CALL FOR PAPERS

The Publications Officers are now accepting submissions for Volume 8, No. 1 of *Texas English Language Teaching* (TexELT), an online journal, a publication of Texas Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages-Region V (TexTESOL V).

This is a peer-reviewed electronic publication which will be posted on the TexTESOL V website and will be available free of charge to members through email Newsletter link and to the general public through the public access portions of the TexTESOL V website. **Submissions are due April 20, 2019.** It is anticipated that manuscripts selected for consideration will be sent to members of the peer jury of readers by April 22, 2019 and returned to the Publications Officers with Level One Protocol advice by April 30, 2019. Online publication is tentatively scheduled for September 2019.

All submissions should be sent electronically to ritadeyoe@yahoo.com. If you do not receive a return email confirming receipt within three days, please send a follow-up email.

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**TexTESOL V Mission and Purposes (from TexTESOL V Constitution)**

**MISSION STATEMENT**
The mission of TexTESOL V is to provide information, direction, and support to its membership in promoting excellence in the teaching of English to speakers of other languages.

**PURPOSES**

1. Work cooperatively toward the improvement of instruction in all programs that seek to provide learners with an opportunity to acquire English language skills and proficiency.
2. Provide opportunities for study and research.
3. Encourage professional development, participation, and leadership at the local and state levels.
4. Promote intercultural understanding and effective cross-cultural communication.
5. Cooperate in appropriate ways with other groups having similar concerns.

**Editorial Process**

Manuscripts that meet the specifications listed will be reviewed by the Publications Coordinator, who will create a “blind copy” with no identification of the author(s). It will then be submitted to members of the TexELT Review Panel or the TexTESOL V Board or other qualified readers, who will be selected for relevant background and interest in the topic, and to insure anonymity of the author(s).

If approved by at least three readers, the blind-copy manuscript will be assigned to Peer Jury Reviewers for general content editing advice and review. If approved by only two readers, it will be submitted to an additional reader and the majority decision will be final.

If a majority of the review panel do not support accepting the manuscript in its current form for further development and publication, the author(s) will be notified accordingly.

If only minor editing is needed, the Publications Officers will make minor corrections. If substantial changes are needed or missing information is required, the author will be given the option to revise as requested or to withdraw the manuscript from consideration.
Publication Priorities

Action Research Reports
These are reports on action research in which the writer has developed a plan to do something in a particular way to try to improve student outcomes, gives some evidence of having compared that approach with previous or simultaneous alternative approaches, evaluates the outcomes, and critically examines both implementation issues and outcomes. If not at the level of an experimental or quasi-experimental design, the study should present evidence of thorough planning of details and be based on a review of relevant available literature.

Critical Reviews of Textbooks, Teaching Materials, or Teacher Preparation Texts
These include critical reviews of textbooks and materials for teaching English or preparing teachers of English as a Second Language at any of the levels (elementary, secondary, adult, and higher education). The reviewer points out personal experiences in using the text or materials--positive and negative--and/or details benefits and defects, as perceived by the reviewer, for populations our membership serves. TexTESOL V members work in urban schools and colleges with extensive bilingual, newcomer, and ESL programs and in rural districts with limited programs and few ESL professionals. The reviewer should state the settings for which the text or materials reviewed are considered.

Practical Perspectives (New Category, 2018)
Articles in this category describe relevant, research-based solutions to current problems in second language teaching and learning. From personal experience, authors provide detailed contrastive information and/or propose innovative strategies, activities, and applications to improve student learning outcomes and highlight practical examples to illustrate key points. Articles may address any levels of education from early childhood through higher education. The articles should be reasonably brief, written in conversational style, be of interest to practicing educators, and include in-text citations/references (APA, 6th edition).

Criteria for Consideration

1. The research topic should be of fairly general interest to practicing ESL teachers at one or more of the levels addressed by our Interest Sections: Elementary, Secondary, Adult and/or Parent Education, Higher Education. This includes post-secondary ESL students and Bilingual/ESL Teacher Preparation.
2. The manuscript should be in Times New Roman 12pt font and should follow APA 6th edition format for citing all sources. You may request information on this format from the Publications Coordinator.
3. The manuscript should be sufficiently edited with regard to errors in grammar, spelling, punctuation, idiomatic usage, and document format to resolve all errors identified by Spell Check.
4. All sources should be cited properly and completely so that the reader can easily consult the original source or access it electronically if it is available online.
5. All authors are solely responsible for ensuring that no plagiarism occurs in their submissions, and authors whose work is selected for publication will need to sign a statement to that effect. At their option, the editors may submit papers to an anti-plagiarism service for originality comparisons.
6. No specific length is required because the online publication format does not create arbitrary limitations on the quantity that can be published. However, our members (and our peer jury) will prefer brevity with substance and simplicity with sufficient detail to comprehend fully the contexts and applications discussed.

Peer Reviewers and Editors for TexELT Texas English Language Teaching, Volume 7, Issue 1

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Contents


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Welcome to the Seventh Issue of Texas English Language Teaching (TexELT)

The seventh issue of TexELT will be one of the shortest in pages, even though it includes three papers. One article is by an innovative ESL teacher and program developer with a special concern for empathy. After presenting on her topic successfully at one of our TexTESOL V conferences, she decided to convert her research on empathy into a research paper making a plea for teachers of ELLs to receive appropriate professional development to help them develop empathy for their students.

From the original inception of the journal, we have encountered difficulty in finding true research articles that are often created from a modified version of the writer’s thesis or dissertation and are extremely demanding of both the author’s time and the content editor’s time and effort. It is challenging to create a report of the completed formal research that is accurate but couched in terms and a format that make it “readable” by professional teachers and allows them to make use of recommendations for application. Those research papers continue to be an important priority for this publication so that valuable research can see the light of day without competing for publication in a few widely known journals that only accept a small percentage of the papers submitted and that offer little support and guidance to new scholars.

However, as I teach graduate students in online courses that require substantial amounts of research and writing at a professional level, I notice exceptional papers that offer unique and creative solutions to apply research information from a variety of sources to particular needs of specific kinds of learners. This led me to suggest to a few former students that they develop work they had submitted for assignments in courses into short practical articles detailing ways to use research in the classroom. After the review panel discussed ways of describing this new category of article, then reviewed and selected two examples, some basic criteria were agreed on. In the process, we reviewed other professional publications that have “popularized” their contents so much that they no longer even ask authors to provide references for sources. Some of us spend too much time telling our graduate students that someone’s blog that has not undergone any sort of peer review is not considered a “scholarly source” they should cite. That process of discussion and debate, which has not always been comfortable, led us to create a new category of submission that is explained and described on the page that follows this one and in the Call for Papers for the next volume of the journal. We hope you like what we have come up with.

The TexELT publications team this year included TexTESOL V Board member, Les Brinkerhoff, as a reviewer, and TexTESOL V member, Dr. Lana Sloan, who served as second stage editor for copy editing, particularly of APA format, and in addition took on the role of primary content editor of the articles in the new Practical Perspectives category. Our talented and hard-working primary content reviewer and former TexTESOL V Board member, Margaret Redus, made essential major commitments early on and throughout the editing process as our primary content reviewer and primary content editor. For final stage copy editing, we relied on our TexTESOL V Board Publications Copy Coordinator Dr. Jeyashree Venkatesan. My role as Publications Coordinator and Journal Editor has been to make the best use possible of all our talents.

--Rita Deyoe-Chiullán, Ph. D., Publications Coordinator, TexTESOL V and Editor, TexELT, 7(1).

Citation

A common theme in education today is whether research has proven effective in creating change (Shafer, 2016). Some skeptics ask, “Why do achievement gaps persist after decades of research trying to close them?” Many teachers and teacher educators may have asked this same question.

Despite the negativism, most educational leaders in a national survey reported that they value research and use it regularly (Penuel, Briggs, Davidson, Herlihy, Sherer, Hill, Farrell, & Allen, 2016). The survey defined research as “an activity in which people employ systematic, empirical methods to answer a specific question — not just the practice of examining data from a district, school, or classroom” (Shafer, 2016, para. 5).

How, then, can we maximize the potential of research as a tool for student achievement and performance and ongoing, continuous improvement? Hopefully, findings such as those in the survey will motivate us to seek out even more evidence-based solutions to problems of practice.

The health and business professions have already provided pathways for us to follow. In nursing, for example, practitioners are encouraged to pursue translational research, a method for directly translating evidence-based knowledge into the delivery of clinical interventions for patients. “The intent is to build the bridge from ‘bench to bedside’” (Grady, 2010, p. 164). In business, case studies are a preferred method for linking research and practical, day-to-day problems (Dul & Hak, 2012). According to Baker (2011), “Case study methods provide a robust means to guide implementation of effective practices” (p. i31).

While a gap continues to exist in education between what works, as demonstrated through research, and the widespread adoption of those practices (Schafer, 2016), we, as educators, are challenged to close that gap. Translational research and case studies are two approaches we might borrow. Another approach, though, is to use public forums, such as our journal, to share what we have learned with our colleagues in the field and, in doing so, demonstrate the connections between research and the decisions we make for students.

The new category of publication priority (See Call for Papers) in our journal, Practical Perspectives, represents our contribution to closing the research-to-practice gap. In the articles, “The Challenges Arabic Speakers Face Learning English” and “Utilizing Technology to Support ELLs’ Success Today,” practitioners share evidence-based applications to help us provide more relevant, effective instruction to the diverse language learners we serve. We hope you enjoy our inaugural articles and find some ideas you can put to good use.

References


Citation

Introduction to the Contents of This Issue

In the articles accepted for publication this year, the specific passions of the authors have played a significant role in bringing dynamism to the ideas and suggestions they share.

The first article, “The Value of Incorporating Empathy within Professional Development,” comes from Danielle Gines. In years past, Ms. Gines has mobilized her love of travel by working as a volunteer English teacher in Costa Rica and South Africa, and she has discovered the power of empathy to be the magic behind successful communication. Now teaching ESL courses at a north Texas community college, she has become an advocate for enhancing professional development programming with a focus on the development of empathy in educators and school staff. The end result is facilitating better student learning outcomes school-wide. To support her stance, she reports on research in the literature emerging from the fields of psychology, sociology, and educational pedagogy. She makes specific suggestions for professional development activities that can develop personal and professional empathy. Finally, she offers ways interested educators can broaden their exposure to other cultures abroad and here at home.

“Utilizing Technology to Support ELLs’ Success Today” is by Randall Kaufman, who has taught middle-school EFL in South Korea for several years. In this work, he has been able to make effective use of his undergraduate background in technology and media. Mr. Kaufman describes specific activities and strategies involving technology in the classroom that he has found particularly successful in engaging his middle school students by interacting with resources on the internet to build their skills in English. In the process, his goal was that his students would be able to develop a sense of self-agency in English language learning to extend beyond the course and the classroom.

The next article, “The Challenges Arabic Speakers Face Learning English,” by Karem Ismael, presents a meticulous, yet quite readable, linguistic discussion of key differences between the Arabic and English languages. As a native of Egypt who is now an American citizen, he offers readers a precise catalog of features and follows that information with suggestions for teachers of English who are working with Arabic-speaking students. He also provides suggestions for students with Arabic backgrounds who are learning English. As the clarity of his writing shows, his knowledge and skills have been forged from his own education and experience on both sides of the language learning process.

Finally, we close this issue of TexELT with an editorial essay with resources for teaching children who have experienced separation trauma by Dr. Rita Deyoe-Chiullán, our editor. She also includes very brief reviews of three recent books on other topics relevant to many of our readers.

--Margaret Redus, M.L.A., Primary Content Reviewer and Content Editor, TexELT, 7(1).

