



The RI-TELLER

The Newsletter for Rhode Island Teachers of English Language Learners

Issue 3

Fall 2011

Special Interest Articles:

RTI Front and Center

New Evaluation System Q&A

Notes From Adult Ed. Learning Differences Awareness Conference 10

Explicit Targeted Instruction 11

Individual Highlights:

Top Picks for RTI Resources 2

Free TESOL Memberships! 5

Why Join RITELL? 6

Advocacy Corner 8

Lesson Ideas 12

Coordinating Council 14

Spring Conference Photos-2011 15

Spring 2012 Conference 16

Fall Conference Photos -2011 17

Conferences 19

Chris Bourret / Joe Lopes
Editors

RTI Front and Center

Noted Speaker Addresses Issue at RITELL Conference

By *j. a. Lopes*

The groundswell that is Response To Intervention (RTI) is now beginning to shake the very foundation of public education.

Set in motion by reauthorized federal legislation in 2004, RTI, by definition, is a tiered process of instruction that allows public schools to identify struggling students early and to provide these students with

appropriate instructional interventions in math and reading. This issue, and how it specifically affects English Language Learners (ELLs) in Rhode Island, was placed front and center at this year's RITELL Fall Conference.

Speaking to a full house at Rhode Island College, Dr. Janette Klingner shook educators almost

immediately when she said that today "more than half of the English Language Learners are not reaching benchmarks." Klingner, a national expert in the field of ELL and who teaches at the University of Colorado in Boulder, added that the problem is further compounded because many school personnel are unsure how to distinguish between language acquisition and learning disabilities.

"... for ELLs, they read slower when they understand." *Continued on page 4*

The New Evaluation System: Qs & As

In an attempt to provide information to ELL educators relating to the new evaluation system in the state, questions raised by RITELL members were submitted to the Office of Instruction, Assessment, and Curriculum at the Rhode Island Department of Education. RIDE not only has responded to educator concerns, it

also has provided internet links allowing RITELL members to obtain more information.

Listed below are questions raised by RITELL members.

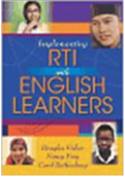
1. *Will there be a different evaluation system and evaluator used for ESL teachers?*

If you are an ESL teacher, providing

instruction to students, you will be evaluated as a teacher according to the evaluation model being used by your district. The district determines who evaluators are. For most people, it is their building principal but it could be other administrators. Additionally, districts may choose to involve others, such as subject area experts, as part of the evaluation system. Anyone serving as a trainer must be trained.

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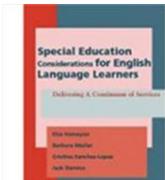
Top Picks on RTI for ELLs-K-12



Nancy Cloud, Ed.D.
Feinstein School of Education and Human Development
Rhode Island College
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1. Implementing RTI with English Learners, Douglas Fisher, Nancy Frey, Carol Rothenberg, Solution Tree Press, Bloomington, IN; ISBN 978-1-935249-97-9; www.solution-tree.com [Downloadable Study Guide Available]

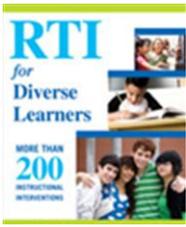
Noted authors Doug Fisher, Nancy Frey and Carol Rothenberg present the RTI approach for English Learners; an approach designed to insure that they have access the core curriculum and achieve at high levels. The book opens with a focus on language proficiency in order to help all teachers understand the important role proficiency plays in school success. Following this, the authors provide a framework for instruction that consists of focus lessons, guided instruction, group work and independent practice. They define appropriate instruction as melding language and content objectives and built around culturally responsive teaching. They also distinguish between quality instruction for ELLs vs. quality instruction for all learners. In the core of the book they describe Tier 1 and 2 assessments and supplemental interventions that build language and content knowledge, as well as intensive Tier 3 interventions and how to distinguish between language difference and learning disability. This is a top pick as it's sure to assist in thinking through your school or district's RTI policies for ELLs.



