



M A R Y L A N D TESOL NEWS

MARYLAND TEACHERS OF ENGLISH TO SPEAKERS OF OTHER LANGUAGES

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Save Teachers of Adults from Paying out their Livelihood for Education Resources

By Ilhye Yoon



(STAPLER) Act. H.R.4541

What works in advocacy? Some would say voting. In theory, if a candidate is taking a certain position on an issue that one agrees with, one often votes for that person. If the candidate or political party takes a position on a variety of issues, one must weigh the pros and cons and choose which has more value in making the decision.

If there is no particular election, there are other ways of influencing the direction a candidate, party or legislature goes. One way that we in MD TESOL attempted to do this was

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What is Literacy?, But Most Importantly, Who Owns Literacy?

By Maria Joie Austria, Ph.D.



A very good friend and a colleague told me yesterday that her principal is “hammering them on literacy.” It was like a *déjà vu*. A couple of people told me exactly the same thing just a couple of hours ago before I had the same conversation with my friend.

With this on-going “hammering of literacy” between administrators and teachers, I wonder, do we all know what literacy means? Or better yet, do we at least have the same understanding of what literacy means? I only probe because when I go around schools, teachers and administrators alike tell me different perspectives apropos what they already know and believe about literacy.

So, what really is literacy? It seems to be one of the most ubiquitous buzzwords

nowadays. Many of you might say, “It’s nothing new. Literacy has been there ever since language and thought process began.” Others may argue and say, “Literacy only happens when reading, writing, and/or both are involved.” So again, what really is literacy? Aren’t you dying to know? I am...

Now, let me challenge you to do a quick and fun activity with me. Let’s do a quick survey. Stop reading this post for a second. Do not cheat. Minimize your browser or close your computer for a couple of minutes. Then, get a pen and paper and write your response to the question: *In one sentence, what is literacy? C’mon... You can do it... just for fun.*

Once you are done writing, go back to your computer and read along. Now, this time, let’s make it even more amusing.



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A Message from Your MDTESOL Newsletter Editors

by Chester Gates and Billie Muñoz, Editors

As of this writing, the 2016 International TESOL Convention and English Language Expo held in Baltimore is already in the rear-view mirror. It seems like a good time to sit back and take stock while reflecting on the importance of the job that ESOL teachers do. In fact “Reflecting Forward” was the theme this year. We say ‘Rightly so!’ This coincides with the 50th anniversary of the organization and MDTESOL was proud to have been selected as the site of this event. While the state of Maryland is not among the five highest by ESOL population in the US, we have all but doubled in growth in recent years. Statistics are only available for up to 2012-13 but we know that growth has been exponential since then. In 2002 there were a mere 27,000 EL’s and in 2012 that number was some 55,000 or 6% of the overall student population. The Maryland Teacher Staffing Report

of 2012-14 identifies ESOL for Pre-Kindergarten to 12 as an area of “Critical Need.” It’s a great time to be an ESOL teacher and the TESOL Convention was the place to network with fellow professionals, see what is out there in terms of the latest technology and publications, hone our skills at workshops and be inspired by the best of our colleagues’ presentations. Hope to see you in Seattle in 2017!

Billie Munoz
Chester Gates

2015



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MD TESOL Candidate's Campaign

By Tanya Camp

Is it surprising that the co-chair of our Advocacy Interest Section would be running for Congress? Not if you know Myles Hoenig. One of the founders of this IS, Myles is running for Congress in the 7th District in Maryland on the Green Party ticket. A long time activist for peace and social justice, Myles feels compelled to take on the establishment on issues that ranges from the environment, foreign policy and of course, education.



Myles has a comfort level with both the street level of activism (he was there for the first night of the Baltimore uprising) to citizen-lobbying in Annapolis for a particular human rights/free speech issue. In 2004 he ran for City Council of Baltimore on the Green ticket. He came in second! (It was a two-person race.)

Education is clearly one of his main platform issues. As a member of the Facebook organization Badass Teachers Association, he has taken on the big guns of Pearson, ALEC, and the Obama administration for their attempt to privatize public education, bust teachers' unions nationwide, install a national curriculum tied to computerized testing, and denigrate teachers.

Although this point will be argued, Common Core is a national curriculum tied to testing. This has been an enormous cash cow for the testing and computer industry. This is something that Myles has said he'd address immediately.

Part of the testing mania includes WIDA. He sees no reason why states should invest so much money into a program that can be replicated fairly easily at the local level. As one who teaches in the largest ESOL population school in the state, he feels his colleagues, and others in other schools, are just as qualified and professional to be able to assess their students' progress and standing. He questions the entire purpose of WIDA and ACCESS.