Citation

The Value of Incorporating Empathy within Professional Development

by

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Abstract

The author examines literature on empathy and discusses its value within the school community-at-large. Within this article, there are pedagogical considerations for using empathy in professional development. This paper also discusses the interconnectedness of culture, language, and teachers as critical components to better serving English Language Learners. Additionally, there are specific empathy-building recommendations and resources that can gear professional development sessions to achieving the goal of empathetic growth.

Keywords: empathy, professional development, English Language Learners

Citation

Introduction

There is a common expression: Before you judge a person, try walking a mile in their shoes. This old adage never uses the word empathy but perfectly summarizes its essence. A fellow instructor of English as a Second Language (ESL) recounted to the author a moment of empathy she experienced in one of her classes. Upon hearing that one of her students had lost her son to gang violence in El Salvador, she became “overwhelmed with grief and couldn’t stop [herself] from crying alongside the mother” (Personal communication, 2018). When she was asked why her reaction was so strong, she said she thought of her own children, and the situation felt personal. In other words, she entered the student’s pain and did not stand outside of it. Empathy is neither pity nor sympathy; it is the ability to see past one’s own preconceived notions and become aware of another person’s experiences on an individual level. Additionally, it is a thought process that changes a person’s actions and interactions.

Teachers’ judgments can have massive influences on how students see themselves as learners. Salerno and Kibler (2013) collected student descriptions from pre-service teachers describing their English Language Learners’ (ELLs) quietness, engagement, friendliness, and language. One teacher described a student’s shy nature in this way: “[Her] aloof behavior could present a challenge in the classroom…however, no student should feel over-looked or that they are not part of the classroom community” (Salerno & Kibler, 2013, p. 8). In another example, a student did not perform well on several assignments and began to lose confidence; the newer teacher stated, “I tried to speak with the [mentor teacher] about altering some assignments to better suit [his] needs, but she felt that would be unfair to the other students” (Salerno & Kibler, 2013, p. 14). Another teacher blamed parents by assuming--without verifying the assertion--that those who “do not participate” in school stay away due to their inability to speak English (Salerno & Kibler, 2013, p. 15). These descriptions came from pre-service teachers who had little experience with ELLs in their teaching practicums or student teaching. Thus, they appeared to miss the mark when describing their students.

Multiple studies have shown a strong correlation between student empathy and academic achievement (Lambert, 2018). This source does not differentiate between ELL and non-ELL students; it indicates that incorporating empathy in all classrooms, for all students, has academic benefits. Lambert (2018) goes on to state that in a study via the Populations Study Center, “empathetic concern” is on the decline. The average level declined 48% over a span of 30 years, from 1979 to 2009, with a particularly large decline between 2000 and 2009 (Lambert, 2018).

Empathy is an active engagement process in which a person puts himself or herself in another person’s metaphorical shoes. However, without having been trained about the value of empathy, teachers might not feel the significance of feeling as their students feel. They might feel that their job is to teach lessons and make sure a student achieves certain objectives and moves forward to another grade level or passes the class. For example, during a college workshop specifically geared toward teaching ELLs effectively, an English professor recounted how her British student stormed out of her office. The professor needed to speak with her about using American English spelling. In the retelling of the story,
the professor was still mystified at the student’s outburst and saw the student as the one who had overreacted.

At the same college workshop, a developmental instructor commented how shocked she was when an immigrant student, who graduated from an American high school, still felt the need to translate her entire paper while she was taking the instructor’s English Developmental Class. Developmental college courses are for all entering students who do not score above the College Ready Score determined by the Texas Success Initiative Assessment (TSI). This particular community college used the TSI test to determine the appropriate level of college coursework for the incoming student. In fact, throughout the workshop, there was no mention of empathy, only focus on the process of levels of language acquisition and language strategies, which reinforces how the educational system can be more reactionary than proactive to English Language Learners.

Literature Review

Historical context of study on empathy

Human nature and its qualities have been the source of psychological literature beginning as early as the 17th century. Some of the first written discussions regarding human behavior can be found in authors like Thomas Hobbes, who saw human beings as self-seeking individuals. A contrasting view appeared a century later, when Adam Smith, an economist and moral philosopher, wrote that nature ingrains people with an ability to experience a “fellow-feeling” when they witness someone in a powerful emotional state (Davis, 1996, p.3). However, it was not until the early 20th century that the attribute of fellow-feeling was further developed with the differentiation of the present-day terms of sympathy and empathy. The word “empathy,” derived from the German word, Einfühlung, was used to express the ability of observers to project themselves into an object. At inception, it was primarily used in an aesthetics context. Then, in 1903, German philosopher and psychologist Theodor Lipps applied Einfühlung to psychological contexts. He used the term to describe the process by which we interact and relate to other people. In 1909, the British psychologist, Edward Titchener, translated the term Einfühlung into English as “empathy.”

At that point, psychologists like Lipps and Titchener began to make distinctions between the terms “sympathy” and “empathy.” They viewed both as emotions and felt that sympathy was more passive. Empathy was a more active emotion in which one person made a deliberate and intellectual effort to “get inside” of another person (Davis, 1996, p. 5). It was later, in 1934, that George Herbert Mead’s work shifted the emotional emphasis of the term “empathy” to an individual’s capacity to take on the role of another person as a means of better understanding the original person’s point of view---their way of seeing the world around them. This link between the psyche of one person and his or her behaviors in social groups was the beginning of combining psychology and sociology into the psychosocial field. The focal point of empathy moved from how I feel what YOU feel to how I use what YOU are feeling to help ME better understand your perspective.
Currently, literature on empathy can be found in psychological, socio-psychological, and educational journals. This article uses content from these three fields of study. Emerging research has been enriched by qualitatively focused professionals such as Dr. Brene Brown, a research professor at the Graduate College of Social Work program at the University of Houston. Dr. Brown has devoted over 20 years of study to topics like courage, empathy, shame, and vulnerability. Her work has gained significant traction because of its ability to resonate with different groups in society, including educators. Dr. Brown defines empathy as “feeling with people” and uses Wiseman’s four common themes in her video on building a culture of empathy:

- perspective taking
- staying out of judgment
- recognizing emotion in others
- communicating that recognition (RSA, 2013).

This combination of “feeling with people” joined together with perspective taking along with the other themes is at the center of this paper’s purpose. Perspective taking, specifically, cognitive perspective taking, alongside empathy can impact the level of efficiency found in required professional development. Warren (2018) also concluded that perspective taking is necessary in order to establish empathetic concern; therefore, being able to adopt someone else’s point of view is “the anchoring dimension of the application of empathy in social interaction” (p.171). In other words, if educators are able to gain the tools to “see” through the eyes of their ELLs, empathy can be a result of that process.

The growing interest in empathy in various fields, including education, has resulted in various assessment methods. This interest could be because empathy lacks tangibility and is difficult to measure, hence the difficulty of quantifying responses to emotions. This paper discusses two particular scales: the Scale of Ethnocultural Empathy (SEE) and the Basic Empathy Scale (BES). These are tools to bring awareness to an assessee’s current level of empathy, which awareness can stimulate reflection and dialog.

Scale of Ethnocultural Empathy (SEE)

Wang, Davidson, Yakushko, Beilstein Savoy, Tan, and Bleier (2003) took previous literature on empathy and expanded on its definition to include culture and a person’s views on cultural differences. They theorized that since ethnocultural empathy is a learned ability, it can be developed over time, and, as such, it can be assessed. Therefore, Wang et al. (2003) developed the Scale of Ethnocultural Empathy (SEE) in an effort to measure the seemingly unformulated concept because of the belief that the introduction of ethnocultural empathy can change individuals’ attitudes towards stigmatized groups.
Factors

From the factor analysis in Study 1, the scale’s items were grouped according to four factors: Empathetic Feeling and Expression (EFE), Empathetic Perspective Taking (EP), Acceptance of Cultural Differences (AC), and Empathetic Awareness (EA) (Wang et al., 2003). The Empathic Feeling and Expression factor includes items that relate to concern about discriminatory or prejudiced attitudes and beliefs. EFE items also focus on emotions or affective responses to the emotions or experiences of different racial and ethnic groups that are not the same race or ethnicity as the respondent. Empathetic Perspective Taking contains items that indicate an effort to understand the experiences and emotions of people from different racial and ethnic backgrounds by attempting to take these people’s perspective in viewing the world around them. Acceptance of Cultural Differences centers on understanding, accepting, and valuing of cultural traditions or customs of different racial or ethnic individuals. Finally, Empathetic Awareness comprises items that appear to focus on the awareness or knowledge that someone has about the experiences of people from other racial or ethnic groups.

Scoring Mechanism

A Likert-type scale is used as a response tool (1= strongly disagree that it describes me to 6= strongly agree that it describes me) with items phrased both positively and negatively to offset any potential response bias. Additionally, negatively phrased items were reversely scored.

Validation

Wang et al. (2003) conducted three different studies. Study 1 explained the scale’s creation, each item’s generation, validity as well as exploratory factor analysis. Study 2 focused on confirming the factor analysis and validity estimates, and Study 3 examined the test-retest reliability of the SEE over a two-week period.

Study 1: Data collected originated from 323 undergraduate students enrolled in three different universities in the Midwestern United States. Study 1 consisted of three parts, which included a demographic questionnaire, the SEE, and the Balanced Inventory of Desirable Responding (BIDR). The validation of Study 1 consisted of correlation analyses for each of the four factors and the total SEE score using the BIDR Impression Management Subscale scores. Wang et al. (2003) reported the intercorrelations among the factors suggest that the four factors (EFE, EP, AC, and EA) were somewhat interrelated but still represented distinctive constructs. In Study 1, Wang et al. (2003) screened the data using the three validity items in the 62-item scale. Then, they removed 16 observations because each had one or more incorrectly answered validity items with an additional nine items removed for having skewness of the factor structure. Further validation of the BIDR Impression Management subscale scores found one significant correlation with the AC factor (r=.17, p < .01; less than 4% of the total variance) with no other significant correlations found for the factors, EFE, EP, and EA (Wang et al., 2003, p. 224).
Study 2: The primary purpose was to examine the stability of the factor structure in Study 1 as well as validating the SEE again. In Study 2, a total of 364 undergraduate students enrolled in two large universities in the Midwestern region of the United States participated in this study. The measures consisted of the same instruments as in Study 1 (demographic questionnaire, SEE, and BIDR) with two additional measures for establishing convergent and discriminant validity. These two new measures included the Miville-Guzman Universality-Diversity Scale (MGUDS) and the Davis Interpersonal Reactivity Index (IRI). Estimates of internal consistency were measured by alpha coefficients and obtained for all four factors. The initial reliability estimates were very similar to Study 1, which suggested the SEE and its four factors have acceptable levels of internal consistency in the sample from Study 2. Correlation analyses were also performed for each of the four scale factors and the total SEE scale score with the BIDR Impression Management subscale scores with three significant correlations found in factors EFE, AC, and the total SEE. This compared to the one significant correlation found in the AC factor in Study 1. Wang et al. (2003) pointed out that, even though several of the correlations were statistically significant, they accounted for a marginal amount of the variance (p. 228).

Study 3: The final study was to provide additional reliability estimates, explicitly test-retest reliability. Fifty-one undergraduates comprised the participants who were also from two large universities in the Midwestern region of the United States although it is not specifically stated they were the same institutions from Study 1 or Study 2. However, in Study 3, the instruments used were only the demographic questionnaire and the SEE. Ninety percent of the participants completed the retest of the SEE exactly two weeks after their initial taking of the scale. In general, the participants reported moderate levels of SEE total and sub-scores. The 2-week test-retest reliability estimated for the SEE total and the subscales were acceptably stable over time (Wang et al., 2003, p. 230)

**Basic Empathy Scale (BES)**

Jolliffe and Farrington (2006) developed the Basic Empathy Scale (BES) in order to measure affective and cognitive empathy. While their focus was on the psychological elements of empathy, the BES can provide empathetic insight to a person or group.

