

FALL ISSUE

# MDTESOL

2018 - 2019

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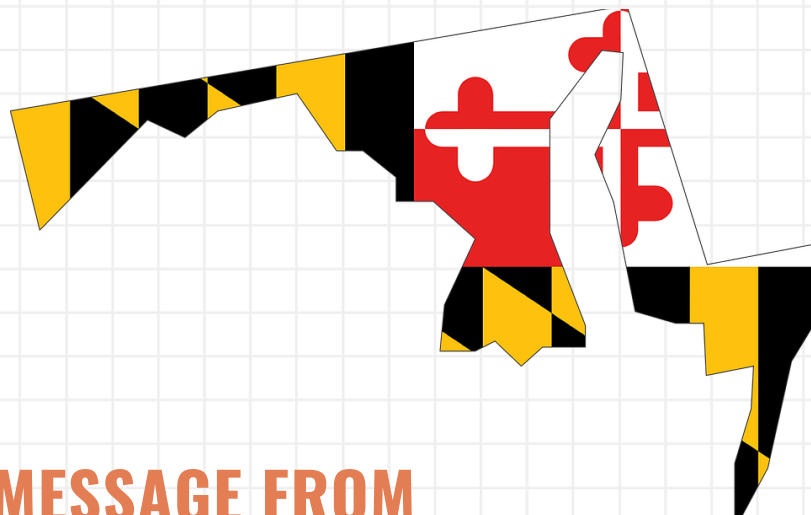
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## MESSAGE FROM THE EDITORS

BY BILLIE MUÑOZ & ERICA RIVERA

It was the best of times, it was the worst of times. Wait a minute. Someone already used that line. Charles Dickens writing about the French Revolution. And yet the words apply equally today. You can almost line up your examples and study them mathematically.

Worst - the separating of families at the Mexican US Border. Best - American citizens, including many teachers, reaching out to offer food, comfort and hope to those children wrenched away from their parents and siblings. Worst - the misogyny that gave way to the Me Too Movement. Best - that there is a Me Too Movement. Worst - the tragic shootings of unarmed young men that gave rise to the Black Lives Matter Movement. Best - (you guessed it) that there is a Black Lives Matter Movement. Worst - the shootings at so many, too many, of our schools and colleges. Best - that Parkland Florida led the way, not by being the first to yell "enough" but to yell it the loudest and to hold the line the longest. ESOL teachers, we have a place at the table for at least three of these Worst/Best scenarios. Pick your battle and be prepared to be a voice for those whose own voices are not being heard. Now, more than ever, our profession is also our calling.



*Sign spotted in  
Congress, June 2018*



# **WELCOME TO AN EXCITING 2018-2019 SCHOOL YEAR!**

**BY LUIS JAVIER PENTON HERRERA**

Dear Maryland TESOL Members and Friends,

I hope you all had a wonderful and restful summer and that you are starting an auspicious school year. Starting a new school year provides wonderful opportunities to reflect on our past teaching practices and think about new routines that we can implement to improve our students' learning.

As I write this message, I reflect back to the many noteworthy projects and initiatives Maryland TESOL has led and I am extremely proud to share information about our upcoming conference. On November 10th, 2018 we will celebrate our 38th Annual Fall Conference. Our conference chair and 1st Vice President, Ashley Jenoff, has appropriately chosen "Ways to advocate for ELLs through education and our community" as our theme. For this, we have secured timely and informed presentations; our Keynote Speaker is Attorney Roger C. Rosenthal, Executive Director of the Migrant Legal Action Program who will be joined by three amazing invited speakers: (1) Dr. Deborah J. Short from TESOL International Association, (2) Dr. Christa de Kleine from Notre Dame of Maryland University, and Mr. Efraín Soto, Puerto Rico TESOL's Vice President.

I look forward to seeing all of you in our upcoming annual conference as we learn and equip ourselves with very important knowledge on how to best advocate in our classrooms, schools, and communities for our English learners.

Best wishes,

Luis Javier Pentón Herrera, Ph.D.  
President, Maryland TESOL  
president@mdtesol.org

# CULTURE'S ENHANCEMENT OF INSTRUCTION AND LEARNING

BY IVETTE CRUZ &  
JAMIE HARRIS,  
ADULT EDUCATION IS



*Photo included in the template*

Individuals are unique. They differ to include experiences and perspectives. I have often said that as an English language instructor, I have had the honor of seeing world peace firsthand. In my classrooms over the years, students from different ethnicities, races, identities and economic classes – sometimes with opposing worldviews – collaborate and laugh together. For those outside of this field who have never had this experience, the idea is far-fetched and almost impossible, but instructors of English language learners (ELLs) have the privilege of fostering that kind of environment.

This experience highlights the importance of culture in language learning. While both can occur separately from each other, language instruction can be more impactful when presented with a cultural connection. Ayuni (2013) stated, “Language learning cannot be separated from its culture. Language is a clear manifestation of culture. A word can have both cognitive meaning and cultural meaning. Cultural meaning refers to words and expressions which represent cultural perception, values and behavior” (p. 129).

In this article, we will explore the need for explicit instruction of culture in English language instruction, cultural responsiveness as a responsibility of the instructor, and cultural humility to foster classroom community. All these areas could affect student success.

## Implicit Instruction of Cultural Expectations

Culture often has been defined by people’s food preferences, language, entertainment, and religion.

According to cultural psychologists, “macro-level thinking patterns such as attitude, values and beliefs” (Imai, Kanero, & Masuda, 2016, p. 72) should also be an integral part of its definition. This can also mean that individuals with particular attitudes and beliefs will develop certain expectations of situations and interactions. Gumperez believed that interpretation of interactions differs with individuals from different cultures. He continued by stating “people from different cultures may have different inherent understandings of how particular speech events progress” (Deckert & Vickers, 2011, p. 106).

Intercultural communication instruction is vital. Assumptions cannot be made regarding students’ perception of how a situation should progress or interpretation of interactions in American culture and/or in the classroom with other students from other countries.

While interviews occur in most countries, an interviewer in the United States can drastically differ not only in his or her choice of syntax but also in his or her expectations of beliefs, dress, conversation order, non-verbal communication, and attitudes. Similarly, authority and power exist in every culture, but hierarchies and interactions are not the same across all cultures.