His focus may be on education, but his students require that one looks at issues such as immigration and foreign trade agreements. Why are so many people fleeing to the US when under this administration, they are more likely to be deported than any other administration? When this government engages and engineers coups and encourages authoritarian regimes, especially in our hemisphere, or enact trade agreements that destroy millions of small farms in Latin America, it is no wonder there is an explosion of immigration, documented and not. These issues will not be ignored if Myles is elected.

Take a look at Myles's web page (www.hoenig2016.com) for more on his positions. Feel free to contact him with any thoughts you may have regarding education policy. He looks forward to the exchange.

"This article is provided for informational purposes only. Maryland TESOL neither endorses nor opposes Mr. Hoenig's candidacy."

Are You Receiving emails from MD TESOL?



Have you been receiving emails from MDTESOL? If not, you may need to add website@mdtesol.org to your list of "safe senders" in your email account. That way you can stay informed about all the exciting Interest Section events, advocacy issues, and conferences that MDTESOL offers throughout the year.



Maryland Seal of Biliteracy Act Established

By Chester Gates, Co-Editor MD TESOL Newsletter

This legislative session saw the passage of a law which establishes a Seal of Biliteracy for graduates of public high schools. The bill was sponsored in the House of Delegates by Del. Ana Sol Gutierrez, from the 18th district, Montgomery County, and in the Senate by Sen. Jim Rosapepe from 21st district, Prince George's and Anne Arundel Counties.

Maryland's Seal of Biliteracy will recognize students who graduate with speaking, reading, and writing proficiencies in English and one or more other languages, including ASL and Native American languages. (Maryland General Assembly: Senate) During testimony before the Ways and Means Committee, Del. Gutierrez stressed that this act does not promote bilingualism; rather, the aim of this act is to increase biliteracy through assessments administered by the schools. (Maryland General Assembly: House of Delegates, Ways and Means Committee)

The act is based on similar legislation enacted by California and other states, and was largely developed at the State Department of Education. The bill had been introduced in the 2015 legislative session, where it failed to pass the House, and was re-introduced this legislative session. (Maryland General Assembly: Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee)

The act instructs the Maryland State Board of Education to "establish criteria and requirements a student must meet to receive a seal of biliteracy" and disseminate these to each Local Education Agency (LEA) in Maryland. (Maryland General Assembly: Senate) Each LEA can then choose to participate in the Biliteracy Program or opt out, but once an LEA has opted in, no individual school can choose to opt out. The only additional expenses to an LEA are minimal and are expected to arise from assessments and the addition of the Seal to the diploma. (Gates)

The Seal of Biliteracy Act comes into effect July 1, 2016 and the State Board of Education must have disseminated criteria and requirements to each LEA by October 1, 2016.



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Let's engage more people. It could be your family members, friends, or colleagues. Now, ask a person beside you or near you right now... if there's none, call somebody and quickly ask the question: *"In just one sentence, what is literacy?"* Tell them they are supposed to answer quickly based on their own prior knowledge and experience. They are not allowed to Google it. Just respond quickly whatever comes to mind, spontaneously. Actually, here's a quick script of what you could say:

*"Hi _____. I have a quick question to ask you. It's just for fun. It's about a word. I want you to tell me what comes to mind when you hear the word literacy?
Or you can ask-- In one sentence, what is literacy? Please respond as quickly as possible."*

Try to record their responses, one person at a time. Do this survey with at least 3 or 4 people. Then, compare their responses. Find out the salient points among their responses. What are the similarities? What are the differences? C'mon... do this quick survey. I promise you. It will be surprisingly entertaining.

Merriam-Webster Dictionary has two definitions of literacy: (1) *"the ability to read and write"* and (2) *"knowledge that relates to a specified subject."*



Try to compare which of these definitions match with what you and the people you know have about literacy. **How did you and your friends define or explain what literacy mean?**

In my next article, I will unravel what research say about literacy and I will also discuss the different types of literacy. In the meantime...

Now, that you have some collected knowledge of what literacy means, let me ask you this pertinent question—**Who owns literacy?** If you were like me, you would be intrigued to ask your family members, friends, and colleagues the follow up question ---*Who owns literacy?*

Now here's a scenario... imagine a newcomer ESOL student who just arrived at your school yesterday. His name is Angelo. He is 12 years old from Guatemala. He has no English. He came to your classroom wearing a blue shirt and blue jeans... with a black and red backpack. He was holding a blue lunch bag. He was standing by the door, anxious to come in. You approached him and welcomed him to your classroom. You decided to let him sit beside Jennifer, a girl from El Salvador. She was born in the U.S., and she speaks both Spanish and English.