**Structure**

Forty items on the BES, based on four of the five basic emotions i.e. fear, sadness, anger and happiness, were counterbalanced. This means 20 items required a positive response and 20 required a negative response. Similar to the SEE, participants have to respond using a Likert scale with 1 meaning “strongly disagree” to 5 meaning “strongly agree.” Jolliffe and Farrington’s (2006) study focused on 363 adolescents in Year 10 around the age of 15. However, a year later, a factor analysis reduced the BES to a 20-item assessment, and the researchers administered the revitalized scale to 357 adolescents in Year 10 at the same schools. The shortened 20-item BES included nine cognitive items and 11 affective items. The original bi-factor BES has also been validated in five other languages: Italian, French, Mandarin, Slovak, and Spanish. It achieved a good fit suggesting the scale can adequately measure empathy in different cultures (Anastacio, Vagos, Nobre-Lima, Rijo, & Jolliffe, 2016).
Categories tested in BES

The BES found results in 10 factors such as gender differences in empathy, relationship between cognitive and affective empathy, relationship between BES and Interpersonal Reactivity Index (IRI), relationship between BES and alexithymia, which is the difficulty of expressing emotions. Additionally, the BES tested the relationship between BES and verbal fluency, impulsivity, personality, parental supervision and parental Socio Economic Status (SES), social desirability, and finally prosocial behavior.

Validation

Jolliffe and Farrington (2006) found the results of the comparisons were in line with previous research and theoretical expectation, and, therefore, support the validity of the BES. However, a negative relationship was found between cognitive and total empathy and alexithymia for both males and females. Furthermore, the BES was found to have convergent validity (convergent in the expected direction and magnitude), as demonstrated by the observed relationships with measures of sympathy, perspective taking, alexithymia, agreeableness, conscientiousness, openness, parental supervision and socioeconomic status. The BES also had divergent validity (divergent in the expected directions and magnitude), as demonstrated by the non-relationship with socially desirable responding (Jolliffe & Farrington, 2006, p. 608).

Potential use

While the majority of the BES has been for adolescent studies and the SEE ascertained its data using undergraduate students, these scales could be helpful in the classroom among the students or used as a basis for future study by future researchers. Because the BES focused on an adolescent group, some of the questions regarding parental supervision might be redirected for a classroom language and empathy-building activity. However, neither assessment method explicitly stated it is only for one particular group.

Pedagogical considerations: Why empathy matters

Teachers must be able to establish connections to their students beyond the curriculum’s standards. Empathy is a powerful tool to enhance classroom learning. Low self-confidence, culture shock, and other anxieties create an affective filter, which shuts down a student’s ability to acquire new language skills. Therefore, Saavedra (2016) determined that showing empathy in the classroom “mitigates students’ anxiety and stress, lowering their affective filter and leading to deeper learning” (p. 66).

Saavedra (2016) used his experience as a Peace Corps volunteer to be more empathetic with his ELL students in his current teaching position in Massachusetts. His personal experiences assimilating to Mozambican culture alongside acquiring language fluency in Portuguese have allowed him to connect with his students on an empathetic level. He realized that his experiences “mirrored my [his] students’ experiences here [in the United States]” (Saavedra, 2016, p.66). Therefore, he began to use more visuals and purposefully scaffolded more language and literature concepts. He also respected “the silent period”
in the early stages of language acquisition, stating it “is a necessary developmental stage and must be respected” (Saavedra, 2016, p. 67). Educators must find a balance between encouraging student engagement and realizing a student is not ready to engage in a particular language skill. Saavedra (2016)’s ability to use personal experiences as a means to reach his students illustrates a way to lay the foundation for empathetic instruction.

Warren (2018) proposed that empathy is a mechanism for obtaining new perspectives on culture that are closer to the experiences, realities, and perceptions of the diverse students and families in one’s school or community. She further asserted that it is in professional development practices “where the application of empathy may be rehearsed” (Warren, 2018, p. 170). Additionally, Warren (2018) encouraged teachers to embed themselves in intimate community events, such as going to a church/place of worship, where they can take part and, hopefully, realize the importance of embedding themselves into the community they serve. She ascertains the need to reflect and connect with these experiences to establish that the students and their cultures are not invalid in the classroom. It is a challenge to the belief that the teacher is the “chief knowledge producer” instead of appreciating that knowledge is reflexive (Warren, 2018, p. 177). In other words, the students and their families do contain valuable knowledge that can be shared in the teaching process. Students are not empty vessels that teachers pour into; their previous language, experiences, and ideas should be recognized.

Quintana and Mahgoub (2016) discussed that a third source of major ethnic and racial disparity in education is the varied receptivity of students to general education practices. Their research used the 2012 National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP), which found the achievement gap between fourth grade English Learners (ELs) and native English Speakers (ES) widened in eighth grade and continued enlarging all the way to 12th grade (Quintana & Mahgoub, 2016).

There is also the impact of stigmatization and stereotyping of students that affects results from testing. Quintana and Mahgoub cited Steele and Aronson’s (1995) research on students’ reactions during testing conditions. Steele and Aronson established that those who have been stigmatized or stereotyped by teachers or administration were less capable of performing well on a particular academic skill, such as mathematics, and these students performed even lower when their “stigmatized status” had been activated (Quintana & Mahgoub, 2016, p. 99).

Consequently, the teaching strategy of grouping students according to their level of academic achievement would only create feelings of isolation and stigma to ELLs. One specific example would be rearranging students, before the state standardized test, into new classrooms according to their assumed test results as determined by the teacher. There is real danger of creating a self-fulfilling prophecy where elementary and secondary students begin to internalize these low standards and, as a result, recognize as truth their inability to acquire the language. Their research demonstrates the need for empathetic strategies towards the different cultures in the classroom as a means to help ELLs achieve across the board.

Lucas and Villegas (2011) developed a theoretical foundation to establish more language-responsive teacher preparation by proposing a similarly named framework called linguistically
responsive teaching (LRT). LRT is an increased awareness and knowledge of language, being able to know the language needs of ELLs, and, then, appropriately scaffold the students’ needs to help them develop academic proficiency in English (Lucas and Villegas, 2011). The LRT framework consists of two major components: orientations as well as knowledge and skills connected to linguistically responsive teachers. Orientations of linguistically responsive teachers lead with a sociolinguistic consciousness, which means these teachers understand the connection between language, culture, and identity. These teachers also value linguistic diversity and are inclined to advocate for their ELL students. The knowledge and skills aspect centers around learning about a student’s language background, experiences, and proficiencies. This is when linguistically diverse teachers can identify the language demands of the classroom tasks and apply essential principles of second language learning such as recognizing the difference between BICS (Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills) and CALP (Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency), transference of a student’s L1 to their L2, the need for comprehensible input, and the importance of social interaction to foster authentic communication.

Role of empathy in the school environment/Reframing the perspective

Diagram 1 below, used in the author’s presentation during a 2016 TESOL affiliate conference, illustrates how empathy can encompass the other components of culture, language, and the teacher. It is a perspective map based on seven years of ESL instruction by the author. However, the circles’ sizes do not indicate a correlation to importance. The teacher does not have the smallest role. The diagram begins with the teacher, then moves into language, and finally, culture. Empathy encompasses all the components within itself. The circles’ growth symbolizes the greater depth of impact an empathetic teacher can have on the students’ ability to synthesize the information and “learn to learn”. In terms of being an effective educator, there is a lot more that can be done to meet students’ needs. This diagram emphasizes taking a more internalized perspective that begins with the teacher’s attitude towards the process of empathizing with the student population.
Role of the teacher

The teacher is the catalyst in the classroom – the source of the students’ academic, social and even emotional development. In the case of ELLs, teachers may be the first native speakers they have encountered who actively engage them on a conversational level. Therefore, a teacher must be cognizant of their impact on their students beyond solely course content or academic purposes. Teachers, from elementary to the university level, have effects on students’ level of language acquisition, insights into their new culture, and appropriate classroom dynamics.

Often educators feel they should focus on curricular demands first. There is pressure to have quantifiable numbers that “prove” a successful program or measure how effective a teacher is in the classroom. However, educators in the classroom are painfully aware that these hard numbers do not truly explain outliers, i.e. drops in attendance or engagement, and a sea of other educational and non-educational challenges. A teacher’s impact on students extends beyond course content. Teachers continue to be on the ground level when it comes to changes in education; therefore, the support they receive in professional development must allow them to feel effective within the classroom to meet the various challenges when teaching ELLs or LEP students. Implementation of meaningful, practical use of empathy could help teachers to reach the students and, ultimately, their academic goals.
Role of language

Acquiring more proficient language skills empowers students. They feel that they are able to integrate within the new culture in addition to becoming fully literate in a new language. Therefore, language is the objective and not the challenge because of its measurability. Exams or homework can ascertain a student’s level of comprehension within language acquisition. While there are, and will always be, challenging moments teaching a language, the definition of objective in this paper pertains to the more systematic and linear factors teaching a language can have. Brown (1980) called these “forms of language–the sounds, sound systems, grammatical structures, words, and discourse features–are utilized to accomplish certain intended functions of communication” (p.147).

Grammar is a necessity as it is the spine of any language. Additionally, the other language skills, such as reading, writing, speaking, and listening, combine together to construct holistic communication abilities. In the long term, highly fluent students can have access to better jobs or more educational opportunities. The stronger students’ confidence with their language abilities, the more capable they will feel in navigating daily life. Strong language skills can help ease students’ anxiety levels as they witness their own fluencies growing.

Role of culture

Brown (1980) said that culture “is the context within which we exist, think, feel and relate to others” (p. 122). Thus, behaviors and attitudes are deeply entrenched beliefs, traditions, or norms that have been taught to a group of people. For ELLs, the new school culture is compounded by the new country and city norms, which can all be very overwhelming. Although the range and impact of culture shock experiences varies for individuals, most ELLs undergo significant obstacles. Several emotions Brown (1980) found in second language contexts evidenced “mild irritability to deep psychological panic,” and second language learners developed an array of associated feelings such as “estrangement, anger, hostility, indecision, frustration, unhappiness, sadness, loneliness, homesickness, and even physical illness” (p. 131).

These challenges can range from assimilation into the United States to unspoken rules within the new culture. New to college, students might not understand the strong stance against plagiarism. For example, it is not uncommon in Asian cultures to use information directly from research or texts because it is seen as getting the correct answers from a reliable source. On the other hand, in the United States, this would be interpreted as cheating because the desire is an original piece of work from the student alongside properly cited researched material. Historical context is also pertinent to understanding cultural insights and behaviors. This information will give educators better tools to help build common ground within the classroom, as group work can be commonplace.

Role of empathy

The empathy circle surrounds all the other circles in the diagram. Empathy acts as the key that brings insight into one’s students and, in turn, increases student engagement and performance. A concentration on empathic principles and the development of these principles could restructure the
program, department, and school culture. Brown (1980) stated that linguistic systems cannot be examined thoroughly without recognizing the need to comprehend that there is a relationship between language acquisition and teaching to the total human being.

Empathy transcends age, culture, grade level, and, especially in this context, course content. Content-specific teachers might feel a student’s language difficulties are meant for the ESL coordinator on campus. After the author’s presentation, a college speech professor commented how he felt the topic of empathy was quite relevant for his department, as well. He felt his colleagues could be more patient with international students’ accents and focus on how difficult giving a presentation is for an ELL. A student’s level of fluency and pronunciation can create high levels of anxiety for ELLs who have to make class presentations.