In these two examples, it is evident that ELLs need support and explicit instruction regarding the culture in which they strive to learn English. According to Risager (2005), "All social life carries meaning, and all exchanges and negotiations of meaning are embedded in more or less shifting social structures and relations of power" (p. 188). Consequently, learning the English language itself is not enough to successfully empower them for their current and future interactions.

### Cultural Responsiveness

As educators, we interact with students from all over the globe. It is truly our responsibility to equip our students with as many tools as we can. We can also increase our cultural responsiveness by increasing the understanding of our students' perspectives, interactions, and learning styles. One way to address cultural responsiveness is to implement instructional practices in the classroom that reflect models of social justice. Within a social justice model, the focus is on ensuring an equitable distribution and access to educational resources, cultural justice and recognition within the school community, and full participation of the marginalized group in decisions that are impacting their lives (DiMatthews and Izquierdo, 2016). It is important that educational leaders, as social justice leaders, foster the active participation and inclusion of all marginalized groups in school by providing the means or tools necessary for their inclusion.

Its critics argue that this model falls short by not providing a more profound personal analysis from the part of the teacher, who has a position of power in the classroom. Critics of the cultural competence model advocate for a more profound approach that encourages the teacher to self-reflect on privilege, prejudice, and cultural misconceptions. Others propose such a model would be cultural humility; one that was developed in the medical field but it's now expanding into education. The American Psychological Association (APA) (2013) uses a definition by Hook, et al (2013) to describe cultural humility as the "ability to maintain an interpersonal stance that is other-oriented (or open to the other) in relation to aspects of cultural identity that are most important to the person."

Lund and Lee (2015) studied pre-service teachers practicing in a social justice-based program where cultural humility was fostered and researched. The participants were teachers that identified themselves as white and their native language as English. They were placed in a school with a very diverse population, mostly immigrants and English language learners.

The researchers found the following emergent topics when analyzing data:

1. Justice-based service learning can:
  - a. Enhance the ability of pre-service teachers to self-reflect critically and appreciate the strengths of immigrant students and their families.
  - b. Foster cultural humility and self-awareness in teachers through the creation of positive relationships with students from diverse backgrounds

### Cultural Humility in the Context of Education

When discussing ELLs and best practices in their instruction, it is inevitable to mention the word culture. Culture will arise in the dialogue as educators continue to look for alternatives to best fit the needs of ELLs. In our desire to move away from practices of assimilation and English as a language of privilege, we want to provide our students with learning experiences that are not subtractive and where diversity is celebrated and seen as an enrichment of their curriculum. Culture becomes a part of that celebration in which inclusion is how our ELLs are able to participate fairly in the dynamics of a democratic classroom where they have a voice and belong. Despite its fame and constant mention in the field of education, inclusion is no easy task. Turning the classroom into an inclusive and culturally responsive environment takes time, knowledge, training and cultural humility. Yes, humility, not competence.

Cultural competence has been widely discussed in different professional sectors and it will be now addressed from the context of ELLs. According to Danso (2018), it originated in the field of social work and is widely accepted as an important component of many codes of ethics in different fields. Cross (1989) defined cultural competence a while ago as "a set of congruent behaviors, attitudes, and policies, that come together in a system, agency or other professionals to work effectively in cross-cultural situations". Danso (2018) explains that, although commonly accepted, cultural competence is criticized for emphasizing only on differences, knowledge, and awareness.

2. Teachers that engaged themselves in activities with their students in community settings contributed with the creation of a positive relationship with students and their families.

When comparing cultural competency and cultural humility models, Lund and Lee (2015) also consider cultural humility a better option as it involves self-reflection. In this process of introspection, it is expected that the teacher recognizes her/his own prejudices by

self-critiquing and acknowledging privilege and biases while empathizing with the students and families in their learning community. Engaging in this process will be difficult for teachers but absolutely necessary in order to understand the students in their classroom and their place in the society we live in from the point of view of privilege.

An example of how cultural humility is critical for ESL classrooms can be seen in Lee's research. Lee (2015) conducted a case study in Canada in which the concepts of culture and race were explored in an ESL classroom through dialogue techniques. The researcher found out that the association of English with power and race was inevitable, even though the participants engaged in meaningful dialogues about culture and race in their classrooms.

## Conclusion

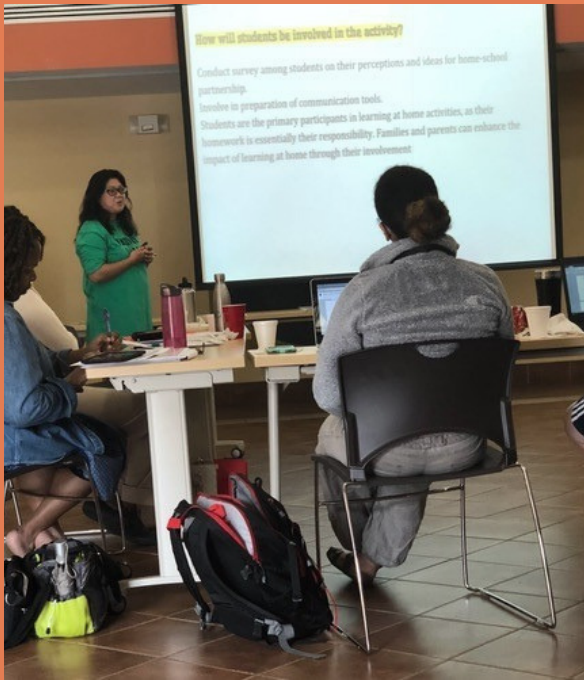
Educators have many tools to facilitate the success of their students. Those who work with English language learners should be prepared to include cultural context in instruction along with cultural responsiveness and humility. In this article, we have discussed the need for these tools to encourage student success that can result in empowered students who thrive in a classroom environment that fosters inclusion, empathy and social justice.

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# A WEEK OF SUMMER IN TPC INSTITUTE AND AN INTERVIEW WITH MARITZA SOLANO FROM CASA DE MARYLAND

BY SELMA BASMACI,  
ADVOCACY IS



*Photo provided by the author*

The need for immigrant parent engagement in schools is growing exponentially, and educators and school personnel are seeking out more resources to attract the non-English speaking parents. In August 2018, Casa de Maryland joined its forces with Maryland and D.C. Area Public Schools and offered the TPC (Teacher Parent Connection) Institute to serve the purpose.