Angelo gazed his eyes around the room. He saw everything around him with labels on them--the chairs, the desks, the computer, the board, etc. They were all labeled in English. His eyes gawked at the wall beside him. It spelled, *"Interactive Word Wall."* He looked closely and observed. He saw the wall covered with words from top to bottom... words he couldn't read. Words he had never seen before...

You noticed Angelo was not listening to what you're saying. He was looking at the window outside. He was clearly tuned out. *Angelo?* You called him in a calm, friendly voice. *"Can you stand up and tell us something about yourself?"* Angelo stood there motionless. He looked at you. He looked at his classmates, who were all-eyes on him. He looked at Jennifer, his seatmate. *"Decir algo ahora"*, she said. It means *"say something now"* in English. Angelo did not say a word. A couple of kids laughed. *"Quiet please"*, you intervened. Angelo slowly sat down and opened his book pretending to read. Tears fell down his cheeks. He knew everyone was looking at him... He closed his book and put his head down... He felt embarrassed he couldn't say a word in English. *"Soy listo,"* he said to himself. It means, *"I'm smart"* in English. He knew he's smart but now he started to doubt that. He sat there the rest of the period... Motionless. Now let me ask you—based on the abovementioned scenario,



Improving Writing For ESL students: The Handbook of Writing Research

By Luis Javier Pentón Herrera, M.Ed., M.S., M.Ed.

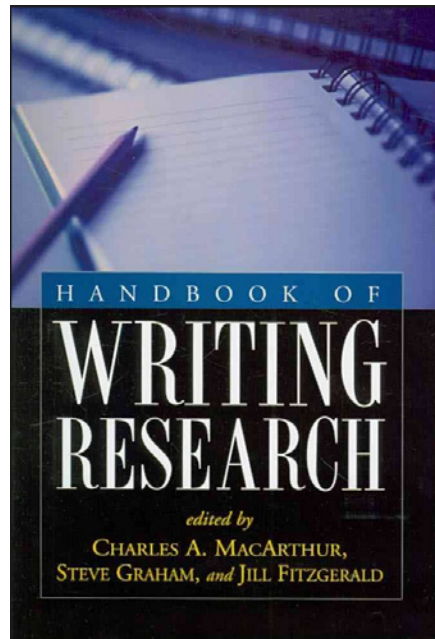
Introduction

The process of writing is a challenge, whether performed in the mother tongue or in a second/foreign language. Writing is one of the four language domains—reading, writing, listening, and speaking—and its proficiency affects language learning (WIDA, 2014). For that reason, it is highly important for English as a Second Language (ESL) to continuously learn about the latest research on writing instruction and writing assessment and to incorporate this learning in their classes. This article introduces *The handbook of writing research*, edited by MacArthur, Graham, & Fitzgerald (2006), as an important tool that ESL educators can use to learn about writing from different perspectives. This handbook is divided into five main sections and it includes a total of 29 chapters about writing research and literature. The purpose of this article is to explain ESL educators how they can use this resource to ultimately affect their teaching practices to improve the writing experience of English Language Learners (ELLs) in the ESL classroom.

Part I: Theories and Models of Writing

The first section of the handbook focuses on theoretical perspectives and model of writing. This section retells the evolution of writing and explains the new directions in writing theory and instruction. This section has a very significant research that explicates how the sociocultural theory has redefined the understanding of writing. The history of the sociocultural theory is primarily intertwined with three important concepts: (1) Vygotsky's research of sociohistorical learning and writing emergence in early childhood, (2) Bakhtin's study in anthropology and sociocultural traditions as a means to promote communication and language, and (3) Dewey's pragmatic description of society as an ever-changing environment that enables children to learn in short time what took ages for humanity to develop (Prior, 2006). These three theories are founded on concepts of anthropology and sociology and have distilled these traditions in a theory and research on cultural practices to modify what is known today as sociocultural theory.

The sociocultural theory places the social context at the heart of the learning and communication process. In this sense, the process of learning and teaching writing cannot be separated from social communication and interaction because texts are tools humans use to express ideas and connect (Prior, 2006). Sociocultural approaches to writing reject the idea of writing as a passive activity and view it as a social action that involves dialogic processes of invention, as we see in articles, newspapers, and books. Early sociocultural studies identify writing and writing literacy as key to revolutionary memory and memorization. Scholars like Luria & Vygotsky agreed that writing is an action that can only be accomplished with good memorization and practice. However, Plato's rhetoric ignores the idea that memorization and writing have anything in common. Regardless of which of these theories individuals agree with, it is important to recognize that culture and society have an instrumental impact in writing and writing literacy. This chapter ends with a promising analogy of writing as a tool that shapes societies and that holds a promise to mediate many of our future activities.



