MIDTESOL MATTERS

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE
BY VALERIE HEMING, MIDTESOL PRESIDENT

2011 began with a snowy start, and if you're like me, you stayed an overlong time in the winter mode of bundling up, rushing carefully along snow-packed trails to and from classes, and watching in fascination as total strangers emerged from their layers of hats, coats, and scarves and become your very own students. Welcome finally, I think, to Spring!

The MIDTESOL board is carrying on the agenda items initiated last year, including continuing our dialog with KATESOL about merging our affiliates, and planning the MIDTESOL conference on October 21-22.

More specifically, we are working to bring members a more comprehensive website, under the capable guidance of Webmaster Jim Ranalli. This has allowed us to set up a conference registration process directly through our site and provide better access to MIDTESOL activities, membership information and board contacts.

Based on your very positive response to the idea of having a MIDTESOL journal, we are now building its framework, and when ready, it will provide a new way for our members to share their research. Our very own *MIDTESOL Matters* is in its second year of using a digital format, and as always, welcomes articles from you. Jennifer Morrison, MIDTESOL's hardworking newsletter editor, is eager to publish them. Please share your knowledge! Do you have book reviews, lesson plans, ideas for how MIDTESOL can better serve you, and, of course, concerns about the field? Send them on! Also, our interest section leaders welcome topics for listserve discussion and are here to facilitate dialog. Have you joined the IS discussions?

As you know, the MIDTESOL conference is just around the corner, and information on registration is coming soon. Please watch the website for details after April 1st. Diana Pascoe-Chavez is our 2011 conference chair, and her team at St. Louis University is getting ready to welcome us to the *Gateway to the West* this October.

You may have noticed that we have had a transition in our membership committee, so if you have questions about your dues or other membership issues, please contact our new membership chair, Heather Ditzer. A big thanks to Amber Wadley for all her work last year in this position and to Heather, who is carrying on those duties in 2011.

Finally, on behalf of the board, I want to thank you for your time and dedication to the MIDTESOL organization. Volunteering to serve on committees, to present at conferences, and to contribute ideas through the growing number of digital media options is something we do in addition to all our professional and personal responsibilities. Your choice to do so for this organization is testimony to your commitment to its vision. If you are interested in a committee position or would like more information about the different committees, I would love to hear from you by email or phone. Have a wonderful spring season, and thank you for your continued support of MIDTESOL.

MIDTESOL News

MIDTESOL 2011 Conference: Gateway to Global Citizenship

October 21-22, 2011   Saint Louis University, St. Louis , Missouri

SAINT LOUIS UNIVERSITY

The "Gateway to the West" becomes a portal for the world.

MIDTESOL

Call For Presentations

Deadline August 20, 2011

www.midtesol.org

MIDTESOL 2011 CONFERENCE REGISTRATION FORM

Online registration and information at: www.midtesol.org

Name: _____Affiliation-for badge: _____

Address: _____City/State/Zip: _____

Phone: _____Email: _____

Conference Registration:	Member	Non-Member	Amount
Early Bird (By September 20)	$70	$85	_____
Regular (September 21 and later)	$80	$95	_____
Student *Must send proof of enrollment*	$40	$50	_____
On-site Registration	$90	$100	_____
Total			_____

Pre-Conference Activities & Workshops and Networking Events TBA

Please make checks payable to "MIDTESOL" and mail with registration form to:
St. Louis University
Attn: Nikki Dalton, MIDTESOL 2011 Conference Treasurer
Des Peres Hall 103
3694 West Pine Mall
St. Louis, MO 63108

Register online at www.midtesol.org!

MIDTESOL Fall Conference 2011
MIDTESOL 2011 Call for Participation
Gateway to Global Citizenship
October 21-22 – St. Louis, Missouri

PRESENTER INFORMATION

Name _____ Affiliation_____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Contact Phone _____ **Email** _____

If the presentation has several presenters, list them at the bottom of this form. All contact about the presentation will be through **email** with the person whose name appears on this form.

IF YOU WISH TO PRESENT, YOU ARE REQUIRED TO

Send the completed proposal form (copied into a word document) to midtesolproposals@slu.edu

Register for the conference

PRESENTATION INFORMATION

Title of Presentation: (as it will appear in the program - 9 words or less)

Summary/Abstract: (approximately 100 words) If your presentation is accepted, this summary will appear in the conference program.