The TPC Institute was held at Casa De Maryland's charming mansion-like office in Hyattsville from July 30 to August 3. The days went by at the speed of light since we were indulged in many resources and a riveting art exhibit which is one of a kind experience that puts exhibit goers in the shoes of immigrants crossing the border against the odds. Worldwide famous academy award winner director, Alejandro G. Innaritu's *Arena y Carne*, a virtual technology integrated show topples one's state of mind. The art exhibit is currently being shown at the theatre building on 1611 Benning Street NE, Washington D.C. 20002. Reserve your seats online! The tickets are free of charge.

The exhibit was on the second day of the institute; and on day four, I decided to conduct an interview with Maritza Solano, Director of Education, Casa de Maryland to spread the news of such a great professional development opportunity to all educators in Maryland.

Selma Basmaci: What is your role at Casa de Maryland?

Maritza Solano: I am the Director of Education at Casa de Maryland. I have been at this role for the last two years. I came to Casa as the community schools manager. As part of a team to design two International high schools that opened in Prince George's County in 2015.

As Director of Education of Casa, I oversee all of our K through 12 programming along with our Teacher Parent Connections Institute, Educational Advocacy Agenda, and Adult ESOL Program.

Selma Basmaci: When did CASA de Maryland offer the TPC institute, and why do you offer TPC Institute offer it every summer?

Maritza Solano: This is the fifth summer we are offering the TPC Institute. We started this in 2014 and we decided to offer it as part of our multi-generational program called Learning Together where we were trying to engage and empower parents to feel like they are the first advocates for their kids when it comes to their education and makes them feel more comfortable going to their kid's schools. We knew that only way we could achieve that was if we had participation from teachers that in the process, and then we wanted to be able to offer teachers the resources and the strategies to know how to best engage parents, as well.

Selma Basmaci: What do you expect the participants to accomplish at the end of the TPC Institute?

Maritza Solano: We want them to be able to take away skills and resources to how to best engage their parent communities and communities in general: What are the skills that your parents to bring into your classroom? What can they offer to enrich not just the experience of their own students but also the overall school community? and also one of the requirements of the Institute for the participants is to develop some sort of project where they are taking those resources, skills, strategies and implement them during the school year.

Selma Basmaci: What are the benefits or perks of the TPC Institute for participants?

Maritza Solano: Aside from the great food, I think one of the perks is just getting to know what additional resources are out there for in particular how to engage immigrant first generation parents. I think the additional perk is you are in a community of educators coming together to question some of the same things that you may be experiencing at your individual schools. You may have a network of resources grows by the numbers of participants in the institute.

Selma Basmaci: Do you also offer certificates or stipends to the participants?

Maritza Solano: We offer a small stipend at the end of the week-long Institute, we offer \$125 stipend and also we also offer another \$125 stipend at the end of the year since we also have four follow-up sessions where we talk about some of the same topics we may have covered in The Institute as refreshers as well as 3 credits through the Maryland State Department of Education.

Selma Basmaci: What do you recommend to the educators who are seeking help with parent engagement?

Maritza Solano: I recommend that they participate in the coming year because it is an annual program but I also recommend them to seek out resources that they may figure out how to assess their community and know what the challenges are and what the resources to meet those challenges right whether is community another community-based organization that may not be Casa but other things that may be able to support better engagement and their schools, other teachers who may have participated in the Institute as well. I'll figure out how what they learned at The Institute and be able to use.

Selma Basmaci: Are there any upcoming CASA events for educators any soon?

Maritza Solano: The only additional event in September we will have our first follow-up TPC session or the year-long TPC session. The topic for that one would just be welcoming folks back to school and giving them additional techniques on how to communicate better with parents.

Selma Basmaci: Thank you for your time and the interview!

# CAREER PATHS IN TESOL: THE BEST JOBS IN THE WORLD!

## BY TEACHER EDUCATION & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IS

A background in TESOL can be a Passport to the World! However, sometimes teachers with a background in TESOL do not envision the opportunities beyond teaching ESL in the United States. While a full 35+ year career as an ESL teacher in the US is a wonderful career path, the purpose of this article is to spark an exploration of the enormous career potential that comes with a degree and background in TESOL.

By exploring the multiple ways that TESOL experiences can be repurposed, we are less likely to limit our professional possibilities; more likely to increase our ability to weather economic storms and reductions in teaching force; and we are most definitely inspired to dream, to search and to strive for some of the best jobs in the world. Sometimes MA-TESOL programs do not provide graduates with adequate information about the rich career paths open to them. So, it is important that we share our professional career journey ideas.

Career paths for TESOL professionals, both in the United States and abroad, include:

- Teaching
- Administration
- Business Development, Global Development
- Marketing and Outreach
- Publishing
- Local, State, and US Federal Government
- International Governments
- Development Agencies

ESL teaching careers include working with children in the US. ESL/EFL teaching careers can also include teaching in US systems abroad, such as, Binational schools, Department of Defense Schools, International Schools, and/or any elementary or secondary program abroad that follows the US curriculum and requires the US-established standards and typical state credentials of teacher preparation for employment.

There is also a range of career possibilities for those more interested in adult and higher education ESL/EFL careers. Possible career trajectories include: adult ESL teacher in US community colleges; adult ESL teacher in a four-year college's Intensive English Language Programs (IELPs);

administrator of community college ESL programs, IELPs or MA programs; adult ESL teacher in private institutions; manager or administrator in private agencies and non-profits focused on serving immigrant populations. Often, one can become a university professor of ESL/EFL in international universities, with just the MA degree (in US universities, the Ph.D. is usually required.). There are also opportunities as an educational specialist for ministries of education abroad and serving as an EFL teacher-trainer abroad.