Part II: Writing Development

The second section of the handbook focuses on developmental issues in writing. This section reviews literature on the emergence of literacy in early childhood, connections between brain research and cognitive research on writing, and the interrelationship between oral language, reading, and writing. This section has a very interesting research on motivation and writing that explains interest in writing from a psychological approach. This chapter shares important research data pertaining to self-efficacy and self-regulation as important motivational variables for improving writing skills. As such, motivation and writing are understood as two concepts that cannot be separated from one another because motivation is the driving force behind writing and writing is the outcome of motivation. The authors explore motivation as a vehicle for output, rather than as an independent factor that impacts writing tasks assigned to students in school or in psychological studies.

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According to Hidi & Boscolo (2006) “research has demonstrated that interest is one of the motivational variables that has powerful positive effect on individuals’ cognitive performance and affective experience” (p. 146). Writers, whether professional or students, are expected to generate work on a given prompt based on their creativity and individual knowledge about the topic. This process of creating visual texts from imagination and motivation is affected by many factors, to include the author’s perspectives of interest, self-efficacy, self-regulation, immediate feedback, and the author’s ability of handling the solitary nature of the activity. Hidi & Boscolo (2006) provide extensive support and research that explain the importance these factors have in the motivation of students and how important it is for educators to know and understand how to maximize interest in writing. This research concludes with an invitation to reflection on how can educators motivate learners to be better writers if we understand that the conditions under which the meaningfulness of the writing experience can really be galvanizing for students.

Part III: Instructional Models and Approaches

The third section of the handbook focuses on instructional models and approaches to writing. This section describes theoretical basis for the instructional approach of writing and reviews the evidence on the effects of instructional intervention. The most relevant research discussed in this section is chapter 15: *Response to writing*. In chapter 15, Beach & Friedrich (2006) examine “different strategies for written or oral responses to writing for the purpose of helping students improve their writing” (p. 222). Some of these strategies include attaching writing activities to meaningful social topics, providing effective feedback for students, and teaching students how to use effective feedback to improve their writing. All of the approaches provided by Beach and Friedrich (2006) rely on teacher-student interaction and communication before, during, and after the writing process. In a sense, these approaches are there to guide students and let them know they are not alone in the creative process of writing.

An important recommendation the authors provide is for teachers to implement effective written feedback for students that is consistent, extensive, and specific. Feedback should not be an end to a writing activity, it should be the beginning of the editing process. In addition to talking about effective feedback, this research addresses the importance of students learning how to self-assess and become proficient editors of their work. Students are depicted in this chapter as active individuals who should

use feedback and their teacher as resources to be better writers. In a sense, students are presented as active authors who should have the capability to learn from feedback, prior mistakes, and should motivate themselves to do better. The chapter concludes with a reflection on the importance of training teachers in effective methods for responding to student writing with a vision of encouraging and motivating students to be better writers.

Part IV: Writing and Special Populations

The fourth section of the handbook focuses on writing and special populations. This section includes four chapters that focus on cultural diversity, gender, special education, and bilingual learners as it pertains to writing. Chapter 20, *Teaching writing in culturally diverse classrooms*, gives a historical overview about the evolution of writing as an academic field of study and as a subject taught in middle and high schools in the United States. The study of writing has changed throughout the years to include a more culturally inclusive outlook on the process of teaching and learning writing. In 1987 researches first discussed the incorporation of programs that focused on fluency and proposed a cross-disciplinary approach to teaching writing. Today, “we are still seeking cross-disciplinary approaches to the study of writing that will inform a broad research agenda to assist us in effectively teaching students from culturally diverse backgrounds in critical and creative ways” (Ball, 2006, p. 293). These inequalities in the teaching and learning of writing do not only affect culturally diverse students, it also affects female students.

Current literature on gender and writing agree that writing styles in peer audiences and teacher feedback on students’ classroom writing contribute to the silencing of female voices in writing. Peterson (2006), addresses this issue on chapter 21, *Influence of gender on writing development*, and provides a plethora of research concerning gender duality in the writing classroom. These studies showed that the presence of dominant models of good writing in the classroom constraints marginalized students and female students. The author recognizes these findings and exhorts further research on this topic to “go beyond the examination of dualistic gender characteristics in students’ writing and move toward contextualizing gender construction through examining classroom interactions that influence students’ writing” (Peterson, 2006, p. 320). The primary message from this chapter, and the author, is the importance of incorporating classroom activities that promote mixed-sex collaboration and gender equality in the academic writing classroom.