2. Special Education Considerations for English Language Learners: Delivering a Continuum of Services, by Else Hamayan, Barbara Marler, Cristina Sanchez-Lopez and Jack Damico, Caslon Publishing, Philadelphia, PA
ISBN 0-9727507-9-7; www.caslonpublishing.com

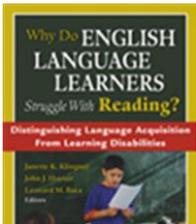
Divided into 12 chapters, this resource book takes readers through the entire process of designing a continuum of services for ELLs. They present a Framework that systematically explores Seven Integral Factors in order to design responsive services and programs for ELLs. They utilize a collaborative service delivery model which takes advantage of the professional knowledge and skills of ESL and bilingual specialists as well as special education and other school-based service providers. Chapter 4 describes the RTI process for ELLs and then chapters 5-11 systematically discuss the 7 integral factors to consider when designing programs for ELLs: 1) the learning environment, 2) personal and family factors, 3) physical and psychological factors, 4) previous schooling factors, 5) oral language and literacy development factors, 6) academic achievement factors and 7) cross-cultural factors. An excellent book for joint professional development where teams engage in study circles to plan a responsive RTI process for ELLs.

Continued on page 3



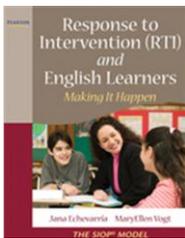
3. RTI for Diverse Learners: More than 200 Instructional Interventions, Catherine Collier, Corwin Press, Thousand Oaks, CA, ISBN 9781412971621, www.corwinpress.com

The book opens with a description of both three- and four-tier models in use in RTI. This chapter is followed by individual chapters on Tier 1, 2, 3, and 4 interventions for diverse learners (including ELLs) in which the instructional focus of the tier is clearly defined and progress monitoring strategies are outlined. In each chapter the author discusses: 1) readiness and resiliency issues or adaptation and development issues, 2) communication issues, 3) literacy issues, 4) behavior issues and 5) cognitive issues and the responsive classroom interventions that can respond to each. Unlike other resources that focus more heavily on academic interventions, this volume also focuses on emotional and behavioral challenges students may face in order to design truly responsive programs.



4. Why Do English Language Learners Struggle with Reading? Distinguishing Language Acquisition from Learning Disabilities, Janette K. Klingner, John J. Hoover, and Leonard M. Baca (Eds.), Corwin Press, Thousand Oaks, CA, 978-1-4129-4147-1; www.corwinpress.com

This book discusses misconceptions about the second language acquisition process that can lead to erroneous conclusions about ELLs that could lead to disproportionate representation in special programs. It defines the RTI Process through the experience at a model elementary school in chapter 3, and discusses how to distinguish between normal language acquisition and learning disabilities in Chapter 4. Chapter 5 discusses data-driven decision making through the tiers and a final chapter focuses on considerations in assessment.



5. Response to Intervention (RTI) and English Language Learners: Making It Happen, Jana Echevarria and MaryEllen Vogt, Pearson, ISBN 0137048904. <http://www.pearsonhighered.com/product?ISBN=0137048904>

One of the Pearson books that takes as its starting place the use of the SIOP Model, this volume explains the linguistic and academic issues that ELLs face and covers effective interventions for Tiers 1, 2, and 3 using the 8 components of the SIOP Model. Tier 1 is framed around the SIOP model and then Tier 2 and 3 move on from there to talk about small group interventions and modeling student progress using effective progress monitoring techniques. The book also discusses distinguishing difference from disability; an important topic in multilingual schools. A unique feature of the book is that it provides special considerations for secondary ELLs in Chapter 6 and also discusses successes and barriers to effective RTI implementation with ELLs.

Continued on page 7

Show your colleagues page 6 and encourage them to join RITELL! The more members we have, the stronger we become in serving you!

Considering these obstacles, the situation, then, is hopeless, correct? Not necessarily.

According to Klingner, school districts can rectify the situation by developing and adopting a hypothesis-driven process that first focuses on eliminating possible reasons for a child's struggles in the classroom. And, so, what follows is a list of steps that Klingner suggests ELL educators follow during the referral and evaluation process:

- ⊙ Begin the process by hypothesizing that the causes of an individual's learning difficulties are due to external factors.
- ⊙ Conduct assessments believing there is nothing wrong with the individual and that systemic, ecological or environmental factors are the primary reasons for the observed learning problems.
- ⊙ Maintain this hypothesis until data suggests otherwise and when all plausible external factors are ruled out.

Again, the purpose of RTI is to catch struggling children early, provide appropriate instruction, and prevent the need to refer the child for special education. This task, of course, is easier said than done for ELLs because it is often difficult to determine if the ELL's struggles are the result of a learning disability or because of language acquisition.