Business and/or Global Development offers the TESOL professional a multitude of career pathways. A background in TESOL prepares teachers, managers, administrators, business leaders, and entrepreneurs for workplace environments that are multilingual, multiliterate and multicultural, both in the US and abroad. TESOL professionals might be well-suited to become workforce leaders, helping organizations as they respond to the needs for English pedagogy and curriculum, employee language proficiency, and other language and cultural needs that exist in today's business and educational environments, in the US and abroad. Further, global development environments in need of professionals with TESOL-related knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) include US Department of State, USAID, Peace Corps, USAID, Department of Defense, other federal agencies, or private development business contexts. Finally, there is room for entrepreneurs who may be inclined to opening their own language school or teacher training institutes in the US and abroad.

Ready to begin the next chapter in your career story? Check out these resources:

- Chronicle of Higher Ed: [https://chroniclevitae.com/job\\_search/new](https://chroniclevitae.com/job_search/new)
- USA Jobs: <https://www.usajobs.gov/>
- TESOL Career Center: <https://careers.tesol.org/jobs>

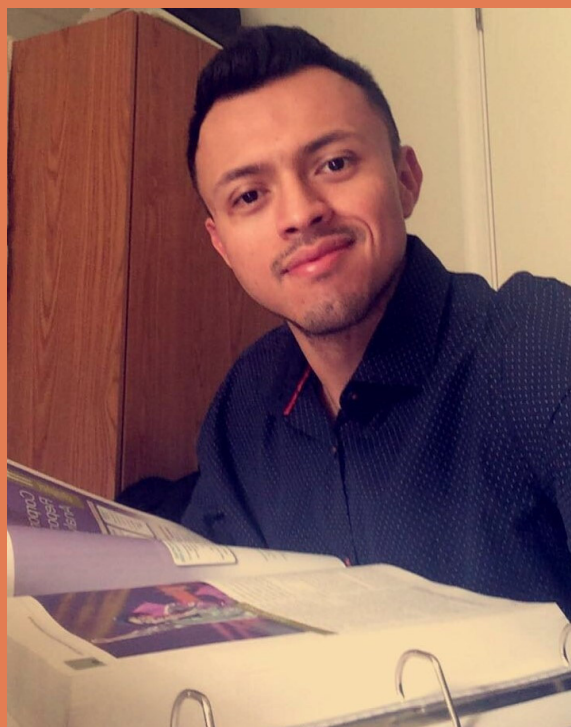


*Photo provided by the author*



# ESOL ESSAY

BY JORGE PORTILLO



*Photo provided by the student*

The following is the sixth in a series on how young people have found success in the United States through their ESOL studies. The MDTESOL Newsletter seeks to support and encourage ESOL teachers of all levels to continue transforming lives. Please send us the story of one or more of YOUR students (along with a photo) in the form of an interview, their own stories written by themselves or your observations of their lives to designated MDTESOL newsletter editors, Billie Muñoz and Erica Rivera at [newsletter@mdtesol.org](mailto:newsletter@mdtesol.org). We will send a confirmation

Hello, my name is Jorge Portillo. I was born in El Salvador and came to the United States when I was thirteen years old. This past summer I earned my associate's degree in Accounting from Prince George's Community College (PGCC). While at PGCC, I had the privilege of becoming a member of the Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society. As a member of the Phi Theta Kappa, I won a partial scholarship to Bowie State University. I was thrilled when I found out about the reward I was being offered. As a DACA recipient, I do not qualify for FASFA or any help from the government to pay for the cost of tuition, books, and fees. This fall I made the transition to Bowie State University where I am junior pursuing a bachelor's degree in accounting. All of this sounds great, but I would have not been able to accomplish any of this without first learning English as my second language.

When I came to the United States in March of 2001, the only words I knew in English were please and thank you. I remember when I arrived at the airport and heard some people talking, but I had no clue what they were saying! Then, my family and I were driving back home from the airport. I was trying to read some of the signs on the road and buildings, but I only saw words without any meaning to me. My little brother, who was six at that time, started talking to me in English and I felt kind of uncomfortable because I did not understand what he was trying to communicate. This was just the beginning of a challenging journey into a new country with a different culture, customs and, of course, language.

As soon as I came to the United States my mother told me I had to go to school. Thus, my learning experience started in middle school. The first day of school here in the United States was very frightening. I felt so overwhelmed because I was left with strangers that I could not communicate with or understand. The first three months were the hardest for me. Not being able to communicate your thoughts, ideas, and feelings is such a huge barrier for anyone. There were many times I felt so lost in school, but I could not ask for help. There were many times I was bullied and made fun of because I had a heavy accent and could not pronounce words correctly. However, with the help of caring and compassionate ESOL teachers, little by little English started to make sense to me. My mother would not let me watch any television if it was not in English. After studying hard, practicing with my siblings and anyone I could, English was no longer an obstacle for me but became a powerful key that opened the door for many opportunities.

Having mastered English as my second language has been one of the greatest investments of my life. I am no longer being bullied or made fun due to a language barrier. In fact, I am now seen as a valuable asset because I am bilingual. In addition, I was able to graduate from high school with good grades. After high school, I went straight into the workforce to support myself. College was a far dream for me because I did not have the funds. However, in 2012 another blessing came along. DACA was given to dreamers by former President Obama. The requirements were very rigorous, one of them was having a high school diploma and of course, without any knowledge of English, this would have not been possible. Furthermore, I was able to get a better job as a restaurant manager, earning a better salary. Again, being able to communicate both effectively in English and Spanish was a benefit for me at work, especially in the customer service industry. I have been offered higher positions such as general manager and area coordinator. However, I humbly turned them down because my heart was set in getting an education. After two years of hard work, I finally had enough money saved to go back to school.

Now, here I am developing myself as a professional and as a person. In about two years I should be graduating from my bachelor's in Accounting. I am so eager to accomplish all my goals and to keep contributing back to this great nation that has given me this great opportunity in life. When I look back in time, I think about how having learned English has made a remarkable impact on my life.

# THE BILINGUAL CORNER – EL RINCÓN BILINGÜE

BY BILLIE MUÑOZ

The following is the first in a series of articles in a dual language format. Here at MDTESOL, we are making a foray into the bilingual education world. According to the Department of Education, 25 states and the District of Columbia are issuing teaching certificates in the area of dual or bilingual education.

It remains a controversial topic. Of course, Spanish is not the only language to partner with English; there are programs in German, Chinese and others.

For this first article we thought an interview with Anibel Muñoz Claudio, President of PRTESOL, would be an apt subject. Here are the original questions and his answers in Spanish then translated to English by this Editor.