Chapter 22, *Writing instruction for students with learning disabilities*, addresses different processes educators can use to improve the writing experience of students with Learning Disabilities (LD). These processes are: (1) planning, (2) content generation, (3) revising, and (4) text transcription. An important information on this chapter is the incorporation of strategies educators can use to motivate students with LD. These strategies for promoting motivation align with the studies presented in chapter 23, *Multilingual writing in preschool through 12th grade: The last 15 years*. Chapter 23 is the last chapter of this section and includes relevant research about inclusion and diversity in the writing classroom. This last chapter ends with a reflection on the responsibility all educators and researchers have of incorporating classroom practices that promote multiculturalism in this globalized society with the vision of promoting equality and advancement for all students.

Part V: Methodology and Analytics Tools

The final section of the handbook includes six chapters that focus on research methodologies and analytic tools in writing. This section reviews existing literature on qualitative and quantitative research in writing and it incorporates innovative evaluation tools used in writing to provide efficient writing assessments. Chapters 24, *Qualitative research on writing*, and chapter 26, *Text structure as a window on the cognition of writing: How text analysis provides insights in writing products and writing processes*, suggest several possibilities for using qualitative research methodologies for the study of writing. The vignette points provided in these chapters support that the best way to get an accurate insight in the individuals' cognition process of writing is by analyzing their writing and individual experiences before, during, and after the writing process.

A somewhat paradoxical approach to writing research is considered on chapter 25, *Statistical analysis for field experiments and longitudinal data in writing research*. This chapter discusses the strengths of randomization and experiments in writing research, and discusses the implications of statistics in understanding writing research. The influence of standardized tests and its findings are addressed in chapter 25 and the authors suggest resources to help scholars design future quantitative research in writing. The chapter concludes with a reflection on the importance of quantitative research methods in writing research, as it pertains to examining the consistency of data with models derived from competing theoretical perspectives.

The last three chapters: chapter 27, *Applications of computers in assessment and analysis of writing*; chapter 28, *Writing assessment: A techno-history*; and chapter

29, *What does reading have to tell us about writing? Preliminary questions and methodological challenges in examining the neurobiological foundations of writing and writing disabilities*, expound information about innovative assessments in writing. Chapter 27 delves into the possibility of using computers to grade English written assignments. This concept was initially presented almost 50 years by educator Ellis Page (Shermis, Burstein & Leacock, 2006) with the vision of alleviating the burden of grading written assignments. Chapter 28 has a similar research focus and examines some historical characteristics of writing assessments through a technological lens. Both chapters, chapter 27 and chapter 28, agree that discussions about technology-driven assessments always conclude addressing reliability versus validity and the impact using computers may have in the long run for students. Lastly, chapter 29 considers the concept of neuroimaging, a technique that allows individuals to “identify sets of interrelated brain regions that are engaged (activated) when the participant performs a specific cognitive task” (Pugh, Frost, Sandak, Gillis, Moore, Jenner, & Mencl, 2006, p. 433). Even though this idea of using neuroimaging in reading and writing is a new concept, findings in this chapter show that there may be real utility for the future.

Conclusion

Writing is the primary basis upon which our students' work will be judged intellectually in our schools and in college. It is a medium in which ESL students can express who they are as individuals and a vehicle for communicating non-verbally. Our job as ESL educators, is to learn, as much as possible, how we can effect academic change in our ELLs' performance through instruction, assessment, and hands-on practice. The reality is that ELLs' academic literacy is primarily evaluated in their abilities to read and write in K-12 and higher education. This article presented *The handbook of writing research* as an excellent resource that ESL educators can use to review their knowledge about current literature on writing assessment and instruction with the vision of ultimately benefiting the learning experience of ESL students as present and future writers.

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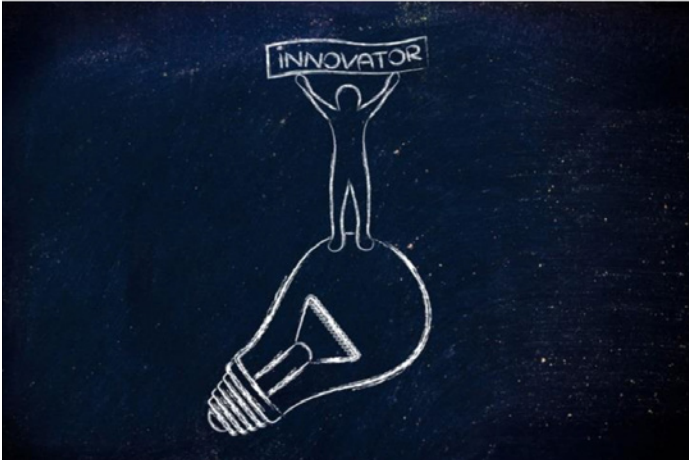
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Urgent: This Innovation Myth Needs To End...