Length of Presentation (check one) □ 25 minutes   □ 55 minutes   □ 90 minutes

Style of Presentation (check one) □ Paper-based □ Demonstration □ Discussion □ Other _____

Media/Audio Visual Equipment

Please check the media/audio visual equipment that **you will require from us** for your presentation and list any other special arrangements. If not checked you will be responsible for renting or providing AV equipment on your own.

Computer _____ Screen _____ LCD Projector _____TV/DVD/ _____ CD/Cassette Payer _____

Overhead Projector _____ Other_____

Audiences for whom the presentation is primarily intended (check all that apply)

□ General audience   □ Intensive English   □ K-12   □ Higher Education

□ Technology/CALL   □ Adult Education   □ Materials Development

□ Program Administration

Scheduling Preference (times cannot be guaranteed)

☐ Friday evening   ☐ Saturday morning   ☐ Saturday afternoon   ☐ No preference

Biographical Introduction (Please provide a short self-introduction. The host of your session will use this to introduce you.)

Would you be willing to act as a host for another session? A host introduces the speaker, greets attendees, and assists with handouts.

Additional Presenters Information:

Name _____ Affiliation_____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Contact Phone _____ Email _____

Biographical Introduction:

Name _____ Affiliation_____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Contact Phone _____ Email _____

Biographical Introduction:

Presentation Proposals are due no later than **Monday, August 20, 2011**.

Send the completed proposal form (copied into a word document) and related inquires to:

midtesolproposals@slu.edu

Printed proposals can be mailed to:

MIDTESOL 2011 Program Committee
Attn: Lauren Rea Preston
St. Louis University
Des Peres Hall 103C
3694 West Pine Mall
St. Louis, MO 63108

You will receive an email reply when your proposal is received.

Notification of acceptance will be no later than **September 10, 2011.**

MIDTESOL News Continued

Iowa State News, submitted by Sarah Thao, Iowa Member at Large

sethao@dmacc.edu

This year the Dept of Ed's Adult Literacy Institute is teaming up with the Iowa Association of Lifelong Learning (IALL) for a joint conference to be held in Marshalltown, IA, July 13-15. The theme is "Blazing New Trails for Tomorrow's Learning Challenges." Keynote speakers include Brenda Clark Hamilton and Randy Dean (the Totally Obsessed Time Management/PDA Guy and E-mail Sanity Expert). For more information visit http://iowall.org/conference.html.

The 13th annual MwALT (Midwest Association of Language Testers) conference will be held in conjunction with the 9th annual conference on Technology for Second Language Learning at Iowa State University, September 16-17, 2011.

Mark your calendar, the annual Iowa Culture and Language Conference (ICLC), will be held in Coralville, IA, November 7-9, 2011. Plans are underway to include sessions on content area instruction, early childhood, immigration and refugees, assessment, and adult education. Watch for the call for proposals this summer. Handouts from the 2010 conference are still available at http://www.nwaea.k12.ia.us/en/upcoming_events/

Missouri State News, submitted by Paula Moore, Missouri Member-at-Large
paulamoore@missouristate.edu

The highlights of this edition's Missouri news include several upcoming DESE professional development opportunities:

- Perfecting ELL Instruction by Using WIDA ESL Standards—April 28, Springfield

- W-APT & ACCESS for ELLs Assessment Training—May 24, Columbia

- Introduction to ACCESS Reports for WIDA Standards / W-APT & ACCESS for ELLs Assessment Training—June 8, Kirksville

For more details:
https://www.mylearningplan.com/WebReg/Catalog.asp?D=11005&S=&G=&AF=&I=&H=1&SDate=3%2F30%2F2011&EDate=2%2F29%2F2012&Term=esl&P=A&C=A&L=A&SortBy=DT_STARTDATE&ShowDescription=TRUE&btn_View=+View+Now+&Page=1

In other Missouri News, the State House of Representatives recently passed HB167, which would require all driver's license tests be administered in English. It is currently in the Senate, which has not made it a priority piece of legislation. It is in the General Laws Committee's hands at the moment, but there has been no hearing on the issue as of 3/30. Here is a link to a more comprehensive discussion of the legislation, as well as the reaction from a Springfield non-profit organization supporting Hispanic community members:
http://www.news-leader.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20110330/NEWS06/103300387/-1/RSS

One additional note of interest to our readership is that as of 12/14/2010, the U.S. House and Senate passed an exciting piece of legislation, S.1338 (2009-2010), which will require "that a nonimmigrant foreign student seeking to enter the United States to study at a language training program enroll at a language program that is accredited by an accrediting agency recognized by the Secretary of Education." This law allows for an exception for the next three years in order to provide institutions to obtain said accreditation.

