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Laureen Fregeau
University of South Alabama, lfregeau@southalabama.edu

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Conference Planning Series: Part III
The Conference Program and Practical Considerations
Laureen Fregeau

Emerald Coast TESOL has been planning small ESOL conferences since 2012. In this installment of our conference planning series the topics will be the conference program and practical considerations.

Program Decisions
Step 1: Decide how many sessions you will have and how long they will be. This may seem simple, however there are several issues to consider

- Will you include sessions of different lengths? If so, what lengths? This is appropriate if there will be a variety of presentation types that might benefit from different lengths such as paper presentations, panel discussions, mini-workshops and demonstrations. I suggest 30 – 45 minute sessions for a one-day conference. 30 minutes works for papers and some demonstrations, while 45 minutes works better for mini-workshops.

- Where will you place the keynote address and how long will it be? The keynote should begin the conference or be placed before or immediately after lunch when all

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The Electronic Village Online Provides Free Professional Development Annually
Carla Arena, Sandra Rogers & Aiden Yeh

With the advancement of Internet technology, teachers find it necessary to expand their knowledge and enhance their technological skills to be able to effectively integrate technology into their teaching. One of the traditional ways of doing this is by attending local and/or international conferences. However, attending such conferences does not come cheap; airfare and lodging, plus conference fees can be very expensive. For some teachers, the cost is more than their monthly salary, and they may not have access to other sources of funding, thus finding it impossible to travel and participate in traditional forms of professional development.

Recognizing these constraints, the Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) International Association’s computer-assisted language learning interest section (CALL-IS) took advantage of the availability of technology and the advancements of online distance learning courses and came up with an idea of bringing a similar-high caliber TESOL colloquia, forums,

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Resources
Free Google Tools
- G Suite Tools manage tasks, communicate & collaborate
- Google Training for teachers
- Google Tools Teachers Should Try (article)
- Google Translate see this article for ESOL application ideas
- Google Voice: oral practice for ELs, teachers can set up assignments

ESOL Program Highlight
University of South Alabama’s College of Education and Professional Studies offers an M. Ed. Masters (30 hours) and Alternative Masters (42 hours) in teaching English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL). Both programs are fully online. Prospective students will find additional information here or can contact program chair Dr. Susan Martin

University of South Alabama’s English Language Center helps non-native English speakers develop their English proficiency in preparation for university studies. Four full-time and five part time instructors provide 5 levels of comprehensive ESL, cultural and academic skills instruction.

Next meeting (tentative): Saturday, April 21, 10:30, Location TBA

Cultural Feature: Egyptian Muslims: Nour’s Story of Culture and Immigration Mini Workshop
Heather Burgess

This article is based upon information obtained through interviews with 2016 Egyptian immigrant Nour El Din and told as his story. Nour is an accountant currently employed by a school district in California. I chose to report on religion, education, immigration to the United States, family and gender roles and sexuality because these appear in the media as ‘hot topics’ that can cause some controversy. The more we learn the more hopeful I am that the controversy and negative mindsets can start to diminish. I conclude with recommendation for improving educator knowledge to better serve Muslim students from Egypt

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the participants will already be in the large gathering room. 30-45 minutes is sufficient time for the keynote at a one day conference. Lunch time is not the appropriate time for a keynote due to meal noise and distractions.

- **Why have breaks? When and how long should they be?** Breaks are necessary for time to change rooms, for set-up between presentations, for discussions between participants and presenters and to allow participants to attend to personal needs. Breaks need to be a minimum of 10 minutes. Longer breaks can serve the purpose of conversation opportunities and time to have snacks as well.

- **Where and when will lunch be scheduled?** The lunch time slot should be scheduled early enough to allow two sessions to follow. Plan to have lunches ready to eat in a separate room from sessions if possible for efficient use of time.

- **When will entertainment be inserted into the program?** Cultural entertainment is a good change of pace and is compatible with lunch as long as all the participants are seated and not talking at a volume to detract from the entertainers’ presentation.