Ultimately, Klingner said, many districts may need to focus on improving core instruction with differentiation, rather than simply trying to figure out what is wrong with struggling students. If that philosophy is embraced, Klingner said, it is important to use progress monitoring to ensure that instruction is adjusted to meet the needs of individual students.

In addition, Klingner added, multiple assessment methods are needed to provide a

comprehensive view of learning and that oral reading fluency does not correlate with comprehension for ELLs. At one point Klingner reminded educators, "You read faster when you understand... but for ELLs, they read slower when they understand."

While this may be an accepted fact among ELL educators, it oftentimes is a foreign concept to members of an RTI team. Therefore, it is imperative to include someone on the RTI team who has expertise in the language acquisition process and who is able to distinguish between language acquisition and learning disabilities.



Dr. Janette Klingner is a national expert in the field of English language learners and students with disabilities. She is a professor of education at the University of Colorado, Boulder, in the Department of Educational Equity and Cultural Diversity, specializing in bilingual special education. She was a bilingual special education teacher for ten years before earning a PhD in reading and learning disabilities from the University of Miami. Her research interests include reading comprehension strategy instruction for culturally and linguistically diverse students, Response to Intervention for English language learners, the disproportionate representation of culturally and linguistically diverse students in special education, and professional development that enhances teacher quality in diverse schools.

If you missed her at The Fall RITELL Conference, here's a link to podcasts of Janette:

<http://rtinetwork.org/professional/podcasts/janette-klingner-what-do-we-need-to-consider-when-implementing-response-to-intervention-with-english-language-learners>

New Evaluation System Q&A Continued from page 1

2. Are ESL teachers to be evaluated at the district level or at each individual school?

The district will determine who evaluates you. If you are assigned to one school or two schools, it may be determined that the principal(s) are most appropriate. If there is a district ELL Coordinator or another central office administrator who oversees your work, that individual could be your evaluator. Please ask your school or district how they have decided these items.

3. When ELL students are a shared population with classroom teachers, how will growth be pinpointed to either the ELL or classroom teacher?

If the classroom model is a co-teaching model, then both teachers are considered contributing educators and will have growth ratings for all students in the class. In another classroom model, you might only have a growth rating for the students on your caseload. The roster process will allow you to verify your students. Please visit: <http://www.ride.ri.gov/EducatorQuality/EducatorEvaluation/EdEvalRIGM.aspx> for more information about contributing educators.

4. Will the evaluation system use the growth model from Gary Cook (WIDA) for ELL teachers?

The growth model is based on the state assessment, NECAP then PARCC. However, you may use data from WIDA for setting Student Learning Objectives. SLOs are required of all teachers. For more information visit: <http://www.ride.ri.gov/EducatorQuality/EducatorEvaluation/SLO.aspx>

B. Who is going to compute this?

RIDE computes growth.

5. How will the progress or lack of progress of ELLs affect a teacher's evaluation?

It's tough to answer this without knowing what part of student learning is referenced. SLOs are developed by teachers to establish mastery or progress goals. The growth model is also a component of the student learning portion of evaluation. For more information, please visit:

<http://www.ride.ri.gov/EducatorQuality/EducatorEvaluation/Guides.aspx>

In addition to these responses to questions, RIDE also reminds members to use the following link to obtain further information:

<http://www.ride.ri.gov/EducatorQuality/EducatorEvaluation/RIModelFAQ.aspx>

Free TESOL Memberships Up for Grabs

Planning on going to the TESOL Convention this Year? RITELL, as an affiliate of TESOL can award 4 FREE TESOL memberships to RITELL members, which means those awarded would pay at the Member Conference registration rates, plus travel expenses. This Competition is open to all, but we prefer to give the membership to someone who plans to attend the Conference in Philadelphia so they can enjoy the member benefits the most.

All you need to do is submit your name and contact information and write a paragraph expressing your interest in the TESOL membership to RITELL Editor Chris Bourret at cbourret@verizon.net

Winners will be announced January 15th, two weeks before the end of early registration .

So apply today to win the chance to become a TESOL member and save hundreds on the conference costs! (Also see Conference info on last page of the RITELLER for more conference information).