We're on the Web!
www.midtesol.org

What's your interest?

MIDTESOL has four Interest Sections (IS) to facilitate communication among members working in various corners of the ESL profession. Two of our IS chairs are new this year: Gisella Aitken-Shadle in Community College/Adult Education and Shaeley Santiago in K-12. Thank you and welcome to the Board!

In the interest of getting these two new chairs a list of prospective IS members, and also for the other chairs to begin to prepare for IS sessions at our October conference, please contact the chair of your interest section indicating your interest. There is no registration, no dues, just a shout out that you want to be part of the interest section. Include contact info and tell the chair where you work and what you do.

At the conference, you'll get to meet with the chair and members of your IS.
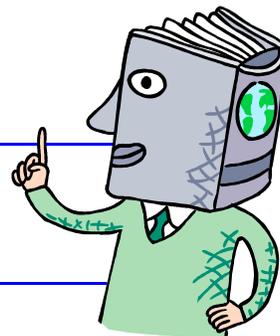
IEP IS	Jamie Schindewolf jbaptist@slu.edu
K-12 IS	Shaeley Santiago Shaeley.santiago@ames.k12.ia.us
Community College/Adult Education IS	Gisella Aitken-Shadle
Higher Education IS	Rachel Herman

Meet Your Vice President!

Hi, my name is Nick David, and I am excited to be your new MIDTESOL Vice-Preside[...]structor at Divine Word College in Epworth, Iowa, but I grew up in the small town o[...] My interest in ESL first began on a church mission when I assisted a Mongolian miss[...] with learning English. This interest later blossomed while I was attended Brigham Y[...] Provo, Utah. My formal introduction to TESOL came late one afternoon while I was [...] the Humanities building on campus, trying to decide on a major. I ended up coming [...] Dr. Neil Anderson, a past president of TESOL, and asked for his advice. I soon began taking TESOL classes, and I've never looked back. I received my MA in TESOL from BYU in 2009 and accepted a position at Divine Word College in September of that year.

Two projects I am currently working on for MIDTESOL include updating membership information and seeking ways to better integrate community college faculty and graduate students into MIDTESOL. My professional interests include ESL issues at writing centers, language policy and planning, and the history of ESL teaching in America. In my free time I enjoy reading, fishing, playing sports, and watching Godzilla movies.

MIDTESOL 2010 Travel Award Winner: Synchronous vs. Asynchronous CMC: Which is right for my teaching?

By Darren (Joe) Cunningham

Computer-mediated communication (CMC) has enjoyed a short but storied history. Not long ago, it would have been difficult to imagine the inroads CMC has made into society – not only do we rely on e-mail for personal and professional communication, but the increasing popularity of social media (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, etc.) further demonstrates that many forms of CMC are fast becoming the norm. Given this development, it bears asking how language learners and teachers can utilize CMC to achieve their pedagogical goals.

Synchronous CMC involves the use of communication technologies for real-time interaction. The seminal work of Chun (1994) and Warschauer (1996) has demonstrated that text-based chatting can democratize participation patterns and "level the playing field" for learners. More recent research by Belz & Kinginger (2003) and Vyatkina (2007) has shown that synchronous CMC may also drive interlanguage pragmatic development; in essence, the potential loss of face in real-time communication with native speakers may help learners to more carefully attend to those linguistic forms and functions involved in maintaining social relationships. In contrast to synchronous CMC, asynchronous CMC is characterized by delayed communication and offers a different set of advantages, including reduced anxiety (Poza, 2005; Satar & Özdener, 2008) and the promotion of autonomy and risk-taking (Schwienhorst, 2003).