- **How many presenters will you have in a session?** Small conferences allow flexibility in structuring sessions. One presenter per session means more participants hear each presenter! Panels can be scheduled in a longer time slot (if there are differentiated times).

- **Should you have strands (competing sessions)?** If your conference serves several distinct interest groups or if you have more presenters than session times, then having strands make sense. Possible strands could include K-12, higher education, adult/IEP, teacher preparation, EFL. If the conference is designed to serve, in part, as professional development for K-12 teachers then a strand directed to their needs is warranted.

- **Limit your program to two strands if you are expecting 60 or less attendees or if you are limited to two or three rooms at your venue.**

**ESTESOL 2018 Conference Highlights**

Congratulations and thanks to Arlene Costello, Amani Habib and the 2018 conference committee on a successful conference! For those of you who were unable to attend, here is a synopsis of the presentations:

**Mary Ann Kiss and Arlene Costello** demonstrated how an ESOL teacher incorporates listening, speaking, reading, and writing in research and independent study in order to provide ELs opportunities to access academic language in an independent study setting using higher levels of thinking. The central aim of the READ project, Pride in one’s Native Culture, is to develop a student centered and culturally competent environment while helping the student acculturate to American culture.

**Sandra Rogers** shared the findings of a case study on the digital gameplay habits of Saudi English language learners (ELLs) and their effects on second language acquisition and on the Saudi cultural norms surrounding gameplay potential conflicts between the Muslim culture and videgame activities for men and women. Her study affirms diversity in learning how a specific culture benefits from gameplay linguistically and how their practices might be applied to game-based language learning in the US. Study participants reported significant learning of English listening, discussions, and workshops to teachers.
### Conference Planning (con’d from page 3)

**Step 2: What will you include in the program booklet?**
You already know you include the schedule of sessions preferably in a grid that organized by time and room. Each session needs a room number and audience as well as a presentation title and the name of the presenter(s).

- In addition to the session information you should include in the program booklet
  - Directions where to pick up registration materials and conference bag. This information should also be on a sign at the venue entry
  - A summary of each presentation in the order they will be presented, including presenter information and contact (ask permission)
  - A list of sponsors
  - A page or half page about the keynote address and speaker with the speaker’s photo and speaker’s credentials
  - A list of exhibitors and the companies they represent
  - Directions to the venue and the rooms once there
  - A list of your conference committee members with a note of appreciation
  - A list of organization board members
  - A note inviting attendees to become members
  - A half page with pictures and description of the entertainers
- The cover page should include the name of the organization and its logo, theme and number of the conference, venue location and conference date(s). The organization website can also be included.
- Finally organization contact information including email should be included.

### Electronic Village (con’d from page 3)

*all over the world thru the Electronic Village Online (Hanson-Smith & Bauer-Ramazani, 2004). EVO is a five-week session (from January-February) offered entirely online to language teachers worldwide annually. Usually there are about 12-15 sessions offered, and some of these sessions are also presented at the TESOL annual convention. How does EVO differ from online professional development courses? One of the biggest differences is that EVO sessions are free! The EVO moderators, mentors, coordinators, and participants are all volunteers. They are offered by educators who have vast experiences and are considered experts in using Web tools as part of their language instructions and/or knowledgeable enough on topic/s of their EVO session. Second, participants are not graded. Although there is not any money involved, the process of vetting EVO proposals, training of EVO moderators, publication of Call for Participation, and the way the actual sessions are conducted adhere to the same professional quality TESOL colloquia, discussions, and workshops are known for.

A well-attended session offered in 2011 was the **Digital Storytelling: From Images to Motion to Great Stories** ([http://digistorytelling.pbworks.com](http://digistorytelling.pbworks.com)). In this session, participants were introduced to various online tools for digital storytelling and learned how to effectively incorporate those resources into their teaching practices. They explored how images, music, slideshows, among others, could be used in educational settings for storytelling. By the end of the workshop, participants were able to develop a digital storytelling plan to promote students' creativity, engagement and learning, incorporating digital production into their lesson plans. There were around 250 educators all over the globe taking this session. Two of the co-moderators - Jane Petring and Mary Hillis - presented the results of the digital storytelling projects they carried out with their students at the TESOL Convention 2011 in New Orleans.