By Meris Stansbury, Editor



Urgent: This Innovation Myth Needs To End...

First-ever report reveals the most prolific innovators in the U.S. are not young entrepreneurial college dropouts; rather, highly educated immigrants with STEM degrees.

It's the myth that just won't go away and is, in part, responsible for the current belief amongst Millennials and Gen Z'ers that higher education isn't relevant: today's most successful and brilliant innovators are young entrepreneurs that drop out of college (e.g. Mark Zuckerberg, Jan Koum ^[1], Sean Parker ^[2]).

And though these drop-out entrepreneurs may have a pop culture edge thanks to the popularity of WhatsApp and Facebook amongst younger users, a new report from the Information Technology & Innovation Foundation (ITIF) reveals that the innovators that are not only the most prolific, but spur the most tech progress for the U.S., are, in fact, immigrants with Masters degrees or higher in STEM fields.

The report [3], written by Adams Nager, economic policy analyst at ITIF; David Hart, professor and director of the Center for Science and Technology Policy at the School of Policy, Government, and International Affairs at George Mason University; Stephen Ezell, vice president of global innovation policy at ITIF; and Robert Atkinson, founder and president of ITIF; defines an innovator as someone that “drives technological progress by creating innovative new products and services that raise incomes and improve quality of life for everyone.”

These innovators include people who have won national awards for their inventions; filed for international, triadic patents for their innovative ideas in three technology areas (information technology, life sciences, and materials sciences); and filed triadic patents for large advanced-technology companies.

In total, over 6,000 innovators were contacted for the report, and over 900 provided viable responses about who they are in terms of race, ethnicity, gender, age, citizenship and education.

Not Who We May Think

According to the data collected in what ITIF calls the first-of-its-kind report, the demographics of U.S. innovation are not only different from the demographics of the U.S. as a whole, “but also from the demographics of college-educated Americans—even those with Ph.Ds. in science or engineering.”

The report reveals that immigrants comprise a large component of U.S. innovation:

- More than one-third (35.5 percent) of U.S. innovators were born outside the U.S., even though this population makes up just 13.5 percent of all U.S. residents.
- Another 10 percent of innovators were born in the U.S. but have at least one parent born abroad.
- More than 17 percent of innovators are not U.S. citizens, yet they are making contributions on behalf of the U.S.
- Immigrants born in Europe or Asia are more than five times as likely as the average native-born U.S. citizen to have created an innovation in America.
- Immigrant innovators also are better educated on average than native-born innovators, with over two-thirds (67 percent) holding doctorates in STEM subjects.

The report also found that innovators in the U.S. are experienced and highly educated:

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- Four-fifths (80 percent) of innovators possess at least one advanced degree, and 55 percent have attained a Ph.D. in a STEM subject.
- Half of innovators majored in some form of engineering as an undergraduate, and more than 90 percent majored in a STEM subject as an undergraduate.
- STEM graduates from private undergraduate colleges and universities are more likely to become innovators. However, innovators are more likely to hold graduate degrees from public universities than private ones.
- While the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) educated more innovators than any other single graduate university, large public universities, including the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, the University of California at Berkeley, and the University of Texas at Austin followed as the top educators of innovators.

The Myths and the Unfortunate Truths

“Contrary to the popular narratives about young, technology-savvy entrepreneurs dropping out of college to found companies in Silicon Valley, the median age for innovators is 47,” emphasizes the report. And as previously noted, also highly educated.

Another myth debunked was that large firms are “copiers and small firms the innovators.” The report found that approximately 60 percent of private-sector innovations originate from businesses with more than 500 employees, with 16 percent originating from firms with fewer than 25 employees.

Also, more than half of companies with fewer than 25 employees received assistance from public sources, including grants from the departments of Defense and Energy and the National Institutes of Health, as well as awards from the Small Business Innovation Research program.

However, the report did find that some stereotypes are, dismayingly, accurate:

- Women represent only 12 percent of U.S. innovators, which constitutes a smaller percentage than the female share of undergraduate degree recipients in STEM

fields, STEM Ph.D. students, and working scientists and engineers.

- The share of women was 5 percent larger among foreign-born innovators than among U.S.-born innovators.
- S.-born minorities (including Asians, African Americans, Hispanics, Native Americans, and other ethnicities) make up just 8 percent of U.S.-born innovators. These groups constitute 32 percent of the total U.S.-born population.
- Despite comprising 13 percent of the native-born population of the United States, African Americans comprise just half a percent of U.S.-born innovators.
- Commenting on the data that women and U.S.-born minorities are significantly underrepresented, Nager stated “...the extent of that gap is so stark that it caught us by surprise.”