Recognizing the differing benefits inherent in CMC, it must also be stated that the respective technologies are just tools and should be utilized to achieve a specific goal. To that end, it is advantageous to utilize a task-based approach (Ellis, 2009). Below I provide a brief overview of potential tasks for both modes of CMC:

Task	**Create a travel itinerary**
Mode	Synchronous
Tool	Instant messaging (text)
Procedures	1. Participants receive a budget and meet online 2. Participants negotiate budget and itinerary with assistance of various websites 3. Results can be presented in class or posted to class wiki

Task	**Interview a business professional**
Mode	Synchronous
Tool	Adobe Connect Pro
Procedures	1. Determine discussion leader or leaders 2. Discussion leaders prepare questions about guest's area of expertise (e.g., education and entry into the workforce) 3. Participants and guest meet in room at appointed time 4. Discussion leaders moderate discussion, directing questions equally to various participants

Task	**Create and present a photomontage**
Mode	Asynchronous
Tool	VoiceThread
Procedures	1. Learners take pictures in the surrounding community to visually capture a particula theme (e.g., diversity) 2. Learners upload photos to VoiceThread website and leave comments 3. When VoiceThread is ready, it is shared with the class 4. Classmates and/or instructor leave comments and feedback

Task	**Tell a chain story**
Mode	Asynchronous
Tool	Voxopop
Procedures	1. Learners compete to write the most interesting "hook" for a story 2. The winner starts the story by creating the first post online 3. Other learners listen to previous posts and continue the story in an entertaining and logical way 4. Class listens to completed story and assesses it (e.g. for narrative structure, for discourse level features, etc.)

For those interested in learning more, including where to access the various modes of CMC listed above, please feel free to contact the author at dcunningham@park.edu.

References

Belz, J. A. & Kinginger, C. (2003). Discourse options and the development of pragmatic competence by classroom learners of German: The case of address forms. *Language Learning, 53(4), 591-647.*

Chun, D.M. (1994). Using computer networking to facilitate the acquisition of interactive competence. *System, 22*, 17-31.

Poza, M. (2005).The effects of asynchronous computer voice conferencing on learners' anxiety when speaking a foreign language. West Virginia University, Unpublished doctoral dissertation.

Schwienhorst, K. (2003). Learner autonomy and tandem learning: Putting principles into practice in synchronous and asynchronous telecommunications environments. *Computer Assisted Language Learning, 16,* 427-443.

Satar, H.M & Özdener, N. (2008). The effects of synchronous CMC on speaking proficiency and anxiety: Text versus voice chat. *Modern Language Journal, 92,* 595-613.

Vyatkina, N. (2007). Development of second language pragmatic competence: the data-driven teaching of German modal particles based on a learner corpus. The Pennsylvania State University, Unpublished doctoral dissertation.

Warschauer, M. (1996). Comparing face-to-face and electronic communication in the second language classroom. *CALICO Journal, 13*, 7-26.

Joe Cunningham is Instructor of English as an International Language at Park University in Parkville, MO. He is also a PhD candidate in German Applied Linguistics at the University of Kansas. When not engaged in professional pursuits, Joe can be found spending time in the garden or curled up with a good book. He and his wife, Shannon, are expecting their first child in August.

MIDTESOL 2010 Travel Award Winner: "Everybody Reads...Right?" Learning about Research in L2 Reading By Annette Meinheit, MA-TESL, University of Central Missouri, Warrensburg, MO

As a graduate student in the University of Central Missouri's (UCM) MA-TESL program, one of the required courses is titled "TESL II: The Written Language." We examined how students acquire reading and writing in English and what challenges they may face. After reading an article about acquiring reading, a question was posed by the professor, Dr. Yates, asking if students read the same types of material in their L2 as they read in their L1. This class also had a research component included, and Dr. Yates' question turned into my research project and eventual presentation at MIDTESOL 2010: "Everybody Reads... Right?"

The original plan was to investigate how reading proficiency in a student's L1 would transfer into reading proficiency in English. The main item used in data collection was a self-reporting survey administered to the following classes: Writing, Levels 5 and 6 at the Intensive English Program (IEP) at UCM ; a class in the English Department at UCM for international students who, although admitted to the University as students, did not meet the required score on a writing test given at the beginning of the semester; and the native speaker control group, a British Literature class, which is taken by students as a general education credit. In all, twenty-seven non-native speakers (NNS) and twenty-two native speakers (NS) participated in taking the surveys.