The EVO has been providing educators with opportunities for professional development that go beyond institutional and national boundaries. It has proven to be an efficient way to connect professionals in the educational field and to weave those connections year-long in a more powerful network of like-minded educators who support each other in their daily activities. Many past participants become active members in the network and end up offering their own sessions in their area of expertise. It is an online “entity” that has gained a life of its own and has become an annual meeting point for those professionals who look for recycling and renewal of their pedagogical practices, fresh perspectives, and the constant interaction with other educators. The EVO has become a learning hub for service to our profession. In 2017, volunteer moderators offered for EVO on the following topics: classroom based research for professional
Videoconferencing to Connect ELs with Native English Speakers Internationally

Laureen Fregeau and William Cornejo

Videoconferencing is a low-cost interactive tool that through communications technologies allow face-to-face real time collaborations. It removes the barrier of distance and learners to take part in live discussions (Burke, et.al. 2010) in a global context. International videoconferencing is a cost-effective and engaging approach to exchanging information between distant education settings (Battaglino, 1996) and has been successfully employed for enhancing post-secondary education (Payne, Goody, Coutts, Duncan, and Wolfe, 2006). International videoconference programs can be tools to unpack the stereotypes participants hold about other cultures (Lee, 2010) and promote cross-cultural understanding critical to successful careers in global settings.

Interactionist Theory tells us that effective L2 communication is learned through interactions between L2 speakers and between L2 and native speakers. Videoconferencing can be an effective and innovative tool for connecting ELs, especially in international settings, to native speakers. Because of its low cost international videoconferencing provides opportunities for students who would otherwise be unable to have an international experience. Many ELs in developing countries are unlikely to have international travel opportunities that take them to English speaking countries. Thus, the goal for current project is to connect native English speakers with EFL students in non-English speaking countries and to help U.S. students make connections that immerse them in learning about other cultures from members of that culture as well as give them experience working with ELs. This model was implemented with World Languages undergraduates as a Service Learning Project.

Conference Highlights (con’d from page 3)

speaking, and reading skills from gaming. In her second session, Sandra taught participants how to take advantage of Google Suite features to enhance teaching ESOL. Her session covered new and advanced features in Google Docs, Forms, Sheets, and Classroom, as well as the Chrome browser’s ‘omnibox’ and useful extensions available in the Chrome Store to enhance Google apps for teaching and learning. The focus was on using Google Suite to augment English language instruction via formative assessments, scaffolding, and use of 21st century skills. Participants were also made aware of free Google professional development opportunities.

In a panel discussion, Grace McCaffery discussed the Latin community and culture in the Florida Panhandle as factors to attaining success in school, college or career. Shannon Nickinson discussed ways the Early Learning Studer Institute Project/Initiative could help very young English Learners Start Kindergarten with strong English language proficiency and help facilitate the access to quality early education for very young English Learners.

Milagros Sessions and Leslie Cuyuch described the goals and activities of the ESOL service learning project at the J.H. Workman I.B. Middle School ESOL classes. Projects include an organic garden, in-class Aquaponics System, outdoor Hydroponics System, outdoor classroom area and Butterfly Garden. Community and educational opportunities for tolerance and diversity are a vital forum throughout these real world projects. At harvest students make fresh produce donations to Manna Food Bank and create their International Cuisine luncheon cultivating a community.

Maegan Baker explained how schools today have many moving pieces and that by establishing teams, all objectives or goals can be accomplished and ESOL teams within schools are having great success. Meagan explained how ESOL teams allow classroom teachers, ESOL teachers, parents, and students to work smarter, faster, and meet the needs of the students while achieving tremendous gains in the classroom and on state assessments. In this session, you will gain insight to how these teams were established, supported each member throughout the year, the technology that has been most helpful, and the successes that resulted.

