Verde is Portuguese, but variations of Creole are spoken in the ten different islands according to a Cape Verdean-American who currently lives in Pawtucket. She stated that in spite of the differences in Creole spoken on the Islands, there is an "official Creole" that everyone can understand. This native language is believed to have been influenced by Mandingo and languages from Senegal, the Gambia, and Guinea Bissau because most African Slaves brought on the Islands originated from those countries.

Education and Upbringing

Education is compulsory from age seven to fourteen in Cape Verde. According to the CIA World Fact Book, 76.6% of the population age fifteen and older can read and write with a percentage of 85.8 for male and 69.2 for female. Each of the ten islands has elementary, middle and high schools and 90% of children attend school. However, parallel to attending school, they are expected to perform household chores and work at family trade. Children are treated affectionately by adults, but corporal punishment at school and at home are not uncommon according to expatriates who grew up in Cape Verde. Behaviors like deference for adults, parents, and authority is inculcated.

In terms of higher education, teacher training schools and vocational schools are available, but most high school graduates have to go abroad if they want to further their education.

Socio-cultural Background

The socio-ethnic composition of Cape Verde is 78% Creole, 28% black African, and 1% white. The diversity of the population of Cape Verde came from its rich European and African Heritage and constitutes the pride of Cape Verdeans. They are a generous, warm, and extremely sharing nation who welcome strangers, and willingly invite them to their homes, and communities.

By Anta Hane Lo, M.ed. TESL
(*questions, suggestion, and comments to* alo@ric.edu)

For more info, check out the following links:

http://www.afdevinfo.com/htmlreports/org/org_28050.html

http://www.everyculture.com/Bo-C0/CapeVerde.html

http://www.education-africa.com/wiki/index_en.php?title=Cape_Verde

https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/fields/2103.html

Math Instruction in an Adult ELL Program

*By **Karisa Tashjian***
Coordinator
RI Family Literacy Initiative

As the Coordinator of an adult education agency in Rhode Island, I have observed that the definition of literacy education for adult immigrants has expanded in recent years. Traditionally, our services have included teaching reading, writing, speaking and listening skills – all under the umbrella of English as a Second Language (ESL). A confluence of factors, mainly the expectations of funders and the state Department of Education, as well as the competitive economic environment that our learners face, are responsible for the expanded definition of literacy. There are now expectations that financial and computer literacy, workforce development skills and math and civics instruction become part of a comprehensive adult education program. There is also budding interest in science instruction being added to adult ESL.

The Rhode Island Family Literacy Initiative (RIFLI) prides itself on carefully gathering information about learner goals and building a curriculum to help learners meet their goals. For most adult immigrants, their goal is to "learn English." Rarely does a learner enter our program expressing that he or she wants to learn math. However, when examined more deeply, many say that they want to learn English in order to improve their employment situation. Yet, without adequate math skills, getting a job or improving one's employment can be more difficult.

Starting this program year, RIFLI began, for the first time, to test its learners' math skills using the CASAS math assessment. The Rhode Island Department of Education's (RIDE) Office of Adult Education's funding proposal for FY2011-FY2015 stated that "all programs must offer explicit reading and math instruction. Instruction should be informed by Rhode Island's Adult Education Content Standards and the internationally benchmarked Draft College and Career Readiness Standards issued by the National Governors' Association in conjunction with CSSO and others.

ESL programs, too, must provide access to math instruction for students who need and want it either as part of the services they offer or through partnerships."

The requirement for mandatory testing and instruction in mathematics is currently under review by RIDE and may be amended. Learner reaction to the math testing has been mixed. Most learners are surprised to be tested. It appears that those with stronger math skills don't mind being tested as much as learners who aren't confident in their skills.

Just as adult English language learners (ELLs) have differing views of mathematics, so do adult education practitioners. Some ESL teachers view math as an integral part of English literacy education that is needed to prepare learners for employment, helping their children with schoolwork, and functioning in daily life. Others view math as a separate yet essential skill that does not belong in the ESL classroom and should be offered as an option to learners. Understandably, practitioners have many concerns: Do I know enough math to teach others? Should we separate learners by English language level or math level? What should numeracy assessment look like for ELLs? How do we talk about math to low level language learners? What resources are available for practitioners? In addition, we must think about cultural differences in notation, measurement, and algorithms and how these differences are reflected in teaching and learning.