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 RI-Teller:

Receive the *RI-Teller* 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

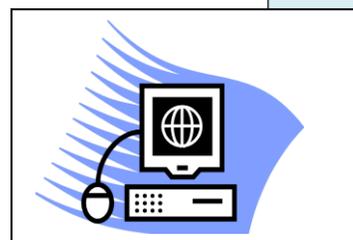
cbourret@verizon.net



Next Issue: Spring 2012

Check Us Out Online!

www.ritell.org is up and running. In the coming months, the site will contain event information, job openings, advocacy positions, educational resources where teachers can post ideas for lessons and other material. And check out our Facebook Page at <http://www.facebook.com/#!/pages/Ritell-an-Affiliate-of-Tesol-International/181353538598462>



Top Picks for RTI *continued*



6. *A Cultural, Linguistic, and Ecological Framework for Response to Intervention with English Language Learners*, NCREST Practitioner Brief, by Julie Esparza Brown, Portland State University Jennifer Doolittle, Office of Special Education Programs U.S. Department of Education. http://www.nccrest.org/Briefs/Framework_for_RTI.pdf

This 12-page brief provides an overview of the RTI process for ELLs, by outlining the student characteristics at each tier, the questions that should guide planning at each tier, the instructional interventions and service providers involved and the necessary provider skills to deliver quality instruction.



7. RTI Action Network: Response to Intervention in Reading for English Language Learners, Sharon Vaughn, Ph.D.
<http://www.rtinetwork.org/learn/diversity/englishlanguagelearners>

This article briefly highlights the knowledge base on reading and RTI for ELLs, and provides preliminary support for the use of practices related to RTI with this population. It describes the skills educators must have to implement RTI for ELLs, universal screening and progress monitoring, and then effective instruction for the three tiers.



8. **Response to Intervention and English Learners: Cerate Brief**, July 2009, Jana Echevarria and Jan Hasbrouck, www.cal.org/create

This 4-page synopsis defines the three tiers with ELLs, assessments used in RTI and considerations for ELLs throughout the process. Concludes with an overview of 6 effective practices for teachers of ELLs.



9. Videos on RTI: Janette Klingner : Response to Intervention with English Language Learners
<http://www.rtinetwork.org/professional/podcasts/janette-klingner-what-do-we-need-to-consider-when-implementing-response-to-intervention-with-english-language-learners>

See also: Realizing the Potential of RTI: Considerations When Implementing RTI with ELLs; Realizing the Potential of RTI: Cultural and Linguistic Diversity in ELLs.

Top Picks for RTI *continued*



10. English Language Learners with Disabilities, Dr. Elisa Cardenas-Hagan discusses assessment and instruction strategies for ELLs with learning disabilities.

<http://www.colorincolorado.org/webcasts/disabilities/>

Search the site for other resources on RTI for ELLs and Differentiated Instruction for ELLs



Advocacy Corner: RITELL Responds to RIDE Literacy Document

The RI Department of Elementary and Secondary Education DRAFT Comprehensive Literacy Plan for Pre-K-12 schools was sent out for public comment on September 20, 2011. RITELL was pleased to respond. By reviewing it, RITELL noted a need to define literacy in a broader multilingual, multicultural context than had been done in the policy document. Because of this we formulated and passed a RITELL Resolution on Appropriate Definitions of the Term “Literacy” in a Multilingual, Multicultural World.” RITELL responded to the document section by section to give feedback about how well each part of the document provided guidance to teachers on Best Practices in teaching Reading and Writing to ELLs. We offered that guidance to RIDE. In addition, we met with RIDE ELL representatives and they are considering possible changes to the Draft Literacy Plan based on our feedback. *The RITELL Resolution can be seen on page 9.*

RITELL Gives Testimony on the new Teacher Certification Regulations:

RITELL Points presented to the BOARD OF REGENTS FOR ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION on Regulations Governing the Certification of Educators in Rhode Island:

- We applauded the use of the “TESOL/NCATE Standards for P-12 Teacher Education Programs” to judge the competence of teachers who will serve English Language Learners
- We opposed the provisions for alternative routes to teacher certification, particularly “fast-track” programs that place teachers in classrooms before they are prepared to serve their students well. We opposed this because we believe that it is likely they will serve ELLs without proper preparation and training to serve them well, as many alternatively certified teachers are being placed in urban districts, where ELLs are heavily concentrated.
- We urged the Regents to make permanent certification contingent upon pursuit of an advanced certificate in teaching or a graduate degree as other PARCC (Partnership for the Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers) states routinely require. *Continued on page 18*