Using Professional Development to Develop Empathy

This paper asserts that empathic professional development practices should be encouraged among school districts, departments, and colleges, particularly when teaching any international students. Currently, professional development is used by schools, colleges, and even volunteer programs to improve an area that might be new, weak, or needs an update. Typical formats for professional development are workshops, panel discussions, extracurricular reading, annual conferences, or in-house guest speakers. As professional development is a requirement within many school districts and post-secondary institutions, it is an ideal avenue to start reframing the delivery or teaching approach for ELLs. Therefore, strong professional development needs to include introducing new knowledge, sharing ideas, or learning new pedagogy.

Banilower, Boyd, Pasley, and Weiss, (2006) suggested anywhere from 20-100 hours of professional development over 6-12 months may be needed in order to affect teacher practice. Darling-Hammond, Wei, Andree, Richardson, and Orphanos (2009) indicated certain characteristics of professional development “are related to effectiveness in changing teacher practice and improving student learning, particularly when professional development focuses on content of the subject taught, corresponds with school classroom activities, provides active learning opportunities, and includes administrative support for planning and implementing” (p. 2).

Reframing current professional development

Rotermund, DeRoche, and Ottem (2017) found that 85% of public school teachers received professional development solely in their content areas. Professional development concerning Limited English Proficient (LEP) students or ELLs received the least amount of attention with only 27% of teachers receiving such training. It is unclear whether the number is across all content areas or if the LEP and ELL professional development was exclusively for the English as a Second Language teachers or coordinators. The attention to this specific training is necessary as the U.S. Census Bureau projects 40% of the student population will be English Language Learners by 2030 (Herrera & Murray, 2005). As the international population grows across the nation, educators will remain at the forefront of bridging language and cultural gaps.
The cultural component

Furthermore, Gregor and Green (2011) found a number of research studies that indicated many preservice and practicing teachers in the U.S. lack a comprehensive understanding of their own and other cultures; as a result, the teachers might be unaware that it is necessary to understand the relationship between the pedagogical approach and culture in order to teach effectively. Their research established that the more homogeneous the school, the less likely that there will be multicultural understanding between educators and their students.

The empathetic component

Dost (2016) observed the need for teachers to be linguistically responsive as discussed via Lucas and Villegas (2011, 2013) to their students. Specifically, Dost (2016) saw the need of using eye-opening experiences, like a language shock activity, for teachers to truly understand the value of second language principles and the importance of LRT. Her research stemmed from the belief that empathy is a vital part of teaching ELLs because it can stimulate sensitivity to different cultures, foster openness and attentiveness, create positive relationships and interactions as well as build a student-centered classroom (Dost, 2016).

Empathetic professional development as a strategic endeavor

Shifting personal and cultural attitudes to build empathetic awareness is a by-product of strategic thought (Irimia, 2010). It is a conscientious and purposeful process that begins on a personal level for each educator. It is also important to move from exposure to interaction. For example, if a teacher, administrator, or student can interact through asking questions, doing an activity, or learning words in another language, the higher the probability that the experience will have a lasting impact and, thus, build more culturally minded interactions later.

Tangibility of empathetic professional development

The varied types of professional development need to be tangible and personal for all educators. This solidifies a deeper connection between the empathetic concept and the professional development participants. Therefore, incorporating empathy, specifically ethnocultural empathy, has to be more than a “one off” moment. It means, in fact, a change to the school, program, and classroom dynamics.

Recommendations: approaches and resources

Through conscious professional development, educators can gain valuable context to the different nationalities in the classroom. Lucas and Villegas (2013) found that increased inclusion of ELLs in general education classes has raised awareness for all types of educators, not just ESL, ELL, or bilingual specialists, to develop better ways of teaching their ELLs. Below, there are various recommendations and resources to engage in empathy building professional development activities.
Language shock experience

One professional development activity is a language shock experience. In this kind of instructional experience, a group of people receive information entirely in a language unfamiliar to any of the participants. Washburn (2008) implemented the following activity in order to support the curriculum for undergraduate education students. Her goal was to perform an experiential learning activity that could develop empathy for ELLs. Washburn (2008) used a language shock class for this group of preservice teachers. Another goal was to stimulate teaching strategies toward teaching ELLs that would benefit them as future teachers and the students that they would serve.

While the activity lasted only 10 minutes, it drew strong feedback from the preservice teachers. First, the class broke into 10 groups in order to learn how to read and understand basic numbers in Chinese\(^2\) as taught through a typical classroom lecture. The students had textbooks written entirely in Chinese. Eight out of 10 groups reported feeling “left out, excluded or alone” and expressed high levels of frustration, confusion, boredom, and self-blame for not being able to understand (Washburn, 2008, p. 248).

Another example of a language shock experience was offered during a keynote presentation at the 2016 TexTESOL V conference. John Seidlitz, a former teacher and education consultant, opened by delivering instructions in Arabic, a language for which everyone in the audience lacked conversational abilities. Initially, there was a large amount of confusion, uncertainty, and looking around among the attendees to see if anyone could translate the commands. No one was able to follow directions confidently. Seidlitz then delivered the instructions a second time adding gestures and verbal affirmative feedback. When the attendees did something correctly, he smiled, clapped his hands, and said “Mumtaz! Mumtaz! (Excellent!).” This encouraged the attendees, who realized that they understood what was being asked of them and that they should continue the action.

Thus, when Seidlitz added specific hand movements and spoke more slowly, the attendees were able to comprehend better and started to participate with more assurance. While no one could truly understand the words he used, the activity proved vital in showing how quickly frustrating and disempowering it is for ELLs when they cannot grasp English classroom instructions. A language shock “class” is a short activity but can be further elaborated with follow-up discussions or reflections.

Extended professional development using multicultural reading

A multicultural reading activity can help faculty and staff get a glimpse of the immigrant experience. Gregor and Green (2011) learned that their graduate students, who were educators working towards Master of Reading Education degrees, came from very homogeneous backgrounds. Therefore, they created a two-concept exercise that would help these current teachers build more self-awareness and empathy when teaching ELLs. This activity could be replicated for professional development purposes. In a stepped approach, they assigned their graduate students to read at least three fiction or nonfiction children’s books that specifically pertained to the immigrant experience. Next, student-educators researched and wrote an immigration experience of their own. This could be from their own
family’s history or a fictional creation. The results were quite positive. During the post-activity discussions, Gregor and Green (2011) found that “a number of teachers developed a clearer understanding regarding the stages of immigration and the obstacles encountered when children move into a new culture” (p. 428). One teacher commented that she “became more aware of how actions of the teacher affect the student…I try to imagine how they feel” (Gregor & Green, 2011, p. 428).

Gregor and Green (2011) have included different titles of books within their article (see Reference page) that can be used for this type of professional development. Another resource comes from Refugee Services of Texas, which releases a book list annually in early spring of autobiographies and biographies written by refugees in the United States as well as all over the world. Its suggestions may be useful for discussions for coordinators or administrators who are looking for adult non-fiction level reading.

Hosting culture days

One model comes from the World Wise Schools, an organization that uses former Peace Corps volunteers to present cultural information to students in low-income schools regarding their volunteer experiences in various countries of assignment. This type of activity exhibits a combination of the administrators’ and teachers’ desires to bring the world to their schools as well as to expose the students and staff alike to a different way of life. This experience can, in turn, diminish pre-conceived biases about a particular region or culture. Another helpful event is a school’s hosting internal culture days that allow students to showcase their own cultures and increase the exposure to others in the school, yielding understanding in a way a book or workshop might not be able to.

Exploring culture shock

Another effective experience is a professional development session that discusses, in detail, the different stages and corresponding behaviors that culture shock can exhibit. There are five stages: Honeymoon, Hostility/Anger, Crisis/Homesickness, Humor, and, finally, Adjustment. As with the first four stages, there is no set timetable for reaching the fifth stage of culture shock, adjustment. This would prove helpful for educators to better understand the depth of shock their students are facing. After the initial discussion, a facilitator can tie in recorded or written accounts from the school’s students sharing their own thoughts about coming to a new country. It is important to recognize this is as a volunteer activity on the students’ part, as not all students will feel comfortable sharing their feelings, let alone sharing their feelings in another language.

To obtain useful material from the students, the culture shock prompt must have open-ended questions so as not to lead the students into “yes” or “no” answers. The goal is to get qualitative responses. Following the sharing of the students’ own accounts, educators can discuss and try to infer which stage the student might currently be experiencing. For example, a student might say, “I miss my grandparents in Vietnam, and I don’t like all the mistakes I make in English.” Depending on the tone, a speculative guess is this student might be between stage 2: Anger and stage 3: Homesickness. This is also a professional development experience that can be followed up on throughout the year or even into the subsequent year if the students continue at the school or program and volunteer to write subsequent
responses. These stories would have enormous impact since they originate from students within the school.

**Learn historical context**

As mentioned in the *Role of culture* section, gaining historical context on the majority groups in a school’s population can be vital in bettering connecting with the students. Educators need to be familiar with the different cultures within their schools or programs to better assess their transition into the school environment. For example, a teacher might notice that an assigned pair of students might seem not to be connecting or completing the assignment together as instructed. This situation might deal less with language comprehension and more with cultural implications. Knowing that one student is Iraqi and the other is Iranian and why that information matters is at the heart of knowing how best to serve the students. In this case of Iran and Iraq, there is a history of a fairly recent eight-year war; the languages are different—Persian for Iran and Arabic for Iraq—and the educational methods, as well as level of access, in each country are quite different.

To tailor the professional development instruction to the school, specific ELL instructors could research their school’s cultural groups and report their findings to the other faculty and staff.

**Suggestions for individual empathy development**

Teaching abroad

As a former professor in the education department and current professor emeritus for the School of Teaching, Learning, and Curriculum Studies, Cushner (2007) reported that education majors at universities who participate in teaching abroad programs tend to develop higher levels of cultural sensitivity and racial consciousness, which make them more effective at addressing issues related to domestic diversity. One preservice teacher reflected how her lack of language fluency in her host country impacted how she structured her future classroom pedagogies, “…Now I can relate to others who come to America and have to learn English. It is very difficult when you are older and [it] can be depressing…--this will definitely help me if I ever get a student who is from another country…” (Cushner, 2007, p. 31). This reflection is a critical step towards transforming and changing previous biases and assumptions. Creating more empathetic educators comes from the removal of their comfort zones, which is no easy task. Teaching abroad makes the educator become a student again. All educators, from teachers and staff to administrators, should be encouraged to seek overseas opportunities.

Teaching abroad is different from taking a vacation. For example, staying at a resort in Costa Rica alongside the beach and hiring a tour guide to take you around town is an enjoyable experience and allows for some cultural insights. However, this is a slanted view of the area as you are a tourist. Compare this to spending a school break teaching English in a poorer area outside the capital, San Jose. Instead of sitting in an air-conditioned bus for tours, you use the local public buses while witnessing first-hand what Tico (nickname for Costa Rican) culture truly is by staying with a local host family.
The latter example illustrates a higher level of immersion. Teaching or volunteering in another country provides an interculturally focused outcome where an international vacation does not. Byram (2008) defined interculturality as the moment someone becomes aware of differences and similarities but can decenter from themselves to help others act together to overcome obstacles of difference (p. 76).

It is important to note that international travel can be a major challenge if a scholarship is unavailable as the costs of the program, flight, and miscellaneous expenses add up. It might also be difficult for teachers to go abroad and immerse themselves for an extended period of time. Following are various opportunities for educators who have an interest in and the capabilities for teaching abroad.