The keynote address, given by Chane Eplin shared his expertise concerning updates in ESOL, current research and practices, and the importance of collaboration between higher education and K-12 in order to deliver in his presentation “Quality Education for English Learners K-12 and Beyond”. He suggested that schools develop a “a whole faculty approach to instruction in which every teacher is a language teacher”.

Featured speaker Susan Martin addressed meeting the needs of linguistically and culturally diverse students through advancement of academic language through specific strategies, current research and practices in WIDA for K-12 and pre-service students, as well as the

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Egyptian Muslim Mini-Workshop

Religion:

“I BEAR WITNESS THAT THERE IS NO GOD BUT ALLAH, AND I BEAR WITNESS THAT MUHAMMAD IS THE SERVANT AND MESSENGER OF ALLAH”

- Most of Egypt’s population practice Islam.
- There are a significant amount of Christians in Egypt, but Muslims are the majority.
- There are similarities between Christianity and Islam.
  - There is only one God
  - God is forgiving
- To be a true Muslim, respecting and believing other religions is expected.

Education

Education in Egypt as been free at public institutions since 1962. The school week in Egypt is from Saturday to Thursday compared to Monday to Friday for the States. Admission to higher education requires a General Secondary School Certificate, a Secondary School Technical Diploma with a minimum score of 65%, or a Diploma of Advanced Technical Studies. Final grades are what are required for admission and some career pursuits require higher grades than others (Nuffic-EP, 2010). The government launched a campaign for fresh graduates to get free courses for computer sciences and different advanced subjects for their degrees this is where Nour attained the Certification for Computer Science.

Nour said that the education system is completely different over in the Middle East when compared to the U.S. Education in Egypt is completely free, there are not any fees to be paid. He talked about some of the fees for schools here in the States and was astounded at how much everything costs. He said maybe students in Egypt would have to pay $5 for something but when he asked me about my fees for school, he was speechless and still doesn’t understand why there isn’t free education in the U.S.

Nour learned English through school and progressed to learn French during his secondary education years. He is fluent in English and Arabic and when I asked him if learning English was difficult. He said it’s the most complicated language that he’s learned. He still has some issues with grammar but his English has improved since arriving in the US. Talking to him on the phone, he auto-corrects himself when he speaks in the wrong tense. The linguistics of English and Arabic are both very different and complicated.

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Conference Highlights (con’d from pg 5)

importance of leadership in collaboration between higher education and K-12 in order to deliver quality education for English Learners (ELs). While enjoying lunch participants were delighted by our entertainment by the colorful and talented dancers from Venimos de Panama, Danzon Cumbia and Viva Panama. Finally, participants enjoyed receiving door prizes and bag stuffers from our sponsors New Readers Press, Cambridge University Press, National Geographic Learning ESL/ELT (Cengage Learning), Escape SPA of Pensacola, Cordova Square, Pensacola Fitness Center, Wish Wash Car Wash Center, Pensacola Beach Information Center, Pensacola Tourist Information Center, Edmentum, Engaging Solutions That Work and Florida Lotto District 1 Region.

Electronic Village (con’d from pg 4)

development, design thinking, Minecraft MOOC, and sessions teaching pronunciation differently. Here is a complete list of sessions this past year. Registration for EVO 2018 begins on January 1st. Follow this hashtag #evosessions on Twitter to keep informed. EVO’s mission statement: The EVO is a creation of TESOL’s CALL Interest Section. In this age of electronic communication, it seems a natural way to bring the issues of our profession to the international stage. Our goal is to allow learning anywhere, anytime, with as little expense as possible. Thus EVO moderators and trainers are all volunteers, and participants need only provide their own Internet access to take part in activities. Contribution as a moderator is a significant act of volunteerism, and forms an important the ones who seek sustainable, ongoing professional development.

References

**Egyptian Muslim Mini-Workshop** (con’d from pg 6)

**Immigration**

The U.S. Department of State 2016 Fiscal Year Immigrant Visas Issued table shows that from Egypt, there was a total of 7,309 visas issued. The family preference issuing count was stated to be at 1,106 and the immediate relative count was at 3,262. Egypt ranks third in Africa for visas being issued. Egypt falls behind Nigeria (8,988) and Ethiopia (9,913) respectively.