Rhode Island Teachers of English Language Learners Resolution on Appropriate Definitions of the Term “Literacy” in a Multilingual, Multicultural World

Whereas UNESCO and the International Reading Association clearly define literacy as pertaining to all languages and cultures around the globe, and

Whereas multilingualism is the norm in most parts of the world, requiring well-designed multilingual approaches to literacy (p. 58), and

Whereas all literacy is situated in local contexts of language and culture (p. 18), and

Whereas many children born in Rhode Island and entering Rhode Island classrooms from other countries are literate upon arrival to school in many languages other than English, and

Whereas having literacy in any language is an asset and a well-documented and strong contributor to school learning and academic achievement, and

Whereas having literacy in your home language promotes the rapid acquisition of literacy in English,

Whereas, literacy is a language-based activity and, because of this, there is general agreement that it is best to learn literacy in the learner’s first language or the one they know best, and there is also general agreement that this gives the best chance to learn literacy in other languages subsequently (*UNESCO’s Position Paper Education in a Multilingual World*). (p. 57), and

Therefore be it resolved that RITELL urge the Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to define literacy as a global phenomena that crosses linguistic and cultural boundaries, to view literacy as existing in many languages in children enrolled in Rhode Island Schools, not just English, and to craft definitions that embed the UNESCO definition of literacy as follows into all literacy policy documents crafted by the Department:

Literacy is the ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, communicate and compute, using printed and written materials associated with varying contexts. Literacy involves a continuum of learning in enabling individuals to achieve his or her goals, develop his or her knowledge and potential and participate in (his/her) community and (the) wider society (UNESCO 2005, 21) [Furthermore, literate environments consist of] the larger contexts in which people learn and use literacy; As such it involves the languages, scripts, modes and methods of literacy and must encompass what it means to be literate in a multilingual world. (p. 62)

Be it Resolved that RITELL make this resolution known to its members in the RITELLER newsletter and on Ritell.org and

Be it Resolved that RITELL send copies of this resolution to all those involved in the shaping of literacy policies for children and youth in Rhode Island Schools.

Reference Document: The Global Literacy Challenge: A profile of youth and adult literacy at the mid-point of the United Nations Literacy Decade 2003-2012, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), Prepared and Edited by Mark Richmond, Clinton Robinson and Margarete Sachs-Israel, UNESCO Education Sector, Division for the Coordination of United Nations Priorities in Education. 2008.

Adult Education Corner

Notes From the Learning Differences Awareness Conference

October 1, 2011

By Sherry Lehane

The 2011 Learning Differences Awareness Conference kicked off with the keynote speaker, Dr. Jack Fletcher, who shared a wealth of information. I took copious notes trying to absorb as much as possible during his riveting 2 hour presentation. I also attended his workshop during the first breakout session. Some of the key concepts I walked away with are:

- Learning disabilities/differences are dimensional - a variation of normal development and they are highly individual. A person is considered LD if he/she does not respond to quality instruction, meaning it is hard for the person to learn; achievement is low, not impossible.
- LD can be of neurological origin, a cognitive discrepancy, or an inadequate response to instruction.
- Learning differences can hypothetically be classified into 6 areas: word recognition (dyslexia), reading fluency; reading comprehension, math computation (dyscalcula), math problem solving, and written expression. (Dr. Fletcher described the key components of intervention for each of these areas.)
- Research has shown that the left hand side of the brain will often compensate for the weaknesses of the right hemisphere, i.e. normally the right hemisphere reads well, not the left.
- LD is often preventable with early intervention. Intervene as soon as possible.
- The first step should be screening to know who is at risk and this should be done several times a year. It's easier to identify students who are not at risk. The second step is to monitor progress of students identified as 'at risk'.

- Instruction should start at Tier 1 - the general education classroom. Instruction should be differentiated and the teacher/instruction must be monitored. Too often, the teacher and class is not observed.
- Tier 2 instruction should support and supplement instruction, not supplant it! Struggling learners need more instruction. Thus, increase time on the task and decrease the size of the instructional group.
- Tier 3 instruction should target the individual needs of the learner with more intensity and should be delivered by an expert.
- Instruction at all Tiers should be explicit. Teachers need to explain how and when to use strategies and model them; lots of scaffolding is needed and strategies should be used in multiple contexts.
- Assessment of a learner's response to intervention is essential. A single assessment is not adequate; assessment must take place at regular intervals and at all levels.
- No intervention is effective if it does not involve academic skill learning, (i.e. read to improve reading, do math, and write).
- When looking at LD, environmental factors such as: home environment and quality of language, socioeconomic factors, including parental education and poverty, and instruction should be taken into consideration.
- Research is evolving!