The surveys were divided into three sections: background information, reasons for reading, and self-evaluation of skill and types of reading. Types of reading for the NNS surveys was further divided into L1 reading and English reading. All surveys were anonymous.

After reviewing the data, one important trend became apparent, specifically dealing with the original research question. In-

stead of focusing on proficiency transfer from L1 to L2, the data suggested that what types of reading students do in their L1 could be a predictor for what types of reading students do in their L2, in this case, English. The surveys were separated by genre – fiction, non-fiction, religious texts, poetry, autobiographies/biographies, textbooks – recording instances when students reported what they read in their L1 as compared to what they reported they read in English. The general trend seemed to be if a student read a certain genre, for example fiction, in their L1, it was a very strong possibility that they also read that genre in English; if they did not read a specific genre in their L1, chances were likely they did not read it in English.

The surveys were divided into four groups based on amount of response on the surveys: Arabic, Japanese, Korean, and other languages including Chinese, Hindi, Thai, and African languages (including French and Kiswahili). Arabic speakers provided the most detail on their surveys by providing me with examples of things they had read in each genre (as per the instructions on the survey.) Japenese speakers, in addition to rating themselves poor readers in English, provided very little detail in their answers. They, for the most part, simply checked the box of the genre for the type of reading they did. Korean speakers provided a little more feedback than did the Japanese speakers, but were divided into their own group based on the amount of Korean speakers' surveys received. Chinese, Thai, Hindi, and African speakers had the same amount of feedback and were grouped together based on the low number of surveys for each language group. Neither age nor gender seemed to influence the results.

Beyond discovering that students reported to read the same types of material in their L1 as they read in English, the project

revealed insights about research in general, especially research done solely by surveys. Some of the questions that arose from the research dealt specifically with the efficacy of using self-reporting surveys, specifically the issues of: participant anonymity, participant misunderstandings of survey questions, and ambiguity in survey questions.

Participant anonymity created a few specific concerns when the data was being reviewed. How trustworthy are self-reporting surveys? Tied to that question, how does culture influence what a student reports on a survey? For example, does reporting having read religious texts mean you are a good Muslim, Christian, or Hindu? It was impossible to follow-up with students if there was a question about an answer or simply wanted elaboration. While this ties into the previous question about what influence culture has on self-reporting on surveys, this goes a bit deeper. Had I followed up on the surveys with actual conversations, I would have been able to ask the Japanese students why they rated themselves as poor readers in English and did not provide examples of what they read, perhaps learning if there was a cultural influence on those answers. Following up on surveys would also possibly have allowed for a greater focus on my original question of reading proficiency transferring from L1 to English might have been answered.

Another important factor within the surveys themselves had to do with the creation of the survey questions and interpretation by the students. Misunderstandings and clarifications were needed regarding the definition of genres. Perhaps if such terms as "fiction" had been more defined, more students would have indicated that they read these types of books. There was also some ambiguity in the question, "Years learning English." An Indian student, whose L1 was Hindi, indicated that he had only been learning English for one or two years. This is inconsistent with the secondary education system in India, where English is the language of instruction. Another Arabic speaker indicated that he had only been learn-

ing English for one or two years as well, which again seems to be inconsistent with being an international student in an American university. The students may have understood the question to be asking how many years they had been studying in the United States, but again, because of the anonymity of the surveys, I cannot assume that was their understanding of the question.

Overall, the research and presentation at MIDTESOL revealed some valuable insights. I set out looking for a possible answer to one question and ended up answering a completely different question. I also learned that surveys without follow-up conversations about answers are not the best way to conduct research. My presentation experience at MIDTESOL 2010 is invaluable to me as a graduate student and I was honored to be chosen as a presenter. With what I have learned from my actual research and what I have learned *about* research, my project left some questions unanswered and created new ones, which I hope to investigate in the future.

Annette Meinheit is from Independence, MO. She earned her BSE in Social Studies from the University of Central Missouri (UCM) in December 2007. She is currently a graduate student at UCM in TESL and will be graduating this May. She has accepted a position in Mexico, MO, at the Missouri Military Academy, teaching middle school and high school ESL as well as high school English.

