



UMBC TESOL Program Newsletter

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Education is the
most powerful
weapon which you
can use to change
the world.

-Nelson Mandela-

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TESOL Convention & Reception A Success!

The 50th TESOL International Convention, held in Baltimore this past April, was an opportunity for the UMBC ESOL program to play host to a number of guests at our reception — including alumni, international visitors, and current students. The reception was held at the beautiful Columbus Center in downtown Baltimore. During this time, we were also able to remember Dr. John Nelson. Several people including his wife, Susan, and daughter, Katie, shared memories and stories. It was the perfect time to celebrate the program and Dr. Nelson.



My Volunteering Experience at the TESOL International Convention

By Alena Yazykova

On April 4th-8th 2016 I had the chance to volunteer for the TESOL International Convention. Despite the fact that I've been teaching for quite a long time, this was the first time I observed an event on such a level, with so many people attending and coming from different parts of the United States and worldwide. When I was in Russia and I got the first email about an opportunity to volunteer at the Convention, I knew I had to be there. So I applied and was lucky enough to be assigned to volunteer for Community College Day, the Educational Visit to Howard Community College and at the Job MarketPlace.

The program for the Community College Day impressed me by the number of various sessions where presenters and professionals in the TESOL sphere shared their knowledge, experience and expertise. I was fortunate to attend several sessions, participate in the discussion of the topics like crossing cultural borders, personal devices in the classroom, second language writing, and also to be an audience member at the panel discussion devoted to myths and misperceptions about Generation 1.5.

The Educational Visit to Howard Community College gave me a chance to get acquainted with its ESOL program at the English Language Center and attend two ESOL classes. One of the classes I observed was a pronunciation class which took place in the college lab equipped with brand new computers and video recording devices. I was especially impressed by this class as I could watch the students in action and three teachers working with them at the same time: their primary teacher in pronunciation, the lab specialist, and the lab technician. Each of these people performed their own roles in this class, but all three were focused on assisting the students in their pronunciation tasks and improving their pronunciation skills.

Knowing that there would be visitors from Baltimore on that day, the three instructors had come together to demonstrate to us how the classes in their lab work and what students can do there. Several of us observing this class had an opportunity to participate and help the stu-

dents with the pronunciation issues they were struggling with. The final task for this class was for the students to video record themselves reading a story from the handout pronouncing certain sounds they had been working on correctly and distinctly. Later, we were told, the teacher would watch and listen to each of the students' video recordings and send his individual audio feedback to each student giving recommendations what had to be improved. The three instructors told us that it takes a lot of time, effort and patience to listen to all the students' recordings but in the end it turns out to be worthwhile as the students get to work on their pronunciation skills more and are motivated and encouraged by getting a personal feedback from their teacher.

The Job MarketPlace was the third place where I volunteered and where I saw a large number of companies interviewing potential employees. This is the place where one looking for a job in the TESOL sphere should definitely come wherever the TESOL Convention may take place. One person can have up to 7 (!) job interviews a day with all companies in one place.

The opportunity to attend and volunteer at the TESOL International Convention 2016 has, undoubtedly, turned out to be an invaluable experience for me and one more step to becoming a professional in the TESOL sphere.



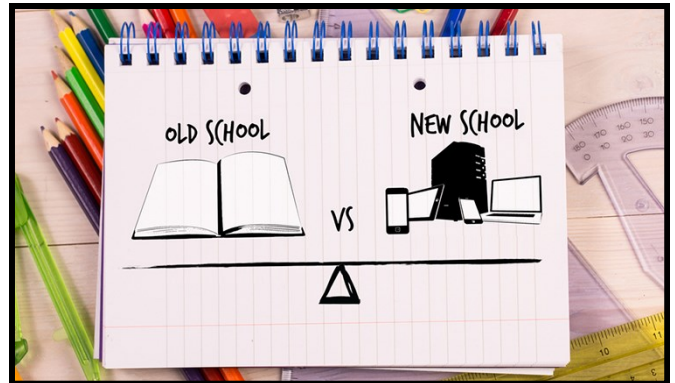
Current students Nicole Cohen and Victorine Awa pose before a session at the TESOL convention.

How Does the Medium Affect Your Ability to Grasp the Message?

By Judi L. Davidson Wolf

Having been fortunate enough to attend TESOL 2016 in Baltimore for one day (thanks, UMBC, for the partial subsidy!), I wanted to share with everyone one of the presentations that I found most informative.

Do you prefer reading digital books or paper books? What about your students? Does it matter? At TESOL 2016, Deborah Gordon and Laurie Blass provided excellent insight into what the research tells us on this topic and its implications for teaching our students in either or both media. And don't assume that all "youngsters" prefer digital—in fact, "Textbook makers, bookstore owners and college student surveys all say millennials still strongly prefer print for pleasure and learning" (Rosenwald, 2015).



Gordon and Blass pointed out that for the most part, the research has been done after the fact—that is, it is not driving the development of digital-reading technologies but simply reporting on their effects. Characteristics of digital reading include inferior retention and comprehension. In addition, digital readers tend to read "non-linearly." While some attendees at the session applauded the ability to link to resources (such as dictionaries) and additional information, such distractions can also disrupt learning. Gordon and Blass noted that digital reading causes fatigue and eye-strain, which obviously can also have a negative effect on learning. Finally, they noted that it doesn't facilitate annotating and highlighting.