“When you consider what this portrait of American innovation looks like today, there are clear opportunities for policymakers to both broaden and deepen the national pool of STEM talent,” said Atkinson. “It is very clear that we need to do a much better job enabling women and minorities to earn STEM degrees. We also need to make it easier for immigrants with STEM degrees to work and contribute their expertise to America’s innovation ecosystem.”

For much more detailed information on the report, including where innovation occurs most often geographically in the U.S., policy implications related to STEM talents in the U.S., and data-based infographics, read “<https://itif.org/publications/2016/02/24/demographics-innovation-united-states>”^[3].

URL to article: <http://www.ecampusnews.com/research/innovation-innovator-myth-350/>

URLs in this post:

- [1] Jan Koum: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jan_Koum
- [2] Sean Parker: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sean_Parker
- [3] The report: <https://itif.org/publications/2016/02/24/demographics-innovation-united-states>



What Works for Common Core: Increasing English Language Learners' (ELLs) higherlevel thinking with webbased technology

By Traci Eckhaus, Elementary Interest Co-Chair

Google Classroom, Google Docs, and other web-based applications, such as Zaption and Newsela, are transforming the way I teach. Not only have these technologies increased my students' engagement and higherlevel thinking, they also simplify and personalize my instruction and assessment.

WEBBASED TECHNOLOGIES THAT WORK

Google Apps for Education: Classroom and Docs

<https://www.google.com/edu/>

Google Classroom is a webbased platform that allows educators to post announcements, questions, and assignments to individual classes. Students can interact with each other, turn in assignments digitally and receive feedback from their teachers online.

Google Docs is similar to a word processing software; however, its online nature allows students to collaborate and view shared documents. Additionally, when creating an assignment on Google Classroom, instructors can, with one click, duplicate the original for each student. In this way, students can independently complete a "worksheet" digitally and turn in the assignment for immediate, personalized feedback.

Zaption

www.zaption.com

Zaption is a webbased, video application. Educators create lessons, and students answer questions as they watch a video or slideshow. Students receive immediate feedback and educators can review student responses.

In addition, Zaption allows teachers to share their video lesson directly with Google Classroom. The seamless interaction of these two webbased applications permits educators to easily create engaging, online assignments.

Newsela

<https://newsela.com>

Newsela is an excellent source for student-friendly news articles. They are categorized by subject area and grade level. Furthermore, to differentiate instruction, each article is available at several lexile scores, allowing students at various English proficiencies and reading levels to access



the same content information. Recently, Newsela added an "annotation feature," in which instructors highlight portions of the text and add a question or explanation in the margin.

Like Zaption, Newsela also seamlessly links with Google Classroom. Students are able to link directly to the article with the instructor's annotations visible.

SAMPLE LESSON: USING WEBBASED TECHNOLOGY TO TEACH PARAPHRASING

The following lesson on the 2016 Election demonstrates how webbased technologies can enhance our teaching practice and support ELLs' ability to meet Common Core standards.

Audience:

- Fifth Grade ELLs
- English Proficiency: Emerging, Developing and Expanding

Contentarea:

- Social Studies/US Presidential Elections

Common Core Standard:

- ELALiteracy W.5.8 "...Summarize or paraphrase information in notes and finished work..."

continued on page 12

Content Objective:

- Students will identify key details in a news article and paraphrase important information for a peer audience.

Language Objective:

- Students will identify and apply synonyms of keywords to paraphrase important information for a peer audience.

Warmup:

- Build and assess students' background knowledge of US elections with a video lesson from Zaption.
 - View "History of Voting" at <http://zapt.io/t7hkz4p3>

Guided Practice:

- To select an article to read, students determine an important issue for choosing our next president.
 - In my lesson, we read an article about standardized testing on Newsela. Students at the Developing and Expanding level read at lexile 870, while students at the Emerging level read at lexile 560.
- After reading the article together, students use Google Docs to practice paraphrasing as a whole group. Prior to the lesson, copy and paste portions of the article into a 3column table in Google Docs. One column is the copy, the next is for listing key words, and the third is for paraphrasing.
- Following a discussion about how to identify key details, demonstrate the "highlighting" feature in Google Docs to highlight the keywords in the original text. Next, prompt students to brainstorm synonyms for these words and restate key phrases. Finally, model how to use the synonyms and new statements to paraphrase the original paragraph. Students are able to view this process in realtime on their own devices in Google Docs.