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Photo taken from [prtesol.org](http://prtesol.org)

1. Cuéntanos un poco de tu historia personal

Tell us a little of your personal history

Nací y me crié en el pueblo de Yabucoa, al sureste de Puerto Rico. Toda mi formación académica se la debo a mis mejores maestros de la escuela pública y a la Universidad de Puerto Rico, la cual me preparó muy bien para ser maestro de inglés a hispanoparlantes.

En una de mis primeras experiencias enseñando en la escuela intermedia Sotero Figueroa Jr. High School (en San Juan), descubrí la falta de interés de los estudiantes por la literatura en inglés. No era pertinente para ellos. Desde ese entonces, decidí escribir mi propia literatura contextualizada en inglés, pero sobre contextos puertorriqueños y caribeños. He publicado 3 novelas y 3 antologías de cuentos cortos que han sido del agrado de estudiantes y colegas especialmente las antologías “Boricuan Times” y “Siempre Forever” y la novela The Cleansing of Unwanted Puerto Ricans. Desde el 2003, trabajo como profesor en el Departamento de Inglés en la Universidad de Puerto Rico en Humacao (UPRH) en el programa de preparación de maestros de inglés y me dedico a la supervisión de la práctica docente. De esta forma, la vida me ha devuelto el favor de ayudar a la escuela pública en mi país preparando futuros colegas. Actualmente en el 2018, he tenido el honor de ser el Presidente no. 47 de PRTESOL.

I was born and grew up in the town of Yabucoa in the southeast of Puerto Rico. I owe all of my educational foundation to the best public school teachers and to the University of Puerto Rico which prepared me very well to be an English Teacher for Spanish speakers. One of my first teaching experiences showed me the lack of interest in the students for English Literature. It wasn't meant for them. Since then I decided to write my own literature in English but with Puerto Rican and Caribbean context. He published 3 novels and 3 short story anthologies. Since 2003, I work as a professor in the English Department of UPRH in a program that prepares English teachers and supervises their student teaching. In 2018, I had the honor and good fortune to become the 47th President of PRTESOL.

2. ¿Que se ha mejorado, que queda por reparar?

What has improved (since María) and what is left to fix?

Poco a poco la isla ha recuperado su encanto caribeño. La naturaleza y la vegetación nos ha servido de ejemplo y motivación volviendo a florecer como antes. Los servicios esenciales (agua, electricidad, comunicaciones, banca, etc.) en su gran mayoría se han restablecido y el comercio, la industria y el turismo están despuntando como antes. Aparte de las luchas milenarias de los políticos y sus debates (donde se apuñalan unos a otros), uno de los grandes aspectos que ha retrasado el restablecimiento de muchos comercios pequeños ha sido el retraso en el pago de las aseguradoras. Los seguros no pagan a los comerciantes el dinero que le deben y estos no pueden abrir sus puertas. Otro aspecto que falta es la reconstrucción y reparación de muchas vías de carreteras que se vieron severamente afectadas por las fuertes inundaciones.

Little by little the island has recuperated its Caribbean charm. Aside from the political fights and debates, one of the biggest challenges has been the recovery of small business and insurance

payouts. The businesses can't open their doors without the insurance monies owed them. Another problem is the reconstruction and reparation of the highways that were flooded.

3. ¿Crees que el gobierno estadounidense les falló?

Según tu gobernador, sí. ¿Cuál es la opinión de la gente a tu alrededor?

Do you think the US government failed Puerto Rico?

Your governor seemed to think so. What do the people around you think?

Los políticos siempre tienen sus opiniones y son subjetivas dependiendo de qué lado vengan. Sin embargo, la opinión general es que el trato a la isla no ha sido igual o consistente comparado con el trato ofrecido por el gobierno federal a otros sectores que han sido impactados por desastres atmosféricos similares. Las opiniones están bien divididas debido al fervor político que se vive en la isla. Hay mucha animosidad en cuanto a las expresiones y acciones del Sr. Presidente, Donald Trump, como su gesto de arrojar rollos de papel toalla a la gente en su visita a Puerto Rico. Pero, fuera de las acciones del presidente, el gobierno federal y sus agencias como la Agencia Federal para Manejo de Emergencias (FEMA, por sus siglas en inglés), el ejército y muchas otras le han dado la mano a Puerto Rico cuando más lo hemos necesitado. Yo puedo afirmar que la ayuda federal la hemos recibido con grandes bendiciones; algunos opinan que ha sido lenta y que debió haber sido más, pero vamos, por favor...como quiera la recibimos y era algo que antes no teníamos. Hay que preguntarse, ¿Qué hubiésemos hecho sin ellas?

Politicians always have their opinions and they depend upon which side they come from. Nevertheless, the general opinion is that the treatment for the island has not been equal or consistent compared with what is offered to other places affected by similar atmospheric disasters. Opinion is divided owing to political affiliations on the island. There is a lot of animosity towards President Trump and FEMA, the army and many others who have given a hand when we needed it the most. I can affirm that the federal help has been a big blessing. Some think it has been slow and should have been more. But, come on! We got it and it was something we didn't have beforehand. We have to ask ourselves, what would we have done without the help?

4. ¿Cómo puede MDTESOL seguir ayudando?/How can MDTESOL continue to help?

Una de las mejores formas en que MDTESOL puede seguir ayudando a Puerto Rico es publicando más artículos como este que destacan la realidad de las personas que vivimos aquí día a día en la isla. Y a su vez, realizando foros y conferencias que destaquen nuestra realidad. Muchas veces las noticias generales no captan la imagen auténtica de lo que pasa aquí. Sobre todo, las noticias nunca enfocan los problemas y necesidades que los maestros de inglés enfrentan en sus salas de clase y la virtud de resiliencia que necesitan para seguir adelante ayudando a sus alumnos. Aquí en PRTESOL, estamos más que agradecidos por la gran ayuda que MDTESOL nos brindó el año pasado con una aportación económica enorme y cuando más la necesitábamos. Solo esperamos que el destino nos permita devolver el favor en algún momento.