Smolcic and Katunich (2017) researched four types of abroad programs that are recommended for pre-service teachers to enlist in as a means to build their interculturality. These culture immersion programs can also be applicable to even the most veteran of teachers or administrators. There are various types of international teaching experiences, and they can be as immersive as a person chooses. The author offers these as a source of inspiration. An attendee of the author’s 2016 presentation made an apt comment afterward about how reading about different cultures in books can only go so far; it does not replace actually going to another place.

Smolcic and Katunich’s (2017) four teach abroad descriptions are as follows:

1) Stand-alone or professional development programs. Targeted professional development for in-service teachers with a focus on intercultural learning such as guided interaction with culturally different populations or reflection on own beliefs and practices.

2) International study tours. Faculty-led experiences with travel to different sites focused on a host country’s history, culture, and society providing discipline-focused knowledge. These tours do not include staying with a local family, second language study, or extended interactions with local people.

3) Overseas student teaching. Programs in which pre-service teachers fulfill their teaching requirement partially or completely abroad. As English speakers, teachers may not be able to teach their specified content area or will be asked to teach additional English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classes within the school. While there is no intentional analysis of culture, the teacher is navigating another culture and language in an organic process while coping with living in a different country.

4) Cultural immersion programs and field experience. A more immersive experience in which teachers can live with a local family homestay and have some type of teaching role within the local school. There is a high level of interaction with local people and a chance to adapt in a natural way to new culture among fellow teachers.

Other resources

The blog, Teaching Traveling: Community Exploring Global Education seeks to make travel for teachers more accessible. This blog was launched in 2010 by teacher Lillie Marshall to provide a consolidated place for all types of educators to find affordable ways to go abroad and immerse themselves in another culture. https://www.teachingtraveling.com/2015/11/17/free-travel-for-teachers
Example resources available in the author’s community offer online readers an idea of the types of opportunities they might find where they live and work. In the Dallas/Fort Worth area in Texas, USA, educationally focused nonprofits include Sister Cities International and the World Affairs Council networks that can help cover certain travel costs. Situated in the North Texas area, Fort Worth Sister Cities (www.fwsistercities.org) sponsors eight youth delegations per year, for which they purposefully seek educators to serve as delegation leaders and cover a fair amount of leaders’ travel expenses. For local residents, they offer an option of hosting an international student for a couple of weeks in the summer for their annual International Leadership Academy. The Dallas Fort Worth World Affairs Council (www.dfworld.org) has Educator Study Tours available for teachers to help them create more globally focused classrooms. Both nonprofits have educator workshops throughout the summer with international and local educators alike.

In the United States, there are various fellowships particularly for educators, like the English Language Program (www.elprograms.org) sponsored through the State Department, which specifically seek out educators wishing to up skill their teaching toolbox. The ELP has 10-month fellowships or shorter projects for experienced teachers through their Specialist program. Fellows and Specialists work within different project needs such as creation of a first-time phonics curriculum, teacher training, or hosting an English language workshop for local law enforcement. The host institutions collaborate with the embassies and determine the projects beforehand.

**Conclusion**

In C.S. Lewis’s (1960) book *The Four Loves*, he explains friendship as the moment when one person turns to another and proclaims, “What! You too? I thought I was the only one” (p.113). Although this quote is about *Philia*, which means deep friendship, it can pertain to the empathetic process needed in current professional development. Feelings of isolation and loneliness are common for immigrants who made the decision or whose parents made the decision to create a new life in a new land. This article hopes to offer alternatives to how educators see professional development and to suggest what can be done to foster empathy-focused approaches to better equip teachers, and in turn, support the needs of ELLs.

There has been extensive research on empathy throughout several decades. The topic of empathy continues to gain momentum as a valuable facet, not just in psychological or socio-psychological fields, as previously thought. It is also quite relevant in the educational field. Empathy is the key to unlock a positive school environment that can affirm the ELL population from elementary level to higher education institutions.

As the pedagogical considerations presented indicate, there are many benefits to building a culture of empathy within a school or program. Stereotyping, single authority figures, and disconnected strategies are all barriers to creating better student outcomes. The professional development recommendations contained here require a desire from within the schools to dedicate the necessary time to implement, maintain, and cultivate a more culturally empathetic educational environment. Schools should encourage qualitative approaches and nurture them within classrooms.
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Author’s Biography

Danielle Gines has taught English as a Second Language at Tarrant County College for seven years. She has taught from basics to advanced levels. Additionally, she collaborated alongside her co-workers in order to create an electronic resource center using Blackboard for low to advanced level students for the Continuing & Industry Education ESL program.

Coming from a military family, Ms. Gines took an interest in international cultures at a young age due to living overseas. Ms. Gines has volunteered in Costa Rica and South Africa teaching English classes to adults, teens, and children. In 2016, she presented about her South Africa experiences to her peers at the TexTESOL V annual conference.

Ms. Gines completed her B.A. in English at Midwestern State University. She also completed an M.S. in Nonprofit Management with a specialization in Global Affairs and Management from The New School in New York City. Ms. Gines has helped to organize numerous fundraisers for Room to Read DFW raising thousands of dollars for Room to Read’s Literacy and Girls’ Education programs in Asia and Africa. She is also an avid runner and has completed just over 60 races since 2010 including 4 marathons.

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Citation

Utilizing Technology to Support ELLs’ Success Today

by

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*From the perspective of a modern practitioner, this article explains how to effectively integrate technology into classrooms to facilitate learning a second language in ways that are relevant and enjoyable for students. While the example activities were originally implemented in a middle school in South Korea, they can be adapted for ESL and EFL students anywhere. The teacher-created activities appeal to diverse learners, recognize the role of learner preferences and styles, and enable the use of current technologies and techniques appropriate to digital age learners, including cell-phone, app, and game applications.*

Key Words: technology in teaching English, EFL in South Korea

Until very recently, I have been teaching English as a foreign language at a middle school in South Korea. In my experience, I have found that if correctly utilized and monitored, technology can allow for both increased student enjoyment and enhanced learning opportunities. Genc Ilter (2009) found that technology can help students’ psychological and social improvement and provide beneficial opportunities for educators to develop and create different, enjoyable tasks in EFL classrooms.

When preparing my lessons, I try to be aware that not all students learn in the same way. Students’ various learning styles have a significant influence on the way they learn information (Jie & Xiaqing, 2006). Incorporating technology into lessons promotes student engagement and creates new openings for them to learn in a variety of approaches (Ellis, 1994). While I am currently applying these techniques with my Korean students, these strategies and ideas could be adapted and utilized in any classroom.

Technology can be integrated into the classroom to support and encourage learning to prepare our students for the increasingly higher demands of a digital world. The first and arguably easiest and most obvious reason is that technology can make learning more fun and engaging. Siegle (2015) found that multimedia games can assist in building students' academic confidence, develop their social and problem-solving skills, and promote teamwork and cooperation. Subjects that students deem challenging or mundane suddenly become more stimulating when they can engage with various forms of media, technology, or even each other in new and exciting ways. For example, in my classes, we preview the textbook chapter key concepts by playing a PowerPoint game. When students answer correctly, they get to choose a box on the screen. In each of the clickable boxes are randomized points, minus points, or bombs for the students to select after answering questions correctly. What would ordinarily be boring suddenly has every student on the edge of their seats, expectantly awaiting their turn to answer. It is amusing to me that my students enjoy the activity even more when the opposing team gets a bomb than when their own team gets points. Middle schoolers seem to thrive in chaos.
I have found my students’ cell phones to also be a powerful tool when properly regulated. Grant et al. (2015) stated that cell phones in classrooms assist learners to access content and communicate with classmates and instructors, no matter where they are, and foster collaborative learning in any setting. A mixture of Google and Naver, the popular Korean search engine, essentially puts an immeasurable wealth of knowledge into students’ hands. Several apps can enhance students’ education. My class sizes are quite large, so I often cannot answer every “Teacher, how do I spell _____?” or “Teacher, what is (Korean word) in English?” I encourage students to use Google Translate for individual words or short sentence translation. Translation apps often present problems when trying to decipher longer and more complex sentences. Even when Google or Naver are inaccurate, I have found these teachable moments to be extremely beneficial as we, as a class, collaboratively seek the actual translation or meaning of a word or phrase.

I have discovered apps such as Ditty to be useful when teaching vocabulary (available for both iOS and Android). Short sentences – I need an antidote for my anxious dog – work best. The app essentially auto-tunes whatever the teacher or students type and plays it back to the melody of different pop songs. I believe the algorithm is based on trying to fit the syllables of the word to the original beat of the song. Some lyrics work better than others, but my students still sing the preposition vocabulary we learned to the harmony of the Black-Eyed Peas. When the rhythm of the auto-tuned words sync up with the melody of one of the many available popular pop songs, it is truly magical and has everyone, including me, erupting in laughter and singing along.

However, as the wise Uncle Ben told Spiderman, “With great power comes great responsibility.” With the addition of technology to the classroom, especially cell phones, it presents new challenges in keeping students on task. I have also discovered that most of my students have exclusively only ever used their phones for recreational purposes, and the concept of using a smartphone as an educational tool is initially foreign. At first, it was difficult to police whether students were using their phones for only the lesson and making sure they stayed off social media, messaging, and game sites. I recently discovered a successful way of regulating this by using a Wi-Fi transmitter (search amazon.com or aliexpress.com for “USB Wi-Fi transmitter and make sure it is one that is capable of transmitting a signal, not just receiving it). I plug it into my desktop computer and have my class put their phones into airplane mode, which disables their cellular data and connect to my specific Wi-Fi access point. In my desktop computer’s settings, I can modify the firewall to allow only the sites I select to be usable, for example, http://translate.google.com, https://www.naver.com/, http://www.thesaurus.com/. Pages that are not on the list, such as Facebook, gaming sites, and messaging apps will simply not load. It essentially creates the same set-up that computers at a public kiosk or retail store would use to stop people from surfing the internet on the for-sale, display model laptop and only allows customers to access the store’s website. This will not stop students from launching game apps that do not require the internet, but, before I begin the lesson, I remind my students that using their phones in class is a privilege. In the typical Korean classroom, phones are surrendered to a locked box and then returned at the end of the day. I also let my students know if I ever have suspicion that any of them are using their phones for non-lesson-related purposes, I will take their phones for the rest of the class. In my four years teaching here, I have only once had to confiscate a device.
For preparing lessons, a website that I found to be extremely useful is Hayeck (2018) “English Speak Like a Native” (ESLN). This site has a specific section for typical pronunciation problems that English language learners will have when learning and speaking English. Specific sections are targeted for Korean, Chinese, Vietnamese, Indian, and Japanese English learners. The website gives a description of the error and examples. Having a quick list of these common Korean pronunciation issues allows me to rapidly create vocabulary lists and sentences focused on these probable error types exclusive to my students. I can then grab a quick game off the website Busy Teacher, such as “Odd One Out” or “Pronunciation Maze,” and adapt it to the error type words I borrowed from ESLN (Pesce, 2013).

Numerous resources and strategies are available for teachers to use to enhance the relevance and effectiveness of instruction, often only a click or two away. A basic knowledge of linguistics and ESL instruction helps educators filter, vet, and assess the worthiness of internet-found materials. The quality of teaching materials and resources is as varied as the quantity, so a primary knowledge of the material being taught and a critical discerning eye are important for all educators to continually develop.