In Memoriam: Ron Long
Submitted by friends of Ron

Long-time MIDTESOL member Ronald W. Long passed away on May 6, 2010, at his home in Warrensburg after battling pancreatic cancer. He was 69 years old.

A MIDTESOL Pat-on-the-Back Award recipient, Ron became involved in MOTESOL in 1979, the year after its founding and just as it was evolving into MIDTESOL. He served multiple terms on the Executive Board, edited the newsletter from 1979 to 1991, and was president of MIDTESOL in 2000-2001. Ron was also a frequent presenter at MIDTESOL Conferences, most often on the application of technology to the teaching of English learners. He assisted many of us in providing, setting up, and helping us use technology for our MIDTESOL conference presentations and was actively involved with the Computer-Assisted Language Learning Interest Section of TESOL and the Electronic Villages at TESOL Conferences.

Ron earned his MA and PhD in linguistics with secondary emphases in cultural anthropology and applied linguistics at Indiana University. He did field work in New Mexico for his MA and in the Ivory Coast and West Africa for his PhD. He married his wife, Ellen, while in the Ivory Coast, and their daughter, Erin, was born in Uganda.

Before coming to the University of Central Missouri (then Central Missouri State University) in 1975, Ron taught at the University of Texas of the Permian Basin and California State University at Long Beach. He came to Central to teach in an MA in English for Non-Native Speakers Program, which combined courses in literature, language, linguistics, and applied linguistics. He was later joined by Ward Sample, a fellow linguist, and the two of them developed Central's MA in TESL Program which was initiated in 1986.

Ron was also among the group of educators who worked together for 10 years to help establish Missouri's K-12 teacher certification in ESOL, which began as an add-on endorsement in 1990. From 1994 to 2001, he served as Project Director of ESL Advisory Services, a program sponsored by the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to provide on-site assistance to English learners and their teachers in Missouri's elementary and secondary schools.

After 31 years of service, Ron retired from teaching at Central in 2006. He continued at the university until his death working part-time as the liaison between the Information Services Department and the faculty.

Ron Long was dedicated to helping teachers of English learners create better educational opportunities for their students. He is and will be missed.

Professional Development Opportunities

May 2011 Workshops on English Language Learning and TOEIC Tests

The Educational Testing Service (ETS) will be sponsoring two full-day workshops at its campus in Princeton, NJ, on May 10 and 11, 2011. These *Propell* ™ workshops focus on means of preparing individuals for the TOEIC Listening & Reading and TOEIC Speaking & Writing tests and on improving language learning with new instructional tools and strategies.

Propell ™ workshops are rarely held (no additional U.S. events are currently scheduled). This is also the first time training has been offered for U.S. English language teachers related to the TOEIC Speaking & Writing test, newly introduced to the United States late last year. TOEIC tests are the world's leading assessment of real world English skills for business and the workplace, taken by over 6 million individuals each year and used by over 10,000 employers and other institutions.

Enrollment will be limited to fifteen teachers/trainers in order to allow sharing of ideas and interactive work with ETS expert trainers. Attendees will return to their centers with an in-depth workshop manual; TOEIC score descriptors; activity books, practice test books, and audio CDs for use with students; and certificates of workshop completion as well as new ideas to develop curricula for practical English skills.

The first workshop will focus primarily on means of improving student listening and reading skills, the second on speaking and writing skills. The information will be of value whether or not your English center offers/teaches to the TOEIC Listening & Reading and TOEIC Speaking & Writing tests; the workshops provide strategies and ideas useful in any language teaching environment.

Teachers can choose to attend one or both workshops. Tuition, materials, and some meals are provided without cost and rooms are available in the Chauncey Conference Center for $149 per night.

The application deadline for these workshops is March 31, 2011. There is some flexibility in this deadline for individuals not planning to stay at the Chauncey Center. However, please e-mail the English4Success Division at AMIDEAST at toeic@amideast.org now with a quick statement on preliminary interest at your center so that the workshop can be planned to best address all participant backgrounds and needs.