Nour is currently on a 2 year immigration status. So his immigration will expire in 2018. Three months before the expiration he is to apply for the Green Card which lasts for 10 years. The immigration process is exceptionally long and complicated. The first step is to have the I-130 Petition filed and then it’s a waiting game with a lot of moving pieces. For more on this process see this infographic chart.

**Family Structures, Gender Roles and Related Issues**

There is always a family house where all the family gatherings for holidays and any special events happen. Parents work and support the financially while the kids focus on their education and help the parents with house work. A tradition in Egypt is for the kids to stay at the family home until college graduation. Also, the parents support the kids until they get a job or marry and start a family.

According to Nour, based on economic changes, gender roles changed in Egypt. Thirty years ago the economy was better in Egypt. The men used to be the source of the family income and the women would stay home and take care of the house work. But now with life and its challenges, the man and the woman both have to have jobs to support the family financially and with the housework. They share it all now in present day compared to the past.

Nour explained there were some jobs that women weren’t allowed to have in the past. Women also weren’t interested in occupational fields like the military, the police or engineering. However, with the changes, Nour says that this area is also changing. There are women who are becoming pilots, high ranking military and police officials, as well as civil engineers and much more. According to Maqsood (2009), it is forbidden in Islam for parents (or others) to force, coerce, or trick youngsters into marriage. (Maqsood, 2009). Polygamy in Islam is a concept that is brought up frequently. Referring back to Maqsood’s article, “At the revelation of the Qur’an it was normal procedure for men to have more than one wife, to the limits of their ability to support them. Islam still allows a man to have more than one wife but no more than four, provided it is not going to hurt the existing

**Videoconferencing** (con’d from pg 5)

and high school students in El Salvador and adult students in Colombia.

We collected data for this project through Narrative inquiry, participant observation, auto-ethnography, document review and self-reflection. The videoconferencing model was reciprocal as it benefited the U. S.-based undergraduates as well as the ELs. Undergraduates with interest in EFL careers experienced direct interactions ELs and gained insights into challenges and why cultural knowledge is important in EFL instruction. The participating Salvadoran high school teacher reported “each web conferencing activity is different which lets me see how student’s interest vary not only by the content of the class but also the interest of students of different ages and different areas of the country which gives me some sociolinguistic insights” and found that his students gained “more confidence to talk to native speakers”. The World Languages undergraduate students were observed to have patience dealing with technology challenges, time differences and EL student English challenges. These undergraduates were enthusiastic and eager to continue with these experiences. They enjoyed interacting with the EL students and learned the difference in the importance of English in developing countries vs. modern languages in the United States. They also learned what Salvadoran students perceived as important to know about the U.S. and American culture. From the Colombian interactions they learned about politics in Colombia compared to U. S. politics and the perceptions of Colombians of our political system, particularly our election process.

There are many challenges as well as benefits to our model of international videoconferencing. Both researcher-participants and participants all agreed that the benefits outweighed the challenges. There were both technical and cultural challenges implementing the international videoconference project. Cultural issues included expectations about preparation, pragmatics, miscommunication due to language barriers or culturally based differences in
Egyptian Muslim Mini-Workshop (con’d from pg 7)

partners." (Maqsood, 2009). Nour’s opinion about polygamy in Egypt is, "It's not supported but it's allowed in Islam, under very special circumstances (wars, disease, family problems) and under very strict conditions. It's not taboo at all. The difference is the present economic situation. Before it was better so it was more. Now it's not so it's less! It is quite clear that the gender roles and norms in Egypt are changing and it seems that they are changing for the better and it is hopeful that the norms continually progress to become more inclusive. Birkvad’s (2007) research reports even more gender role changes after the revolution erupted in 2011. Monika Lindbekk found that gender and ideas related to marriage have changed in Egypt. Lindbekk described how after the revolution more fathers who were divorced from their wives wanted more time with their children formed groups and advocated for it.