One of the best forms in which MDTESOL can continue to be of assistance is to publish more articles like this one in which we see the reality of the people who live here day to day. And, in turn, giving forums and conferences in which our reality stands out. Above all, the news sources never focus on problems and needs that English teachers face every day in the classroom and the virtue of the resilience that is needed for our students to get ahead. We are very grateful for the help that MDTESOL gave us last year when we most needed it. We hope to be able to return the favor some day.

5. ¿Temen uds. la próxima tormenta? O ¿fue María "la tormenta de quinientos años?" Sabiendo el efecto de María, ¿qué planes hay para evitar tantos daños en el futuro?

Are you frightened of the next storm? Or was Maria one of those 500-year storms? Knowing Maria's consequences, what plans do you have to avoid so much destruction in the future?

Si, así es. El efecto del Huracán María ha sido tan traumático para todos que nos ha costado una emigración de casi 300.000 personas. Todos le temen ahora hasta la más pequeña vaguada, sobre todo los más jóvenes porque nunca habían experimentado algo así tan fuerte y aterrador. Fue un verdadero monstruo y despiadado. La naturaleza nos dejos sentir su poder y furia como nunca. Para los que estamos en los 50's como yo, sabemos que esto es bien cíclico dada nuestra localización geográfica y caribeña. Nuestro clima es parte de lo que tenemos como una gran bendición, pero viene con ese precio de estar en la ruta de huracanes durante este período de agosto a septiembre. Yo viví los huracanes Hugo (1989) y Georges (1998) en la isla, pero nada como María.

Yes, that is the way it is. Maria has been traumatic for us. It cost us the emigration of almost 300,000 people. Everyone is afraid, especially the young people who had never experienced anything so powerful and scary. It was a real monster without pity. Mother Nature let us feel her power and fury like never before. For those of us 50 and above, like me, we know about the cycles given our geography and location. Our climate is a great blessing but it comes at a price. We are in the path of hurricanes from August to September. I lived through Hugo and George but nothing like Maria.

6. Fui a Orlando y conocí a bastante "huérfanos de la tormenta." María seguramente va a cambiar la vida de muchos para siempre. En tu opinión, ¿has pensado alguna vez mudarte para allá?

I went to Orlando and met many "orphans of the storm." Maria for sure has shaped lives for many for a long time. In your opinion, have you ever thought of moving to Florida?

La vida ha cambiado para muchos después del huracán María. No, yo no he pensado mudarme a EEUU por razones atmosféricas. Cada lugar del mundo tiene que pagar su precio a la madre naturaleza. Ya sean volcanes, terremotos, tornados, tsunamis, tormentas de nieve, sequías, tormentas de arena, fuegos forestales y otros cada uno tiene sus problemas. No sé qué me espera en el destino, pero por ahora me quedo en la isla del encanto hasta que me retire del trabajo. Luego, decido.

Life has changed for many people after the hurricane. I have never thought of moving to the US because of the environment. Each place in the world has to pay a price to Mother Nature. Whether they are volcanos, earthquakes, tornados, tsunamis, blizzards, droughts, sandstorms or forest fires every place has its problems. I don't know what my future will bring but I will stay on La Isla del Encanto (PR's nickname, the Island of Enchantment) until I retire. Then, we'll see.

7. ¿Hay algo que tú quieres que nosotros sepamos?

Is there anything else you want us to know?

Quiero que MDTESOL sepa que estoy profundamente agradecido por esta oportunidad de expresarme en su medio. Y aprovecho para compartir el tema de este año para nuestra Convención PRTESOL es "Relevant and Resilient: ESL Educators Impacting their Communities". He querido enfatizar en todos los esfuerzos que han tenido los maestros de inglés para seguir adelante con toda la resiliencia del mundo para ayudar a sus comunidades. Nuestra convención es un foro para defender a Puerto Rico.

I want MDTESOL to know that I am profoundly grateful for this opportunity to share my thoughts in this way. And I want to take advantage of it to share the theme for our PRTESOL Convention this year. I have been wanting to emphasize all the efforts that English teachers have made to continue forward with all the resilience possible to help their communities. Our convention is a fórum for defending Puerto Rico.

# THE CIRCUITOUS PATH

BY ILEANA TABOADA



*Photo provided by Ileana Taboada*

The following is the next in a series of stories about ESOL teachers who came into the profession later in life. They have interesting stories to tell!

Please feel free to send your story to [newsletter@mdtesol](mailto:newsletter@mdtesol) for inclusion in an upcoming edition. We will send you a confirmation.

Ileana Taboada is an ESOL teacher at Woodlawn High School in Baltimore County. Her career path has taken some interesting twists and turns that make her a great candidate for the Circuitous Path series. Ileana is from Miami, Florida by way of Cuban, Guatemalan and Jamaican ancestry. Her Latina heritage played a role in her present career but that's getting way ahead of the story!

Ms. Taboada began her academic career at Johnson and Wales University majoring in Business Administration and finished her degree online through UMUC. After graduation and a stint at a now-defunct phone company, she was hired by BCPS, but not as a teacher. Looking back, Ileana admits she never really had a passion for Business Administration but was told it was a good choice because it would allow her flexibility in the world of work. Boy, did that turn out to be true! Ileana went to work as a Records Secretary at Woodlawn High where she met some people who would later become key in her career switch. Eventually, Ileana took another BCPS job, this time in Human Resources. Fate stepped in one day about five years ago.

Ileana happened to be present at the signing of a new ESOL teacher who "in a very dramatic fashion" decided to renege on her new job as an ESOL teacher at Woodlawn High right there in the HR office! All faces turned to Ileana. Was she aware that a door had closed, and a window opened up? Yes, she was! She closed her eyes, took a leap of faith and ... a brand new provisional ESOL teacher was born.

Fast forward another four years and Ileana is still at Woodlawn, only now she is acting Department Chair. She says "being an ESOL teacher just kind of fell into my lap and a passion built up around it." Ileana made it official by going back to school, this time at Notre Dame because it was a cohort program. Everything has come full circle as Ileana now watches students she enrolled back as Records Secretary go through high school, many of them graduating and going on to college.

It is a joy to her to "see them acclimate to our culture, participate in prom and other senior activities because it means they are buying into our culture and are feeling welcomed in America. A deeply spiritual person, Ms. Taboada says that "everything happens for a reason" and has given up worrying about what she wants because she has a larger purpose that was chosen for her.