Sherry Lehane is an adult educator for RI Family Literacy Initiative (RIFLI) and RI Regional Learning (RIRAL). She has many years of experience teaching Adult ELL students.



Explicit targeted instruction

– by Sylvia Stipich, Graduate Student, M.Ed in TESL Program, Rhode Island College

Literacy specialist Barbara Bowen delivered a presentation at The Adult Education Breakout Session on how to deliver targeted explicit vocabulary instruction for adult ELLs. As usual, the first step to any successful teaching is assessment. First, Ms. Bowen recommended that teachers assess the NRS functioning levels of students in order to tailor instruction. She then elicited vocabulary instruction ideas from participants and guided teachers through the steps of explicit instruction: presentation, guided practice, corrections and feedback, independent practice and finally weekly and monthly reviews. These steps provided a framework for teachers to fill with a variety of practices, strategies and methods. Best practices to obtain results included using vocabulary relevant to students' lives and needs, allowing students to self-rate their knowledge, defining with examples, use of visuals and graphic organizers, creation of word banks or word walls, and having students listen for vocabulary words in the media. Special strategies for academic words, such as using academic word lists and vocabulary resources from the national Student Achievement in Reading project (STAR), were also discussed. For most teachers, particularly those of beginning level learners, finding new methods to teach vocabulary is usually a struggle. Attendees at this break-out session swapped ideas such as creating color-coded vocabulary cards that can be used to create questions, match with a picture, or can be matched with other words. But perhaps the most important advice delivered at this meeting was "recycle, recycle, recycle!" Using and reusing words in different contexts leads to mastery. Thanks to the great ideas provided by attending teachers and Ms. Bowen's resources, RITELL members who attended this break-out session will not lack strategies, methods or resources to help ELLs master new English vocabulary.



Barbara Bowen, M.S. in Ed., is a Literacy/Reading Specialist for the RI Adult Education Professional Development Center (RIAEPDC), and has been a literacy staff developer for elementary and high school principals and teachers. Being a USDE-OVAE nationally certified Student Achievement in Reading (STAR) trainer for RI, she trains adult education practitioners in the art of teaching literacy in ABE/ELL classes. Her work includes: providing comprehensive supports, on-site technical assistance, classroom observation and coaching in and across program collaborations to review student work and reflect on teacher practices. She travels throughout the state coaching, planning, observing, consulting and teaching in programs and classrooms of adult learners.

To get information on Professional Development Workshops given by Ms. Bowen and her colleagues, visit the Adult Education Professional Development Center Website at www.riaepdc.org

Scaffolding the Comparison-Contrast Essay

By Kiyomi Donnelly, Graduate Student,
M.Ed. in TESL Program, Rhode Island College

As all ESL teachers know, a well-scaffolded lesson can make all the difference between students understanding and feeling empowered to write academic essays, or students feeling lost and unprepared for the demands they face in their classrooms.

In the lesson that follows, I will share strategies I used to create a scaffolded lesson on comparison-contrast essays in a community college setting in MA. I combine Powerpoint and carefully tailored handouts, to take the students step-by-step to a positive conclusion where all can master the comparison-contrast essay. I hope my lesson may be useful to those of you teaching academic essay writing to your ESL students and think it could work for any grade level starting at the 6th grade and up, even though it was designed for college-aged learners.

My goals were to teach needed skills in a highly supportive and personalized setting where students feel comfortable. In order to create this context, I modeled the writing of a comparison-contrast essay by comparing and contrasting my two cats. The students enjoyed seeing pictures of and learning about my two cats. They also enjoyed the peer-work and freedom to choose their own topic for the final essay. All of the materials I created are posted on the RITELL website under "Resources".