Independent Task:

- Students now practice paraphrasing in their own google document. They use the highlighting feature to select keywords and phrases and type their paraphrasing directly into the document.
- Students turn in their work via Google Classroom. Provide comments online through Google Classroom, and students can revise their work accordingly.

Closing:

- Students post their independent work on the Google Classroom stream for peers to review and post comments. Students evaluate each other's paraphrasing in comparison to the original text.

INSTRUCTOR'S REFLECTION

Students enjoy working with technology, and the upcoming election engaged students in a lively discussion. Because students had chosen the issue of "testing" as an important topic, they were interested in reading the selected article. Newsela's variety of lexile scores for the same article helped differentiate the lesson for students at the Expanding, Developing and Emerging levels. Students remained focused on the lesson's objectives, and I was able to assess students' work via Google Classroom. Students appreciated the quick, online evaluation and revised their work accordingly.

Thus, as the lesson demonstrates, technology tools, such as Zaption, Newsela, Google Classroom and Google Docs, allow teachers to differentiate instruction and give immediate feedback to students. By engaging ELLs with technology and granting them opportunities to practice and apply higherlevel thinking, we empower our students to achieve the state standards set forth by Common Core. Furthermore, our ELLs develop the crucial skills necessary to compete in the "real world." And isn't that what it's all about?

who owns literacy? Who's in charge of literacy? The teacher...? The students...? The school? Angelo...? Who?

Michael Rosen (2012), a writer/blogger when describing a student wrote "so you don't own literacy but the school appears to not only own it, but to a certain extent to be in charge of it. Authority figures change the signs; they ask children to write more of it. There are special places—controlled by the authority figures—where their writing is put. Books come into the school, apparently also controlled by the authority figures."



So then the questions become, *what is our charge as educators? Should we own literacy, or should we give the students the ownership of literacy? Should we both own it? If we agree with the latter, then how do we do that? How do we let our students take control of their learning?*

I urge you to reflect on these abovementioned queries and reflect on them. Have a conversation with a colleague and discuss your thoughts.

If you wish to read further and dig deeper into the types of literacies, I invite you to read my other article- "Multiple Literacies and Multiple Intelligences: Are We Doing Enough of These in Our Classrooms?" Here's the link: http://joieaustria.blogspot.com/2016/01/what-is-literacy-but-most-importantly_31.html

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by using the direct approach of calling representatives to weigh in on a piece of legislation.

Background:

MD TESOL is not an advocacy organization, but it is permitted to do some advocacy work. That we do not hire a lobbyist is obvious, being a voluntary organization. There are times in MD TESOL's history that we have taken a position on an issue, such as opposing English-Only legislation. There is a process that must be followed when MD TESOL does decide to take a formal position on an issue. It involves board discussion of the issue, sending it out to the membership, and revisiting it at a board meeting for further discussion and voting. As you can see, the process is long and cumbersome but guarantees as full involvement as possible.

TESOL International Association, however, has on staff John Segota as Director for Public Policy. He is often on the Hill talking with staffers and members of Congress about issues related to our field, whether they be for K-12, adult, immigration/refugee, etc. Over the years, the TESOL board has adopted resolutions and position papers, which can be seen at <http://www.tesol.org/advance-the-field/position-statements>.

At present, MD TESOL and TESOL act independently regarding legislation and positions. We're not in opposition, but we have different processes to follow. In time, we might as a board and membership organization accept their resolutions and papers as our own, but a bi-law process must be followed. Therefore, if Mr. Segota says, "Hey, we'd like MD TESOL to get involved with this item," we would have to tread carefully. What we can do, and did at the TESOL Convention in Baltimore, is to inform our members about important issues and ask them to act according to their desires.

One piece of legislation that is up for consideration is H.R.4541 - STAPLER Act of 2016 (Save Teachers of Adults from Paying out of Their Livelihood for Education Resources Act). It calls for the amending of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow individuals providing adult education the same above-the-line deduction as is allowed for expenses of elementary and secondary school teachers.

At the MD TESOL booth, we provided lists of telephone numbers of Maryland congress members, as well phone numbers for congress members to TESOL members from other states who came by the booth. TESOL is looking for

co-sponsors of this bill. We were careful to not say "We want you to call your congress person and ask him/her to co-sponsor this bill," but rather, we mentioned that that it's TESOL's position to support the bill and asked those willing to tell their representatives what they felt about it. Not that everyone who came by made the call, but we certainly had no objections.

Did it work? It is way too early to say and not a large groundswell of people came to our booth looking to do some advocacy that day. However, the process worked. MD TESOL played a role in an advocacy position. Time will tell if more co-sponsors sign up but it's not too late to call YOUR congress member to say that TESOL supports the STAPLER Act and tell them what you think.



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