There are frustrations in her new life too, of course. She has learned instinctively to advocate for her ESOL kids and feels that some of the other teachers have a tough time viewing life through the lens of an immigrant. Ileana bemoans that "many of our kids have experienced things that we as adults would not wish on our worst enemy." She wants to heal their trauma through support and understanding and not "make snap judgments."

Looking back at her career decisions, Ileana reflects that there are "tough days when I don't feel like I am making an impact.

Then another teacher will put one of my student's essays in my mailbox and tell me that I inspired it or a student will tell me that I am the reason for their success." The students confide that it helps them to see a powerful Latina woman navigating the system. Ileana feels strongly that her students are worth the extra effort because of all that they have been through.

# MDTESOL CELEBRATES YEAR AT SPRING DINNER

BY BILLIE MUÑOZ

In May, just before concluding another academic year and heading off to summer adventures and more leisurely pursuits, MDTESOL members got together at Martin's West just outside Baltimore to reflect on achievements and honor professionals who made special contributions to the field of TESOL on a local level.



*Claribel Rivera,  
Ann Beusch Distinguished Service Awardee*



*Sydney Wallace,  
Teacher of the Year Higher Education Awardee*

One such honoree was Claribel Rivera who received the Ann Beusch Distinguished Service Award. This award was created in honor of a former Maryland State Supervisor of ESOL and Foreign Languages. Claribel is a Paraprofessional who wears many hats at Laurel High School. Claribel works primarily with the SLIFE (Students with Limited or Interrupted Formal Education) population in particular.

When asked what she does for these students she warmly declares; "Well, I adopt them. Yes, I adopt them. For many of them, I am older than their biological parents, so ... I am like a grandmother (in the Hispanic culture the ones who have the power). Because I'm making sure that they go to classes, checking their grades, calling the parents or guardians if they're doing the wrong things. I hear them talk about their concerns, and if they need any resources for counseling, for their well-being or welfare, I am always looking for resources inside and outside the school to help them. I am the one that greets them with a "Buenos días" every day, who enjoys every occurrence or joke in class, but at the same time imparting on them the respect that everyone one must have for the others. I facilitate the adaptation to the school system here."

The Teacher of the Year Award K-12 went to Kathleen Callaghan from Digital High School in Baltimore City. Her humorous and profound remarks are included in this Newsletter in their entirety.

The Teacher of the Year Award Higher Education went to Sydney Wallace of the ELC (English Language Center) at Howard Community College. Sydney, who has had past interactions with MDTESOL including hosting IS gatherings at the college, humbly told the group "I feel extremely fortunate to work in such a collaborative environment." She explained the mentorship features that are integral to the success of the ELC program and the importance of open idea sharing both formally and informally. Looking directly at her audience, Sydney declared "I know that you share my enthusiasm for what we consider to be the best job in the world. Language is uniquely what makes us human. From the early click languages to the approximately 7000 languages spoken in the world today, the ability to communicate is crucial to our survival -both physically and emotionally". She ended by reminding us of the circumstances including war, famine, and persecution that send our students to our classrooms and thanking her colleagues and MDTESOL for their support.

A Research and Development Grant was awarded to Farhana Shah. Special Lifetime Achievement Awards went to Past Presidents Debra Suarez and Karen Blinder. Please check out the next Spring Newsletter for information on the 2018-2019 Spring Dinner.

# FULL TEXT OF REMARKS

## BY KATHLEEN CALLAHAN, K-12 TEACHER OF THE YEAR RECIPIENT



*Photo provided by the author*

Good evening and thank you so very much for this opportunity to speak with you tonight. I am a bit nervous, so please bear with me. As a teacher, of course, I'm used to speaking before groups, but usually, I've known them for a while. Also, I can give them detention. :) I would be more nervous, but what made it easier to come before you all tonight is that I thought to myself, well--they're ESOL teachers, and that makes me feel like I know you a little bit; I do feel like we are a sort of special club of some really great people, so - anyway - thanks for being you.

I don't really have the words to say just how honored and humbled I feel to be receiving this award--and that's not a very good start, seeing as how I am an ESOL and English teacher, and I'm supposed to have words! When I got the news, I was a bit stunned. I was helping administer PARCC testing when I got the email, so I could only glance at it at first. Later, at the end of the day, I read it but didn't fully comprehend it (I know, not a good sign for an ESOL teacher, right?). I had to call a friend over, another ESOL teacher in our department, and ask her to read the email. "Is that saying what I think it's saying? Am I reading that right?" I asked her.

In any case... for my time with you, I thought I would try to show what it means to me to receive this award, because of what this work means to me. I came to ESOL teaching in my late 20s after briefly trying another profession - one in which I was mostly miserable and unhappy. I was working in International Development and was living in the Washington, DC area. Often when I met people, one of their first questions was, "What do you do?" I used to actually feel angry when people would ask me that question because I felt like my job at that time had nothing to do with who I was or my values. My days at work would drag on interminably and I had so much time on my hands. (Note: my daily job life is quite the opposite now!)

One day at work when I had nothing to do, I brainstormed a list of what kind of job I would like to have. There were ideas on it like work with language and culture; help people somehow; do something interesting intellectually, creatively, politically, spiritually. I sought what Buddhism would call, Right Livelihood. It was shortly afterward that I found and started the UMBC ESOL/Bilingual M.A. program, and teaching ESOL has always been exactly all those things I was looking for. I'll always be grateful for the start and direction I got in ESOL from Jodi Crandall, Ron Schwartz, and, may he rest in peace, John Nelson. From them, I inherited a never-wavering belief in the importance of meaningful, useful, interesting, and relevant content in teaching English, and this has guided my career and my work with English learners.

Flash forward a few years, and I started teaching ESOL at Patterson High School in 1998. I was hired late that summer and started my position after school had been in session for a few weeks. My first day was September 21, 1998 -- It was a Wednesday. I taught that Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday, and I remember going home on Friday and thinking to myself, "Ok, wow--it's going to take about 5 to 7 years to get good at this." I also thought back in those days, that my new ESOL teaching job



was going to be something I was going to do for a while; I thought, back then when I was 28, that it would be one of the careers that I would have in my lifetime. After I had been doing the job for a while, there came a day when I realized it wasn't "one of" the careers - It was The Career.