This 75-minute long lesson was originally designed for intermediate adult ESL students preparing to take college courses, who have learned the fundamental academic writing rules for a conventional five-paragraph essay. The goal was for students, after completing this lesson, to be able to develop a well-organized, cohesive compare-contrast essay to clearly present similarities and differences between two subjects. In this lesson, students learned to 1) use logical connectors found in comparison-contrast essays, 2) three ways of organizing an essay, and 3) a strategy for organizing characteristics of two subjects being compared. The procedure for the lesson involved the following five phases: 1) Opening (5min.), 2) Lecture (30 min), 3) Deconstruction of a Comparison-Contrast Essay (20 min.), 4) Construction of a Comparison-Contrast Essay (15 min), and 5) Closing (5min.). Here are the procedures for delivering the lesson to your ELL students.

The first phase or opening of the lesson (see the outline below for more detail) is designed to engage students. Having them realize the importance of the lesson and explaining the procedure for the lesson are extremely important to help them focus. After stating the learning objectives, the importance of achieving the learning objectives, and the lesson procedure, the instructor should remind the students to participate in learning actively, explaining that participation is the key for successful language learning. The power point slide #1 is used for the opening (see RITELL website under "Resources").

The second phase or the lecture, is further divided into three parts: 1) Introducing connectors of compare-contrast, 2) modeling ways to construct a compare-contrast essay, and 3) introducing three organizing styles. This phase will be teacher-centered; however, while receiving information, students will have the opportunities to participate in discussion as they provide oral answers to questions (both individually and together) and to respond using hand signals to show their understanding (show "1" or "2" using fingers or thumbs-up or thumbs-down etc.)

The first part is a language focused lecture. After the vocabulary necessary for writing a compare-contrast essay (see PPT slide #2) is introduced with ample example sentences (see PPT slides # 3~5) along with visual aids (see PPT #6,7) , the students have an opportunity to practice the target language (see PPT #8). To make language learning enjoyable, the topics of the example sentences should be something familiar and interesting to the students to help them engaged and possibly increase their motivation level.

Continued on page 13

Scaffolding the Comparison-Contrast Essay continued from Page 12

The following part in the second phrase is modeling ways to construct a compare-contrast essay. The subjects and their characteristics discussed in the previous part are reused, so that the language focused learning segues into learning written academic discourse. In this part, the Venn diagram is introduced to organize and examine similarities and differences of the subjects. After the characteristics are presented in the Venn diagram, students are asked to determine the controlling idea (more similarities or more differences) of the essay. After a brief review of the elements of a thesis statement, a model thesis statement is presented. The PPT slide #10 is used for this part.

The last part of the second phase of the lesson is to introduce three organizing styles. The images of essays on the PPT slides #11~12 are presented in the similar manner as the presentations in the textbook used for this course [on page 158 and 159 of "Writing to Communicate 2: paragraphs and Essays" to make their independent work (reading p.158~166)]. The subjects (with photographs) and their characteristics are reused in this part again not only to help students distinguish one style from another, but also to help students internalize the target language.

The third phase of the lesson is deconstructing a model essay to identify what students have learned before (thesis statement and its topics and controlling idea) and what they have just learned (the target language of the lesson and three organizing styles). This phase will be student-centered, but the process of deconstruction is highly controlled as students must answer specific questions given in handout #2. In completing the task, a communicative approach is implemented, allowing students to interact with their class mates in a small group (see handout #2 for detail and PPT slide #13). Completing the task is non-threatening since the task is shared by a few other classmates. While students are working on the task in groups, the instructor circulates to check the students' understanding. While monitoring the students' progress, the instructor praises, prompts, and provides additional assistance as needed.

In the fourth phase, students construct their own comparison-contrast essay using the newly learned information (the connectors and organizing information using a Venn diagram) using handout #3. The instructor needs to make sure that students understand that the two subjects are from the same general category and they can be compared. The subjects have to have substantial differences. This phase is student-centered learning, and students express ideas to construct an essay independently. As in the previous phase, while students are working on the task, this time individually, the instructor circulates to check the students' understanding. While monitoring the students' progress, the instructor praises, prompts, and provides additional assistance as needed.