However, they pointed out that the research also shows that digital readers can learn to improve their reading. Many of the strategies they referenced echo those taught throughout the MA TESOL program. For example, they recommended explicit teaching of reading strategies, particularly of metacognitive strategies such as making predictions before reading, "interrupting the reading to ask questions," and having students "discuss the connections they made with themselves and the text." In fact, they suggested assessing students' strategies as much as assessing their comprehension. An excellent tool which they recommended is Harford Community College's Metacognitive Awareness Inventory (although they did advise choosing to teach just a few strategies at a time!).

References & Further Reading

Gordon, D., and Blass, L. (2016). *Digital vs. Print Reading: Teaching Appropriate Skills for Both Modalities*. Presentation to TESOL 2016, April 7, 2016.

Harford Community College Learning Center. (2014). *Metacognition Awareness Inventory*.

Rosenwald, M. (2015, February 22). Why digital natives prefer reading in print. Yes, you read that right. *The Washington Post*.

They offered a number of tools that can strengthen students' metacognitive skills. Three free apps they mentioned are Evernote, Penultimate, and Skitch, which help students with the note-taking that is "an essential part of active reading." They also noted that teachers can use these note-taking tools to embed metacognitive tasks for students. For example, a PDF file could have a pop-up at a certain point that asks students to answer a question or reflect on their reading strategy, or suggests that they carry out a metacognitive task.

This is clearly a topic we must deal with as ESOL teachers, and this interesting and informative presentation provided much food for thought.

Recognitions & Awards



This year, **ChengCheng (CiCi) Zhou** was selected as a Teacher of Promise for UMBC. CiCi will graduate in Summer 2016 with her K-12 certification.

The Maryland Department of Education describes Teachers of Promise as follows: The Teachers of Promise Program and Institute began as an outgrowth of the Maryland Teacher of the Year Program and capitalized on the expertise of Teachers of the Year and other award-winning teachers by matching them with the most promising pre-service graduating seniors from Maryland colleges and universities. Mentor and protégé work together online during the spring and summer transition period until the new teachers are placed in their schools.

Dr. Sarah Shin, Director of the TESOL Program, and May F. Chung, PhD Candidate in Language, Literacy, and Culture and Professor in English and Modern Language and Linguistics, recently were awarded the Jodi Crandall Award for sociolinguistics research. Dr. Shin and May will be using the grant to fund "Voices from the Classroom", featuring vignettes from actual teachers on how to incorporate their knowledge of linguistics in the classroom. The series will be featured in Dr. Shin's forthcoming book, *Linguistics for Language Teachers: Lessons for Classroom Practice*.



Lauren Raughbaugh, a 2013 graduate of our program, has recently accepted an offer at the University of Central Florida for her PhD in TESOL. She also was awarded a Presidential Fellowship and a teaching assistantship at their ELI. While sharing her good news, Lauren added, "I will never forget UMBC and all of the incredible people there; UCF has a lot to live up to."



Larry's youngest class—eager and ready to learn English!

Interning in Cochabamba, Bolivia by Larry Wilt

If you are looking for an internship for a month or more in a friendly and supportive environment yet with the adventure of living abroad, Cochabamba, Bolivia might be for you. The Centro Boliviano Americano (CBA – see their web site) offers English courses to over 2,500 students in small classes, at all levels and for all ages above 7 years old. I spent two months teaching there, starting January 4, 2016. Each class is a month long, five days per week. The CBA can arrange room and board for interns. In addition to that, there is a small stipend for expenses. You pay your own airfare. UMBC has sent several TESOL students to the CBA over the years.

Cochabamba has about the same population as Baltimore, but it feels smaller. Their weather is always like Baltimore's late Spring, but with a little less temperature variation, that is, about perfect. The local restaurants are superb and inexpensive. The city is safer than many cities in the USA.

Through living with a local family, you can't help but learn some Spanish during your stay. I would recommend that you complete at least a year of college level Spanish courses before you go, though it is possible to do this internship with no Spanish background; I stayed with a family which did not speak English. Theoretically, you can conduct all of your business and teaching at the CBA in English, though knowing some Spanish helps.

If you would like further information on my experience, please contact me at larry.wilt@gmail.com.

ESOL CLUB



This year, the ESOL club planned a dinner to Indian Delight, study breaks and a luncheon of Peruvian food (see picture).

We hope you can become involved in the ESOL Club next year! We will be looking for ESOL Club board members in the fall. Interested in planning or helping?

Contact: esol@umbc.edu

Spring 2016 Graduates !

Certificate Awardees:

Elena Bzhedugova
Jose Gomez Garcia
Susan Hade
Carolina Felipes Porco
Paula Villanueva de Miguel

Master's Graduates:

Will Armstrong
Carol Carnett
Bosun Choi
Rosemary Harty

Christopher McKinnon

Hilary Reintges

Seikyung Shim

Carla Silva Hounshell

Sean Stinson

Bill Stout

Megan Trivisionno

Steven Wagoner

*Please keep in touch with us as
we greatly enjoy hearing from
our graduates!*



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