Fortunately, RIFLI has two teachers trained in a new program called Teachers Investigating Adult Numeracy (TIAN). The goal of TIAN is "to increase and deepen teachers' mathematical content knowledge to increase teachers' knowledge and use of state mathematics content standards, to increase the number and range of teachers' instructional approaches, and to build teachers' connection to their state ABE mathematics/numeracy standards."

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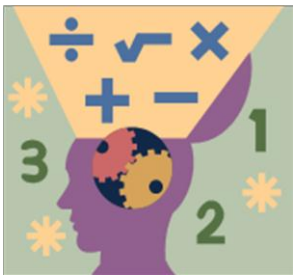

Math Instruction in an Adult ELL Program cont.

The approach to teaching math using TIAN is to allow students opportunities to share their problem solving strategies, explore different approaches to numeracy, and apply their knowledge to real world situations.One of RIFLI's teachers who has received extensive training in TIAN, Sherry Lehane, now serves as a state trainer. She has made the teaching of math skills in her Intermediate ESL classroom a regular part of the routine. She has found that devoting ample time to explicitly teaching math has allowed her learners to use their language skills in a new context and develop a new vocabulary around numeracy. The rewards of teaching mathematics have been seeing students develop a stronger number and operation sense and watching them demonstrate mastery of these skills in their lives. A challenge has been planning for and teaching multi-level math classes using differentiated instruction.

Math and numeracy are important life skills. They help with everyday tasks and navigating systems. RIFLI will continue to explore integrating math instruction into our program.

Resources

TIAN:
http://adultnumeracy.terc.edu/TIAN_goals_acts.html

RI Adult Education content standards for math:
http://www.ride.ri.gov/adulteducation/ri%20content%20standards.aspx

RITELLER Featured Links:

1. **Way To go RI:**

Source for college and career planning in RI. Information, units and activities for K-Adult learners. Teachers can register their class for free on site.
https://secure.waytogori.org/Default.aspx

2. **TESOL English Language Bulletin:**

The TESOL English Language Bulletin is a weekly news bulletin presented as a service to members of Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) and members of RITELL are also eligible to subscribe to this service. It's free! Follow link below to subscribe.
http://multibriefs.com/optin.php?tesol

RITELL at TESOL

Certificate of Affiliation
Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, Inc.
hereby acknowledges the affiliation of
Rhode Island Teachers of English Language Learners
in the year of 2011
TESOL
Presented at the 45th Annual TESOL Convention and Exhibit
New Orleans, Louisiana USA
March 16–March 19, 2011
Brock Brady
President 2010-2011

RITELL was recognized at the TESOL Conference with a certificate of Affiliation. Professors Nancy Cloud and Andres Ramirez attended the affiliate meeting and manned the RITELL table at the conference.

Affiliate Meeting at TESOL

RITELL Display at TESOL

Useful Math Links

1. *Mathglossk-2; Math Glossary for grades K-2*

http://www.wilmette39.org/resources/mathglossary/mathglossK-2.htm

2. *CUNY Math: A glossary of mathematical terms and concepts for ESL students.*

http://www.cunymath.cuny.edu/sites/cunymath/students/glossary/index.html

3. *IXL Math: online activities and a paid membership site for teachers to use in their classroom.*

http://www.ixl.com/math/

4. *math.com - pre-algebra: various math resources*

http://www.math.com/students/homeworkhelp.html#prealgebra

5. *(NCELA) – National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition: Fast Math Curriculum*

http://www.ncela.gwu.edu/faqs/view/13

6. *Challenges for ELL Learners in Content Area Learning*

http://www.everythingesl.net/inservices/challenges_ells_content_area_l_65322.php

7. *Kids Zone Math Activities*

http://www.kidzone.ws/math/grade1.htm#dynamic

8. *Math Instruction for English Language Learners: Strategies for making language in Integral part of math instruction. Many activity links at end of article.*

http://www.colorincolorado.org/article/30570

9. *Mathematics in TESOL; an independent forum within TESOL. To join the listserve email:*

shelly.chasse@maine.edu

10. *TODOS: mathematics for ALL; An NCTM Affiliate*

info@todos-math.org
Join online at www.todos-math.org

11. *Research briefs and clips about ELLs in mathematics*

www.nctm.org/news/content.aspx?id=8468

12. *Position Statement: Teaching Mathematics to ELLs*

http://www.nctm.org/about/content.aspx?id=6330

13. *Family Resources: www.nctm.org/resources/families.aspx*

RITELL Coordinating Council

President: **Nancy Cloud**

Vice President: **Andres Ramirez**

Recording Secretary: **Susan Rotblat-Walker**

Membership Secretary: **Jane George**

Treasurer: **Lauren Bentley**

Advocacy Representative: **Suzanne Da Silva (not pictured)**

RI-TELLER Editors: **Chris Bourret and Joe Lopes**

Representatives at Large: **Pat Morris and Dina Silvaggio**

How to Pay for RITELL Membership and Spring Conference

You can now pay online at www.ritell.org!