The final phase is to quickly review the lesson to recap the main points. After summarizing the points of the lesson, students have a chance to ask any questions they may have at this point. This phase is also to help them have a sense of accomplishment. The instructor assures that what they have learned in this lesson will enable them to complete the independent work. *Continued on page 20*

RITELL Coordinating Council

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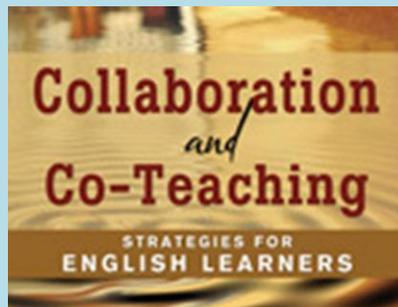
**Rhode Island College Student Union
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Advocacy Corner *continued from page 8*

--Tied to the last point, we expressed concern about the increase in coursework for secondary content teachers who teach ELLs, as it appears that, since they now will have to meet the TESOL/NCATE standards, they will be required to complete 18-21 credit program, as do elementary, English and Modern Language teachers now. Our concern stemmed from the fact that there is no incentive for doing so (i.e. getting a certificate or pursuing graduate coursework in order to obtain permanent certification), and we are concerned this will discourage secondary content teachers from preparing to serve ELLs.

The regulations passed without taking into account any of our concerns or recommendations.

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



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Upcoming Conferences

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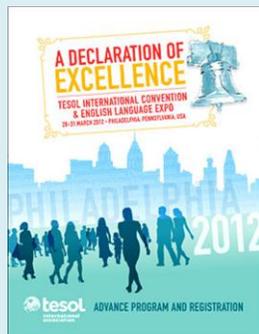
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Scaffolding the Comparison-Contrast Essay continued from page 13

To help you implement the lesson, here are the procedures in outline form, with the expected times for each:

Teaching Methods/ Procedures

- I. Opening (5 min)
 - A. Stating learning objectives (learn how to write a compare-contrast essay): The students will learn:
 1. Common connectors used in comparison-contrast essays
 2. Three Organization styles for comparison-contrast essays
 3. A useful strategy for organizing the characteristics of two subjects you intend to compare
 - B. Discussing the importance of achieving the objectives in relation to their academic studies
 - C. Presenting the lesson outline
- II. Introducing connectors (transitions, p.p. as connectives, conjunctions), (10min-lecture, sequential participation)
 - A. Show the positions of transition words in sentences
 - B. Show example sentences containing connectors
 - C. Have them choose appropriate connectors to complete sentences
- III. Modeling ways to construct an essay (10 min- sequential/simultaneous participation)
 - A. Show how to organize the information given in the previous activity (II-B)
 - B. Guide students to determine the controlling idea of the essay
 - C. Show a model thesis statement
- IV. Introducing three organizing styles (10 min- sequential/simultaneous participation)
 - A. Basic block style
 - B. Block Comparison style
 - C. Point-by-point style
- V. Deconstructing a model comparison-contrast essay (Analyzing model essay 1 p,160 in their text; this could be any model essay you would like to use) (20 min- small group)
 - A. Identifying the thesis statement (topics, controlling idea)
 - B. Identifying the controlling idea in each body paragraph
 - C. Identifying points of comparison between the two subjects
 - D. Identifying the organization style
 - E. Share the findings in class

Continued on page 21

Scaffolding the Comparison-Contrast Essay continued from page 20

- VII. Closing (5 min)
- A. Brief Summary of the lesson
 - B. Answering questions they may have
 - C. Explaining the independent work that must be done by the following meeting

Independent work

1. Read p.158-166 of "Writing to Communicate 2: Paragraphs and Essays" in their text
2. Study the chart 16-3 on p. 358, the chart 17-5 on p.376,19-2 on p.399, that chart D-3 on p.448 of Azar's book (independently or with a tutor in the lab)
3. Organize characteristics of chosen subjects using handout #3
4. Write draft of a compare-contrast essay

Materials Used

- 1) *Writing to Communicate 2: Paragraphs and Essays*, 3rd ed. by C. Boardman and J. Frydenberg. Pearson Longman, 2008: White Plains, NY.
- 2) *Understanding and Using English Grammar* 4th ed. by B. S. Azar and S. A. Hagen. Pearson Longman, 2009: White Plains, NY.
- 3) Handouts
 - (1) Connectors: additional information
 - (2) Analyzing the essay on p. 160
 - (3) Constructing a compare-contrast essay
- 4) Power point slides

Look for this lesson and additional materials for it on our website: www.ritell.org under "Resources."

If you have a successful lesson or activity that you would like to share, submit it to the RITELLER for the Spring2012 Issue! (See Page 19 for Contacting RITELL Editors).