In my own personal teaching context, one challenge I have noticed and tried to work with is Konglish. Stodolska and Yi (2003) described Konglish as “an awkward mix of Korean and English” (p. 63). Sometimes this can be words such as “computer” or “radio” simply pronounced in a Korean way. Complications arise when English words take on new meanings, but students are not aware that the definition has changed and that a non-Korean English speaker would not be able to understand them. For example, “handle” means a car’s steering wheel, and “eye shopping” means window shopping. A native English speaker could probably still ascertain this meaning. However, if a Korean traveled abroad and asked where to buy a “sharp” (mechanical pencil) or a “Y-shirt” (dress shirt), he or she would be met with very confused expressions. I recognize that some of my students plan to go abroad one day, and I try to teach lessons focused on Konglish to prepare them to recognize the differences.

Koreans will also use the brand name for items as the item’s name, much in the same way English speakers will refer to a tissue as a Kleenex or a bubbling bathtub as a Jacuzzi. These brands are often exclusive to Korea and would cause confusion when using this language abroad. I found that using the same activities for teaching vocabulary is effective for teaching Konglish versus Standard English. Interestingly, a linguistic divide has been created between North and South Korea because North Korea does not allow the use of any English loan words and instead has created its own unique word for TV, computer, cell phone, and others. North Korean defectors sometimes struggle to integrate into South Korean society because of the reliance on Konglish and English, and there are currently multiple language-support programs for North Korean refugees in South Korea (Lee, 2016).

In my experience, I have found that if properly utilized and supervised, technology can allow for improved learning. It also empowers students to work more independently and leaves me open to answer more complex questions rather than running around the room translating and helping with spelling. The end goal would be that students can then take these skills and knowledge and apply and expand on them in the future. As educators, we should strive to continually increase our knowledge of technology and different ways of applying it to benefit our students.
References


Author’s Biography

Randall Kaufman has been teaching English in South Korea for the past nine years to all different age groups. Before going to Korea, Randall utilized his undergraduate background in film, media, and graphic design to shoot and edit shows at a TV station, as well as create online videos for a financial magazine in Oregon. An urge to travel brought Randall to teach in Seoul and eventually the port city of Busan, where he lives now with his wife. He recently completed his M.Ed in Teaching English Language Learners at the American College of Education to make what was once an excuse for travel into a career.

He never lost his passion for technology and media and is always seeking new ways of integrating them into his classroom and lessons. Korea is on the forefront when it comes to cutting edge technology and eSports (pro-gaming that is sponsored by the Korean government as well as Samsung, LG, and Hyundai), so the country felt like a natural fit for Randall from the beginning.

When Randall was growing up, many of his peers would express that their dream was to be a police officer, firefighter, or doctor. Randall is inspired that in Korea, many of his students have stated that their dream job is “pro gamer” and then actually go on to do just that. Go pro eSports team, Seoul Dynasty!

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my wife for continually inspiring me to better myself professionally. I would also like to thank Dr. Deyoe-Chiullan for encouraging me that my ideas and solutions I came up with for my own Korean students could benefit teachers all over the world. Most importantly, I would like to acknowledge my students who never cease to amaze me with their long study hours they keep but still always making the time to stop by my office. They continually make me smile when they visit to talk in English about school, computer games, American movies and sitcoms, if my eyes are actually green, if my blonde arm hair is real, and which Korean food I like the best, cheering when I say, “All of it.”

Citation

The Challenges Arabic Speakers Face Learning English

by Karem Ismael

This article explains the differences between Arabic and English for Arabic speakers and ESL teachers or tutors. Students will find suggested ways or methods to help them recognize phonetic patterns in English to make learning easier. For teachers, there are explanations to help them understand the challenges Arabic speakers confront in learning English and ideas for designing specific lesson plans that meet the reading, speaking, writing, and listening needs of Arabic students.

Key Words: contrastive linguistics, English for Arabic speakers

Learning a second language is challenging for anyone. However, Arabic and English provide significant challenges for second language learners because they come from different language families. Arabic, Amharic, Neo-Aramaic, Hebrew, and Tigrinya are in the Semitic branch, which is one of several branches of the Afroasiatic language family (Simons & Fennig, 2018). English, German, and Dutch are in the Germanic branch, and French, Italian, Portuguese, and Spanish belong to the Romance branch, both of which are branches of the Indo-European language family (Simons & Fennig, 2018). Arabic and English are so different that they have a limited number of cognates between the two languages, and positive transfer between the two is almost nonexistent.

First-language experiences influence the learning of a second language, and, when those two languages are similar in their relationship of sounds to letters, it seems easier. Although the languages themselves are very different, in both Arabic and Portuguese, students can make predictions as to the pronunciation of phonemes and words. “For example, in Arabic and Portuguese, it is relatively easy to predict the pronunciation of a word from its spelling, unlike English where the relationship is rather loose” (Bond as cited in Al-Busaidi & Al-Saqqaf, 2015, p. 182). However, when the languages are as dissimilar as Arabic and English, there are phonemes in each language that are nonexistent in the other (Al-Busaidi & Al-Saqqaf, 2015, p. 182).

Each language does have words borrowed or loaned from the other’s language. Algebra, alcohol, camel, coffee, lemon, and numbers are examples of the words English has borrowed from Arabic. English words loaned to Arabic include cinema, computer, grapefruit, electronic, and telephone.

Arabic speakers who are learning English struggle with the language because of the differences in phonetics and grammar. However, any language is more than a set of rules; it reflects the beliefs and practices of that culture. The Arabic culture significantly values family, friends, and relationships while English culture values independence. In the Arabic family, cooperation is more important than independence. If an individual has a need or a problem, the family works together to meet the need or solve the problem. Privacy is not a huge concern among Arabs. A person can walk by the farm of a close friend or family and pick food from the fields or gardens. A family member may see a leak in the sink or a broken tile in the house of a relative and repair the sink or tile. The family member does not need to ask permission. The problem is fixed to make the friend or relative happy.

Arabic is a very specific language compared to English. For example, there are three words in Arabic for forbidden: غَيْبٌ for things that are taboo, مُمْتَزَجٌ for things forbidden by businesses, and حرام for things forbidden by religion.
Arabic is an active language, while English is passive. For example, in Arabic, we say, “I took the car to the mechanic, and he fixed it” while in English, we say, “I got my car fixed.” In Arabic, we say, “I went to the dentist, and he extracted my tooth.” However, in English, we say, “I got my tooth pulled.” ESL students from Arabic-speaking countries must learn the American culture just as teachers working with Arabic students must learn the beliefs, customs, and values of their Arabic students. There are always challenges to learning a second language, but there are also ways to work through the language challenges.

The Arabic language is over 1,500 years old and is spoken today by more than 400 million people (History of the Arabic Language, n.d.). The enormous number of Arabic speakers makes Arabic “one of the top six most spoken languages in the world” (History of the Arabic Language, n.d.). Arabic has two forms: the written and the spoken. The language has not changed significantly over the years; therefore, Arabs can easily read the classical literature including the book of the Qur’an in its original form, unlike English speakers who cannot read works written in Medieval or Shakespearean English or the first Latin to English translation of the Bible.

The written form of Arabic known as Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) is an academic and eloquent language used throughout the Arabic world. The spoken language is not the same as the written language and is a colloquial one depending on the region or country: North Africa (Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya), Persian Gulf (Oman, Bahrain, Qatar, Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Iraq, and Yemen, which are near the Persian Gulf), Levant (Syria, Lebanon, Palestine, and Jordan), and the countries that have their own dialects: Egypt, Sudan, Mauritania, Djibouti, and Somalia. MSA is derived from the book of the Qur’an that was written in the classic form of Arabic by Mohammed disciples. Writers, poets, linguists, and the clergy formed the MSA through their works of literature and lectures. The grammar rules of this form are clear, and it is straightforward. For example, when a word is spoken or read, the last letter must be pronounced according to its case whether nominative, accusative, or genitive. The word *jameel* (beautiful) can be *jameelon* or *jameelan*, *jameelin*; the letter (*l*) is pronounced according to its case *on*, *an*, or *in*.

The standard spoken Arabic was destroyed when the Arab world was conquered by many cultures repeatedly throughout history. The language lost its rich value of sounds and identity during this time. Original words were lost, and unfamiliar words were added to Arabic from the conquerors’ languages. The pronunciations of other words in the language were affected which led to additional new Arabic words. The word for doctor was “wise” until changes occurred, bringing in the word “doctor” to replace “wise.” In World War II, refugees from Italy, Greece, and other parts of Europe fled to North Africa and settled there. They influenced the culture through the architecture, language, and professions. The different nationalities who settled in Africa contributed to the development of the Arabic dialects that are still spoken today.

The fact that the MSA is the written language and the spoken is the unrecorded language of daily life makes it hard for non-native speakers to learn Arabic because they need to learn one form for reading and writing and the colloquial (local dialect) for speaking. The differences between the spoken and written forms of Arabic are like the differences between Castilian and Latin American Spanish.
Chart 1 describes how Arabic differs from English. The information can help students and teachers develop an awareness of the dissimilarities between the languages. ESL teachers who understand these differences can diagnose the errors of Arabic-speaking ELLs.

Chart 1

*Fundamental Differences Between the English and Arabic Languages*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Arabic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>▶ English is written from left to right in upper and lower-case letters.</td>
<td>▶ The Arabic language is written from right to left, and there are no upper or lower-case letters.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▶ The small letters <em>i</em> and <em>j</em> are the only letters with dots.</td>
<td>▶ Half of the letters have dots. These are parts of the letters.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▶ There are no marks to control pronunciation.</td>
<td>▶ There are diacritical marks that control the pronunciation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▶ Letters in words are only connected in cursive writing.</td>
<td>▶ The letters in Arabic are always connected in words.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▶ English is a non-phonetic language.</td>
<td>▶ Arabic is a phonetic language. What is written is spoken, and what is spoken is read.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▶ Objective pronouns are not connected to verbs. Possessive pronouns are not connected to nouns.</td>
<td>▶ Object pronouns can be attached to verbs. Possessive pronouns can be attached to nouns.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▶ Adjectives are placed before nouns.</td>
<td>▶ Adjectives are placed after nouns.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▶ English sentences start with the subject, as it is a nominal sentence.</td>
<td>▶ Sentences in Arabic are expressed in either nominal form or a verbal form depending on what is emphasized at the beginning of the sentence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▶ English has blends, consonant clusters, and digraphs.</td>
<td>▶ There are no blends, consonant clusters, or digraphs in Arabic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▶ Phrasal verbs are common in English.</td>
<td>▶ Phrasal verbs are not common in Arabic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▶ English has no gender for living beings and things.</td>
<td>▶ Arabic has gender for living beings and things.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▶ There are some sounds in English that do not exist in Arabic such as <em>p</em>, which is pronounced as a <em>b</em> by Arabic speakers and the <em>v</em>, which is pronounced as <em>f</em> by Arabic speakers.</td>
<td>▶ Some sounds such as غ، خ، ق must be learned by hearing. It is hard to transliterate them because English will not give the exact pronunciation of these sounds.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Phonetics

Arabic is a phonetic language. Therefore, what is spoken is written, and what is written is read. The language has 28 consonants and 6 vowels. The sentence: "انا طالب" (أنا طالب) or “I am a student” is pronounced as it is written. English is a non-phonetic language; for example, the sound /f/ is written three ways but always pronounced the same: ph as in Phoenix, gh as in tough or f as in fell.

Another example is the sound of ea which is pronounced differently in the following words:

dream /driyrm/, break /breyk/, and head /hɛd/.

The digraphs /θ/ as in think, /ð/ as in them, /ʃ/ in chalk, /ŋ/ in sing,

and the sounds /dʒ/ in jar, /p/ in pet, and /v/ in villain do not exist in spoken Arabic (Hafez, 2001). The Arabic /r/ is a flap sound that does not exist in English (Hafez, 2001).