If you would like to become a member, click the *membership* button on website when paying. RITELL half-year membership fees are $ 20 for full-time teachers. Fees are $12 for part-time teachers and retired teachers.

If you have already become a RITELL member, click on the *conference* button on the website to pay online. Spring Conference Registration Fees will be *$10 for members*, $5 *for students, part-time teachers or retired members.* Those attending who do not wish to become RITELL members will pay a conference fee of $35.

If you prefer, you may also pay your membership fee and your registration fee in one check made out to RITELL at the conference.

Contact Jane George at Jane_George@NKSD.net to register for the conference and let her know you will bring your check that day.

Show your support for RITELL by purchasing a nifty RITELL T-Shirt and tote bag at the conference. They are going fast and supplies are limited, so don't forget to purchase them!

Thanks to all our members for their support and contributions this year!

RITELL Fall 2010 Conference Photos

RITELL's first conference as an independent TESOL affiliate was a great success, thanks to a wonderful presentation by Professor Maria Brisk, and superb breakout sessions for elementary, secondary and adult attendees. Thanks to your support we are already 150 members strong and still growing in our first year. This only helps to make us a vital and important organization and resource for ELL professionals and the learners we serve.

More Fall 2010 RITELL Conference Photos

Advocacy Corner

This year started off with a bang! RITELL had to respond to two very important advocacy issues so far in 2011. The first was the new high school regulations, which thankfully have been pushed back to 2014, but should still be of utmost concern to teachers of English Language Learners. Our concerns were voiced in regards to the equity issues that exist for our students. Their documented lack of English language skills, through no fault of their own, could lead to ELLs not being able to pass the NECAP and be denied a diploma or be given a lowest tier "RI" diploma. This issue is still unfolding and is far from over. Our voices need to still be heard in response to this educational equity issue concerning the ability of ELLs to meet RI's graduation requirements, given their late arrival into American High Schools.

The second hot button issue is the English Competency Provisions being passed by the RI Department of Education which state that, in cases where someone raises a complaint, a teacher's English competency must be assessed to determine if the teacher has sufficient proficiency to be a teacher in a Rhode Island classroom. RITELLs concerns revolve around the potential for abuses and also the technical adequacy of the measures that will be used to measure a teacher's proficiency.

Given the value of having teachers from the languages and cultures of our students, we weighed in on the proposed regulation concerning English proficiency of RI teachers. We will be monitoring the developments in this area, as it appears that the regulation was passed.

If you know of issues that RITELL should be focusing on, please contact me or any member of the Coordinating Council. We do intend to be active on behalf of ELL teachers, students and families on all issues that will have a major impact in our state.

Suzanne DaSilva, Advocacy Representative, RITELL

teachingthefuture@gmail.com

RITELL advocates for all teachers who serve ELLs. Let us know the issues important to you!

Contact information:
We're on the Web!
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RI-TELLER submissions
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Upcoming Conferences

2011 MATSOL Conference

All: Meeting the Needs of Diverse Learners

May 5-7, 2011
Four Points Sheraton, Leominster, MA. K-12, Adult, Workplace and Higher Education Focus.

Online registration open until filled.
See Matsol.org for information.

RI Adult Education Spring Conference

May 25, 2011
8am-4pm
Rhode Island College Student Union Ballroom

For more information, contact Jessica Ortiz at jortiz@ric.edu or call 456-2838.

Helpful Tips for Submission to RI-TELLER

Articles can be up to 900 words in length. Contributing writers are asked to keep in mind the following tips when submitting articles to the editors of the RITELLER:

- **Get to the point…**
  The more succinct your submission, the more likelihood it will be read.
- **Third person …**
  Unless you are writing an editorial, always write in the third person.
- **Be objective …**
  Your task is to inform, not to be opinionated.
- **Avoid jargon…**
  Don't bore your reader to sleep. Simple, clear language is usually more effective