And it's been 20 years that I've never felt angry when someone asks me "What do you do?" Being an ESOL teacher for me has been a gift because it's been a vocation and an avocation that has allowed me to live in accordance with who I am and my values—it has been my Right Livelihood.

When I had been teaching a few years, we had a new teacher join our department. One day she was really frustrated with the behavior of several students in her classroom and was feeling rather negative. "One thing I've realized," I said to her, "is you have to love them." It all starts there, and that love leads to everything else. When I heard that Baltimore City was going to spend 42 million dollars to build a state-of-the-art school with a technology program, and needed an ESOL teacher, my strongest feeling was, I want to help make sure that our ESOL students have the same access to that program and opportunity as any other kid in Baltimore City, and that's when I came to my current school, Digital Harbor High School.

You have to love the students, and that means making sure they have what they need, instructionally, socially, culturally, physically, emotionally, and politically. Our students are so amazing and have been through so much. They have left families and friends behind, they have undertaken often dangerous journeys to come to new lands where they don't know the language or the culture. They often have to reunite with family they haven't seen in years, and in the midst of ALL that, they have to learn English AND learn reading and writing and math and science and social studies, all in that new language -- while making friends and trying to be a kid and have fun, and oh, don't forget, you have to pass those PARCC tests. They're amazing. You can't help but love them. They deserve so much. For a few years, I taught eleventh-grade sheltered content English language arts - English III in high school - which is the year we focus on American literature. The focus of the year was the concept of the American Dream, and early on there was a unit on Puritan literature. One thing I would say to them is, "Do not EVER let ANYone tell you that your story - of leaving your country and coming to this country and trying to make your dreams come true - is ANY different from the Puritans' story. Your story IS the American story."

All these feelings are why I do the work I do, and why I keep doing things every year like sharing my Thanksgiving tradition with our students (while also teaching them the problematic history behind U.S. policies towards Native Americans); it's why we put on an International Festival that is a celebration for the whole school - and it's I why I will keep fighting for DACA and comprehensive, sensible, and compassionate immigration reform.

In the past year and a half, it seems that some parts of our country are moving away from these inclusive sentiments, and so now more than ever I think it's important to support and cherish and celebrate our ESOL students, in addition to teaching them as best as we ever can, helping them acquire ALL the tools and skills they need to be able to go out into the world, to be safe and successful and to advocate for a better world for themselves and all of us.

# MDTESOLERS LEARN TO ADVOCATE

Webster's defines advocacy as "One who pleads for the cause of another." It can also be defined as "Speaking for those who cannot speak for themselves."

Three MDTESOLers (Tara Theroux, Selma Basmaci and Billie Muñoz), two of whom chair and co-chair the Advocacy Interest Section joined about 90 TESOLers from almost every state in the nation on June 18, 2018, for the TESOL Advocacy Summit at the Hilton Hotel in Alexandria, Virginia. The Summit included two days of training, targeted at learning how to speak to staffers, senators, congressmen, and women. The third day was set aside for travel to Capitol Hill to hold discussions with the leaders for whom we are the constituents. All this was set against a backdrop of the controversial separation of parents and children at the Mexico border.

One of the most profound lessons is that ESOL teachers are the "experts" in what ELL's need in order to be successful. Prior to the summit, we had sent requests for appointments to the offices of the Senate and congressional delegates, and their response was swift and positive. After completion of training, we broke into area groupings and stepped into the offices of the following politicians: Congressman John Sarbanes, Third District of Maryland; Congressman Anthony Brown, Fourth District of Maryland; Chris Van Hollen and Benjamin L. Cardin, United States Senators from Maryland. The legislative counsels and assistants of the Maryland politicians focused on our issues attentively as we explained and asked them co-sponsor the ELL Reaching Out Bill that will provide the educators in content classes with opportunities to address the needs of ELLs in the classroom. The assistants also took notes as we explained the importance of maintaining OELA (Office of English Language Acquisition) and RELA (Reaching English Learners Act).

It was a powerful experience in Democracy and the voice of the people. The Summit is held at the same time every year and is a tremendously worthwhile experience. While we don't know what will be the hot button issues of the 2019 Summit, we do know that ESOL teachers do have a voice and can be trained to use it in advocacy.

More information can be found here:

[http://sites.tesol.org/MemberPortal/Events/2018/ADVDAY2018/TESOL-Event-Detail?WebsiteKey=0d1b66b8-c087-413e-94b1-74021c640176&EventKey=ADVDAY2018&In-Person\\_Event\\_Detail=1](http://sites.tesol.org/MemberPortal/Events/2018/ADVDAY2018/TESOL-Event-Detail?WebsiteKey=0d1b66b8-c087-413e-94b1-74021c640176&EventKey=ADVDAY2018&In-Person_Event_Detail=1)

What can I do?

- Talk to your Senators! Call them up and make an appointment! If you don't know who your Senator is, go to <https://whoismyrepresentative.com/>
- Tell your Senator that you support the RELA Bill (Reaching English Learners Act) to prepare more teachers to work with English Learners, and maintaining the OELA office.
- Ask your Senators to co-sponsor RELA and maintain the OELA Office!
- Join MDTESOL's Advocacy group
- Meet with other Advocacy group members at the MDTESOL 2018 conference
- Attend TESOL's Advocacy Summit in 2019 to learn more about advocacy and practice on the hill. See their website for upcoming details.



*Word cloud provided by board members who attended the summit*

# MDTESOL Fall Conference

MARYLAND TESOL

## 38TH ANNUAL FALL CONFERENCE

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 10, 2018

NOTRE DAME OF MARYLAND  
UNIVERSITY,  
BALTIMORE, MARYLAND

Ways to Advocate for ELLs through  
Education and Our Community



MARYLAND  
TESOL

MDTESOL advocates for ELLs

MDTESOL



KEYNOTE SPEAKER

ROGER C. ROSENTHAL, ESQ.



DR. CHRISTA DE KLEINE



DR. DEBORAH J. SHORT



EFRAÍN SOTO SANTIAGO

INVITED GUESTS

[HTTPS://WWW.MD TESOL.ORG/CONFERENCES/UPCOMING-CONFERENCE](https://www.mdtesol.org/conferences/upcoming-conference)



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