A basic problem for Arabic speakers learning English is where the English sounds are made in the mouth. Arabic speakers articulate their sounds from the front of the mouth and back of the throat (Tharpe, 2014, p.10). The context of a sentence determines how Arabic words will be pronounced. Many words are spelled the same, but the meaning of the word in the sentence dictates the correct pronunciation (Al-Busaidi & Al-Saqqat, 2015, p.181).

Consonant clusters in English words are another problem for Arabic English language learners. In Arabic, consonant clusters do not appear as more than two letters in a row. English can have consonant clusters of up to three letters or more at the ending of the first word and the beginning of the following word as in banks closed. Some other examples are abstract or world. Because Arabic does not have consonant clusters, ELLs would pronounce abstract as /abistirakt/ and world as /worlid/. An Arabic speaker will spontaneously insert a vowel immediately after the second consonant in English, which leads to incorrect pronunciation.

Grammar

The English prepositions in, at, and on are difficult for Arabic students. In English, speakers say, “He is on the train. He is in school. He is at work.” Arabic speakers use in for all three sentences: “He is in the train. He is in the school. He is in the work.” Arabic speakers experience difficulties using plural nouns in English. In Arabic, it is correct to say, “Five hundred strong soldier lives on the base.” The plural form applies to the number hundred, strong, and live. An English speaker would say, “Five hundred soldiers live on the base.” The plural form here applies to soldier. Another example is “The Democratic and the Republican politicians never agree on anything” compared to the Arabic sentence “The Democratic(s) and the Republican(s) politician(s) never agree(s) on anything.” The plural form in Arabic is based on a pattern as seen in the following examples, Mohandis - engineer (m) مهندس and mohandis(oon) - masculine plural مُهندسون and Mohandisa - engineer (f) مهندسة and Mohandisa(ath) - feminine plural مُهندسةات.
In English, the structure of a sentence follows the Subject - Verb - Object (SVO) pattern as in “Sam bought a beautiful car” with adjectives coming before nouns. The subject is the one who does the action, the verb is the action itself, and the object is the one or the thing that receives the action. Arabic sentences have two orders depending on whether the subject or the verb is being emphasized. The sentence order can be nominal: subject verb object – “Ahmed drank his milk.” (The focus is on the subject.) The other form of a sentence is a verbal sentence: verb subject object – “Drank Ahmed his milk.” (The focus is on the drinking or the process.) In the sentence, “Mohamed bought a car beautiful,” the focus is on Mohamed, while in “Bought Mohamed a car beautiful,” the focus is on buying a car.

Ways to Face the Challenges

ESL teachers need to show Arabic students that English is a non-phonetic language by using as many examples as possible. Students need to be taught the sounds of the English alphabet, where they are made in the mouth, and then the sound patterns that exist in English such as *ission* as in mission, transmission, admission, depression, *ea* as in dream, treat, neat, seat, or (*i*+consonant+*e*) as in tribe, hide, bide. The words that teachers use for this activity need to be ones the students encounter in their daily life. Alphabet cards, sound pattern cards, and picture word cards should be used with students.

Arabic speakers try to pronounce every single letter in an English word because each letter makes a sound in their language. If there are five letters in a word, there are five sounds. Teachers need to explain that in English not every letter is pronounced. Again, students need to be shown examples and listen to how the teacher pronounces the words. Students should listen to dialogues or watch movies of native speakers as ways of learning correct pronunciation. Then students should practice speaking in English using dialogues or movie scripts.

Teachers should show students the differences between consonant clusters in English and Arabic. Also, a teacher could teach the word transfer */transfər/* and ask the students how they would pronounce it. Then the teacher should pronounce the word correctly and explain the differences between consonant clusters in the two languages.
Grammar

Arabic ESL students need to be shown the differences between *at, in,* and *on.* One way is to use Table 2 with the students and give them a variety of activities to practice the prepositions.

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prepositional Chart for Arabic Speakers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Place</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>at work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>at the bus stop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in the house</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in Texas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in New York City</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in the United States</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>on the floor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>on the street</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>on a plane</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>on a boat</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ESL teachers should show students Arabic and English sentence orders and point out the differences. The students could practice with sentences in pair-share or group work and then individually write sentences. Working with the sentences would also be helpful for learning about singular and plural nouns and subject-verb agreement. Students need to learn the English word order through visual and auditory activities.

Cultural Notes

Teachers and administrators need to learn about the Arabic students’ culture to better understand their actions and reactions. For example, if the teacher is playing music and expects the students to dance, the boys from Middle Eastern countries may dance, but girls will not because this is considered inappropriate. Students may get loud when they are answering questions, asking questions, talking with peers or teachers. Their tones may sound angry, but the students are showing passion, excitement, or sincerity in their discourse. The showing of emotions is valued in Arabic culture. In Middle Eastern culture, males should never hold eye contact with a female for more than a second or two because it is considered rude. Male students will not look a female teacher in the eye when speaking to her. However, they will step into her comfort zone to show or explain something to her because this is acceptable behavior with the same or opposite gender. If teachers need to talk with the parents, it is more respectful to contact the father and speak to him first. Administrators and teachers must be aware of the cultural differences, so they can show respect to the Arabic parents and students.
Conclusion

Learning a second language requires time, patience, and perseverance for any student. The task is more difficult when the first and second languages are from two different language families, such as Arabic and English. Teachers with an understanding of the differences between Arabic and English must show and help students understand these differences. Students need time and activities that encourage practice to gain fluency in English. Administrators and faculty members must understand Arabic culture to avoid misunderstandings between students, parents, and the school staff. There are always methods to help Arabic students deal with the challenges of learning English.

References


Author’s Biography

Karem Ismail worked as an English and Arabic language instructor and translator for twelve years in a school in Alexandria, Egypt. He provided professional Arabic/English translations for businessmen and clients via paperwork and prepared contracts and conducted verbal (simultaneous) translations. He taught Arabic to American and European engineers, managers, business professionals, and Russian diplomats who were working in Egypt. Ismail also developed Arabic teaching methods and lesson plans as well as a computer-based translation tool for English speakers of Arabic. He provided instruction for classroom language teachers to improve their teaching skills. Classroom teachers learned about the importance of cultures in language instruction from Ismail. His work at the school also included various administrative tasks including accounting. After immigrating to the United States, Ismail substituted in New York and New Jersey public schools and taught in ESL classrooms.

Ismail graduated from Cairo University with a Bachelor of Arts degree in English and Arabic Literature with a focus on English/Arabic Translation. In July 2018, he graduated from the American College of Education with a Master of Education in Teaching English Learners. His next educational goal is to earn an Ed.D. in Leadership.

Acknowledgements

Thank you to Emad Azmi, Frank Newell, Bill Grossmann, Dave Kimball, and Elisabeth Kwasnitzka, who encouraged me to persevere in my first year of study at the university. The high academic English and Medieval English were hard to understand. They taught me new perspectives on learning languages and cultures.

Thank you to my family who stood by my side through my studies and my move to the United States. Dr. Rita Deyoe-Chiullán encouraged me to write this article and helped me get it published. She has inspired me to learn, adjust, and accommodate my teaching world. She encouraged me to pursue my dream of getting an Ed.D. I am in awe of the depth of her knowledge of linguistics and teaching, and it is incredible the amount of time Dr. Deyoe-Chiullán spends preparing for her classes and working with students.

Citation

Teaching Children with Separation Trauma and a Few Good Books:  
An Editorial Essay with Side-trips

by

Rita Deyoe-Chiullán, Ph.D., TexELT Editor  
Adjunct Professor, American College of Education

The one issue that concerns me most at this time is how our ESL and bilingual teachers (and many other teachers) are going to cope with even more children suddenly showing up in their classes after suffering separation from their parents during an attempted border crossing or when massive ICE raids of factories and plants and other businesses have suddenly deported one or both parents and the children are left with relatives and/or friends who may accept caring for them but cannot replace their parent(s).

Here is an example from one of my graduate students who is a teacher and who posted this in a course discussion about teaching English language learners:

“...In the city where I am working, not long ago, parents and children were very scared because ICE was in the neighborhood detaining specific people in different businesses and on the streets. That day we only had three children at school. It was chaotic, and, sadly, the next day, the children could not stop talking about this incident at school. …”

What was done for political reasons may cause irreparable harm to young lives and to the parents who also risked their lives trying to protect their children from conditions that were too dangerous or too hopeless to endure in their home countries.

Educators need to be prepared in ways that only occasionally have been an issue before because for every child who has been affected directly, a dozen "cousins" (relatives and friends/acquaintances) will suffer anxiety because something similar could happen or could have happened to their family.

Children suffer separation trauma and anxiety for a variety of reasons, such as divorce/separation of parents, death of a parent, imprisonment of a parent, relocation of a parent/parents for work or military service, illness of family members, or their own illness. However, the current situation is a particular case where the separation is immediate, harsh, and unexpected, based solely on a sudden and arbitrary change in immigration policy. It does not seem understandable or rational.


Every teacher cannot suddenly become a licensed social worker or child psychologist but will have to become prepared to respond sensitively to the needs of children suffering from this trauma or fear/anxiety about the possibility of experiencing such an event.
Some needs for every teacher include the following: knowing what to do/say and what not to do/say to a child who exhibits these symptoms, having available resources to teach positive responses to this sort of fear or anxiety, and having high-quality children’s literature that can provide bibliotherapy either through sharing with a whole class or with individual children, as needed.

Below, I have outlined a proposal for seeking funding for a project to address these needs:

*Proposed Project Mission: Curate, Communicate, and Create

**Curate**

Collect a set of resources that teachers can ask their school to purchase or that teachers can verify holdings of in the school library. These should include resources that deal with healthy/healing responses to separation in various languages/cultures/historical contexts.

Create teacher guides for teaching appropriate books using close reading. Collect links to online resources for these books that already exist and evaluate them for literacy quality, emotional appeal, and age appropriateness.

Follow the same process for popular books that are relevant and well known to most teachers, and for which many activities and resources are available online.

*Where the Wild Things Are* by Maurice Sendak

*Grouchy Lady Bug* by Eric Carle

*Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good Very Bad Day* by Judith Viorst

*Where the Wild Things Are* by Maurice Sendak

*Grouchy Lady Bug* by Eric Carle

*Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good Very Bad Day* by Judith Viorst

Locate additional recent publications that may be appropriate. (These have not been evaluated and are simply listed as examples to be evaluated.)

*Amal Unbound* by Aisha Saeed

*A Terrible Thing Happened* by Margaret M. Holmes

*Bomji and Spotty's Frightening Adventure: A Story About How to Recover from a Scary Experience* (Hidden Strengths Therapeutic Children's Books) by Anne Westcott

*How Sprinkle the Pig Escaped the River of Tears: A Story About Being Apart From Loved Ones* (Hidden Strengths Therapeutic Children's Books) by Anne Westcott

*How Little Coyote Found His Secret Strength: A Story About How to Get Through Hard Times* (Hidden Strengths Therapeutic Children's Books) by Anne Westcott

*Listening to My Body: A guide to helping kids understand the connection between their sensations (what the heck are those?) and feelings so that they can get better at figuring out what they need* by Gabi Garcia

*Listening with My Heart: A story of kindness and self-compassion* by Gabi Garcia

*My Name is Victoria: The Extraordinary Story of One Woman's Struggle to Reclaim Her True Identity* by Victoria Donda

*Once I Was Very Very Scared* by Chandra Ghosh Ippen

*Today I'm a Monster* by Agnes Green
Communicate

Create *Teachers of Children Moving Around* and develop the TCMA website and a regularly scheduled emailed newsletter as well as podcasts with interviews with professionals. Send in proposals to get on the programs of professional organization conferences/meetings. Sponsor or co-sponsor webinars with EdWeb.net (examples of recent webinars include these: Trauma-Sensitive Practices for a Positive, Thriving Classroom and Creative Expression as a Social Emotional Learning (SEL) Tool.)