Sexuality

When it comes to relationships and marriage, after graduation if you have feelings for someone and you think that they are 'the one', the families will meet and arrange for an engagement and then the marriage. If you haven't found someone you can see yourself with, your family and friends can start helping with an arranged marriage. Families and friends will introduce single people to one another and be present during the interactions to gauge whether the relationship was good or bad. Nour says that traditionally, there is no sex before marriage.

If a marriage is on the horizon and a wedding is to be planned, the times have changed how this event happens. Nour says that in the past, the groom was in charge of everything (house, furniture, wedding, jewelry, even the wedding dress). But in today’s world and the present economy, both the groom and the bride create an agreement before the wedding that dictates who has what responsibility and the charges are shared together.

Homosexuality and other sexual diversities are considered sins and people can be arrested if exposed. Furthermore, there is no common acceptance and people who identify as a homosexual are avoided and religiously prohibited.

References


El Din, Nour, personal communication


Heather Burgess is a secondary history teacher from Kentucky whose passion is Ancient Egyptian and Ancient Roman history with a goal to work translating Hieratic and Hieroglyphics in a museum setting.

Videoconferencing (con’d from pg 6)

expectations. Technical challenges included insufficient bandwidth, intermittent or lack of audio or video, equipment malfunction and participants with limited experience in using this technology. Other challenges included locating partners in other countries, scheduling issues due to time differences.

The project team worked through many of the challenges. Schedules can be negotiated. Often participants will be flexible if everyone is willing to compromise. Partners can be located through mutual contacts. Word of mouth is a trusted approach for people in many countries. Technical challenges demand back-up planning: having an alternative web-conferencing software set up so a switch can be made if needed. Locate and use web-conferencing software that uses less bandwidth. Have spare equipment available. If audio does not work on either platform, switch to chat. If video does not work use audio with a shared screen picture of the participants. Schedule a test for new participants prior to the date of your videoconference so they can learn the system. Cultural challenges must be worked through with conversations between partners and potential participants. Being forthcoming and sensitive in these conversations is an appropriate approach.

References


Gillies, D. (2008). Student perspectives on videoconferencing in teacher education at a distance. Distance Education. 29 (1), 107–118
ECTESOL Review Description and submission information - (updated 3/12/2017)

Editor: Laureen A. Fregeau

Learning English as another language is a global endeavor. ECTESOL Review invites submissions on and includes all topics within the scope of learning English as another language at any level (K-12, higher education, adult education): related linguistics topics, practitioner guides, innovative approaches to teaching English as another language, technology and other related are covered. Book reviews are also included. The mission of ECTESOL Review is: Open access publication to connect people and ideas to TESOL/TEFL.

Editorial Policy and Procedure ECTESOL Review is committed to scholarly inquiry, discussion, practitioner materials and reportage of topics related to learning English as another language (TESOL, ESOL, EFL, TFL, IEP, EAL, ESP and TEFL).

Manuscripts are considered in five categories: (1) research and (original, review, and interpretation), (2) theoretical essay and discussion, and (3) descriptive reports from the field, including descriptions of innovative programs or classrooms, (4) practitioner materials and (5) book reviews. Articles should be 1,000 – 3,000 words in length although longer pieces will be considered.

The journal follows the format suggested in the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, 6th ed. Contributors should send, via e-mail attachments of electronic files (in Word), the manuscript including a one paragraph abstract of no more than 250 words; a one paragraph description of each author, including current position and research interests; and a mailing address, phone number, and email address where each author can be reached to: ECTESOLReview@mail.com with “submission” in the topic box. As a refereed journal, all submissions undergo a blind peer review selection process. Therefore, please include the author’s description and other identifying information in a separate electronic file. The abstract and any tables or figure can be included in one file with the manuscript. Identifying references may be designated “Author, year” for the review. The cover letter should state that the work is not under simultaneous consideration by other publications. Mailing us a hard copy of the manuscript is not necessary.

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