To access the first of these archived EdWeb.net webinars, go to [www.edweb.net/classroommanagement](http://www.edweb.net/classroommanagement) and join the community; after that, you will have access to the archived webinars in the Community Toolbox on the left under edWebinar Archives, where you can select the desired title “Trauma-Sensitive Practices for a Positive, Thriving Classroom.”

To access the second of these archived EdWeb.net webinars, go to the Creating a Positive School Climate Community URL: [www.edweb.net/positive](http://www.edweb.net/positive) and join the community; after that, you will have access to the archived webinars in the Community Toolbox on the left under edWebinar Archives, where you can select the desired title “Creative Expression as a Social Emotional Learning (SEL) Tool.”

For a thought-provoking reminder of how being empathetic differs from what we were told and often have also told children, follow this trail to a poster about what to say instead of “Don’t cry!” [https://www.facebook.com/GottmanInstitute/photos/fpp.149200885864/10155455535020865/?type=3&theater](https://www.facebook.com/GottmanInstitute/photos/fpp.149200885864/10155455535020865/?type=3&theater)

Scroll down under Photos until you reach the poster and then read the Comments to hear voices from your past! The poster actually belongs to another organization: [https://www.facebook.com/pg/happinessishereblog/photos/?ref=page_internal](https://www.facebook.com/pg/happinessishereblog/photos/?ref=page_internal)

Find useful research, such as the following report in *ScienceDaily*:

A video game can change the brain, may improve empathy in middle schoolers [https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2018/08/180809175051.htm](https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2018/08/180809175051.htm)

A fantastical scenario involving a space-exploring robot crashing on a distant planet is the premise of a video game developed for middle schoolers by researchers to study whether video games can boost kids' empathy and to understand how learning such skills can change neural connections in the brain.

Reference

Create

Write, edit, and publish children’s books for each of various identified likely responses to separation. Include notes for parents/teachers guided by the content from “Children with Traumatic Separation: Information for Professionals” The National Child Traumatic Stress Network http://www.NCTSN.org

Budget Needs for the Proposed Project

Computers with appropriate programs, printers with printing supplies, back-up storage
Consultants (Fee for Task based or full-time/part-time, with/without health insurance)
Materials---Books and media to evaluate, describe, and link
Travel, lodging, registration fees for conferences/meetings
Webinar expenses
Website expenses
Newsletter expenses
Podcast expenses
Writer/Artist stipends or payment for partial/complete manuscripts
Publication expenses (such as using Amazon’s CreateSpace)

*Before you try to find the TCMA (Teachers of Children Moving Around) website, let me explain why this project won’t be funded…
I was almost taken in by a Facebook Messenger Scam perpetrated by some nefarious individual who created a fake Facebook page for a friend and colleague of many years by using a photo from his real Facebook page and then sending out Facebook Messenger messages to “friends” who, like him, could be funded for as much as $150,000 for medical needs or to start business projects with a grant from the Federal government backed by the World Bank…of course there were “clearance fees” needed to complete the application once one had rendered up the standard personal information gathered by all lenders. Fortunately, I didn’t have any money to give the scammer, and the person I asked about helping me encouraged me to do a little more research…and report the scammer to Facebook!

On another note, I had previously committed to reviewing three books generously provided by their publishers for this year’s editorial. The “reviews” follow:

Rigorous Reading, Texas Edition: 5 Access Points for Comprehending Texts by Douglas Fisher and Nancy Frey with a foreword by Gretchen Bernabei (2018, Sage Publications/Corwin Literacy). I have read about half of the book, and it is very thorough and complete with links to videos illustrating parts. I think it would work well as a study group text for a PLC (professional learning community). My only question is that I kept wondering whether we haven’t almost always been doing this when we weren’t doing test-prep drills. I remember using these skills as an undergraduate in college, and I don’t remember when or where I learned them.
EL Excellence Every Day: The Flip-to Guide for Differentiating Academic Literacy by Tonya Ward Singer with a foreword by Jeff Zwiers (2018, Sage Publications/A joint publication by Corwin and LearningForward—the professional learning association). Corwin generously sent this along with Rigorous Reading, assuming I would find it interesting, too. I haven’t had time to read it, but if I wanted a cookbook for differentiating instruction for my ELLs, this one does look promising.

Patterns of Power: Inviting Young Writers into the Conventions of Language, Grades 1-5 by Jeff Anderson and Whitney LaRocca (2017, Stenhouse Publishers). I have been reading descriptions and praise for this book for a year now but didn’t have the cash to purchase it. (It costs less from Stenhouse and arrives sooner than from Amazon, in case you’ve checked the Amazon price.) Finally, in desperation, I called Stenhouse and explained my desire to review it and they promptly sent me a copy; it arrived today. I wanted to see if I should recommend it to my veteran teacher graduate students who don’t ever plan to teach above 4th grade and who are not really well served by the book I recommend to my graduate students who teach in other countries or to older students in the USA, which is Martin Parrott’s Grammar for English Language Teachers, 2nd edition (2010, Cambridge University Press). I think this new book will be a winner! It is directly useable to show younger writers why writing conventions are useful and helpful. The use of white space and color is encouraging to my elementary/primary mind, and I can actually imagine saying those things to young children. So far, my only objection is that it is very thick and rather heavy to tote around. However, throughout the book, the focus seems to be on showing children samples and asking them to “notice” things and tell how they are different—that is a lot more promising than having them memorize grammar rules first and try to apply them in compositions later.

I hope you will forgive my inviting you along on a uniquely organized journey to seek solutions for children and their teachers in our very, very trying times. May we all live and teach to see happier, more equitable times; please vote; it does matter!

Citation

Dr. Rita Deyoe-Chiullán has taught bilingual students of all ages in the U.S. and Colombia for about fifty years. Currently she teaches graduate online courses for the American College of Education. Her scholarly efforts focus on preparing qualified bilingual and ESL teachers.

Her most interesting professional challenge recently has been authoring new online graduate courses in linguistics and methods and materials for second language learners for the American College of Education.

Dr. Deyoe-Chiullán’s most exciting recent project has been developing and editing this peer-reviewed online journal, Texas English Language Teaching (TexELT), under the sponsorship of the TexTESOL V Board, where she serves as Publications Coordinator.

Dr. Jeyashree Venkatesan has taught English as a second language and college composition in the U.S. and India for several years. She has taught in many local colleges such as Texas Wesleyan, Texas Christian University, Tarrant County College, and Northlake College. Currently, she is a Professor of ESL at Collin College.

Dr. Venkatesan continues to faithfully contribute her excellent copy editing skills as the TexTESOL V Board’s Publications Copy Coordinator. Fortunately, she also agreed to serve as a reviewer for TexELT in addition to providing her copy editing skills at various levels of the publication process.
TexELT Primary Content Reviewer and Content Editor’s Biography

Margaret Redus has been a member of TexTESOL V for many years. Within TexTESOL V, she served as Treasurer and later Membership Officer. She holds a B.A in elementary education with a minor in English and an M.L.A with a specialization in bilingual education. She began her career in education with 6 ½ years teaching primary grades in Dallas ISD.

More recently she taught ESOL credit courses in all skills areas to adults at two local community colleges, with a focus on the skills of writing/grammar and worked part-time as a Writing Tutor at the Richland College Writing Center. Again this year, Margaret has dedicated many hours reading manuscripts, suggesting revisions to make the messages clearer and patiently re-reading after revisions were made to be sure the next draft was more effective.

TexELT Content Reviewer and Content and Format Editor’s Biography

Dr. Alana (Lana) Sloan has been a professional educator for more than 35 years, serving 22 years in K-12 and 13 years in higher education. She is also an award-winning journalist and received a Living Legend Award from the Dallas Press Club in 2013 for her lifetime contributions as a reporter-editor for the Dallas Times Herald and a freelance writer.

Currently, Dr. Sloan is the Assistant Provost for Curriculum Production Services at the American College of Education, an online institution of higher learning serving students nationwide and globally. In 1981, after pursuing an undergraduate degree for 13 years in her spare time, Dr. Sloan completed a Bachelor’s Degree in Elementary Education at the University of North Texas and fulfilled a lifelong dream of becoming a teacher. She served 22 years in the Dallas Independent School District, where she also combined her experience in journalism and education as a curriculum developer.

In 2003, Dr. Sloan founded Wordsmiths Publishing Company and Educational Consultants, Inc. Through Wordsmiths, Dr. Sloan joined American College of Education as a creator of the college’s original curriculum. Inspired by her colleagues at American College of Education, she has since earned a Master’s Degree and a Doctorate in Educational Administration at Texas A&M University-Commerce.
Technology Coordinator’s Biography

Jayson Hammett is the Director of Program Management at Project Education, a data management and consulting company based in Texas. His teaching experience includes positions as a World Languages Instructional Specialist for the Arlington Independent School District, teaching Spanish as a Second Language in Dallas, and teaching writing in Wylie, Lake Worth, and Arlington. As a Response to Intervention Facilitator, he supported teachers and students by establishing a standard for implementation and intervention across schools.

With a Masters of Education in Policy Studies, a Principal Certification, a Bachelor’s degree focused on Linguistics and Foreign Language Acquisition, and an Associate Degree in Interpreting for the Deaf, his passion for languages is apparent in all he does. His recent projects include a data analysis program that allows teachers to monitor students’ development in language proficiency while simultaneously comparing academic proficiency. He is honored to be a part of TexTESOL V, a wonderful organization set on providing the best for language learners of all ages.

Higher Education/Adult Education Representative and Content Reviewer’s Biography

Leslie A. Brinkerhoff, Jr. oversees the Continuing Education Program of ESL for Mountain View College in Dallas, Texas. He teaches credit classes for upper level writing courses for the ESOL program there as well.

Prior to working at Mountain View College, he worked in several countries of Africa, particularly francophone, as a literacy consultant assisting local communities in the development of literacy programs fitted to local cultures, languages in use, and other environmental factors.

He graduated with a Master's degree in Linguistics from the University of Texas in Arlington and a Bachelor's in French from Houghton College in New York State. He is fluent in French and has an intermediate ability to communicate in Spanish.
The TEXTESOL V BOARD 2017-2018

PAST PRESIDENT/LIAISON Dr. Amie Sarker is an Associate Professor of Literacy Education at the University of Dallas.

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ADVOCACY REPRESENTATIVE Liz Martin served as a bilingual teacher, a bilingual specialist, and then became the Bilingual/ESL Program Director. She retired in December 2011 after 33 years in Grand Prairie ISD.

MEMBER AT LARGE REPRESENTATIVE Mark Fischer is a Professor of ESL at Collin College in Plano, Texas.

TECHNOLOGY COORDINATOR Jayson Hammett is the Director of Program Management at Project Education, a data management and consulting company based in Texas. His teaching experience includes a position as a World Languages Instructional Specialist for the Arlington Independent School District, as well as a variety of other second language and ESL instructional roles.

PUBLICATIONS COORDINATOR Dr. Rita Deyoe-Chiullán teaches courses for bilingual and ESL teachers as an Adjunct Professor at the American College of Education.

PUBLICATIONS COPY COORDINATOR Dr. Jeyashree Venkatesan is a Professor of ESL at Collin College in Plano, Texas.
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