Educational Opportunities: CARLA Summer Institute Program 2011

Early Registration Deadline: May 31, 2011

The Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition (CARLA) at the University of Minnesota has sponsored a summer institute program for second language teachers since 1996. This internationally known program reflects CARLA's commitment to link research and theory with practical applications for the classroom. Each institute is highly interactive and includes discussion, theory-building, hands-on activities, and plenty of networking opportunities. CARLA summer institute participants—more than 3,400 to date—have come from all over the world. They have included foreign language and ESL teachers at all levels of instruction, as well as program administrators, curriculum specialists, and language teacher educators. The institutes that will be offered during summer 2011 are:

- Using Social Networking Technology: Collaborative Language Learning; June 20-August 19, 2011
- Immersion 101: An Introduction to Immersion Teaching for Character-Based Languages; June 20–24, 2011
- Content-Based Language Instruction and Curriculum Development; July 11-15, 2011
- Culture as the Core in the Second Language Classroom; July 11-15, 2011
- Focusing on Learner Language: Second Language Acquisition Basics for Teachers; July 11-15, 2011
- Meeting the Challenges of Immersion Education: Counterbalanced Instruction in the Immersion Classroom--Nearly full; July 11-15, 2011
- Immersion 101: An Introduction to Immersion Teaching--Teacher section full; space available for administrator section; July 18-22, 2011
- Developing Assessments for the Second Language Classroom; July 18-22, 2011
- Improving Language Learning: Styles- and Strategies-Based Instruction; July 18-22, 2011
- Language and Culture in Sync: Developing Learners' Sociocultural Competence; July 25-29, 2011
- Using Technology: Digital Storytelling for Communication; July 25-29, 2011
- Developing Materials for Less Commonly Taught Languages (LCTLs); July 25-29, 2011

Registration Information: The cost of each of the CARLA summer institutes is $350 if registration is received by May 31, 2011 and $400 after that date. More information is available on the CARLA website at: http://www.carla.umn.edu/institutes. To request a copy of a print brochure you can email the CARLA office at: carla@umn.edu.

Editor's Corner—Investing in Our Future
By Jennifer Morrison, K-4 ESL Teacher, Springfield, MO

For this edition of the *Matters*, I have been waffling between two topics to bring to you, trying to decide which would be more pertinent to the membership. My first thought was to comment on the political happenings across the country that are affecting teachers and students at all levels of education. Then, I had something happen at school that emphasized the personal connections we make with our students, how we touch their lives and how they touch ours. As I contemplated the issues, it occurred to me that the two are inherently connected—if those making the decisions about education could only understand the impact teachers have on this country and the world, perhaps education wouldn't always be at the top of the list when budget cuts come along. So, just in case some of those people making the hard decisions in our state capitals and in Washington, D.C., are listening, allow me to tell you a story.

Last year, I was lucky enough to receive two special students from China, a brother and sister, let's call them Amy and Jack, both of whom had just moved from China to live with their parents for the first time. Neither of them spoke any English, and neither of them knew their parents well. In fact, their situation was very similar to children who are adopted from overseas, minus the complete loss of the native language (since their parents do speak Mandarin at home). Simply put, both siblings had a rough go of things the first few months, rougher than most of my newcomers. While Jack was relatively quiet, he had no idea about how to act in school, rolling around on the floor, wandering wherever he wished, crawling under and on tables—yikes. Amy, on the other hand, is a very forceful personality; she says exactly what she thinks (I'm glad I couldn't understand anything she was saying sometimes!) and expresses herself in other ways that aren't quite conducive to an educational environment. In fact, there were a couple of times Amy's rages at school were so severe, the Special Education teachers had to help restrain her so she wouldn't hurt herself. Our first few weeks were—trying. All of us went through some extremely emotional days as we tried to find our way through this period of adjustment.

Over the next few months, we worked with Dad and Mom through our interpreter to keep tabs on the kids' progress, worked with Amy and Jack to help them acclimate to school life in the US, and worked with the classroom teachers to address the various needs Amy and Jack presented in the classroom. Amy and Jack did adjust—began to fit into the routine of school, and began to blossom—we started to learn what amazing kids they were (and are) and what wonderful talents they had. Amy was a whiz at math and loved to make jokes. Jack was caring and kind, always wanting to lend a helping hand to me or to his friends. Because of those emotional days at the beginning, I became very connected to Amy's and Jack's lives—invested in their success at our school and in their lives in general. I visited their parents' restaurant and learned about their history and business. I wasn't just the kids' teacher; I was the family's advocate—their friend.

About 2 weeks ago, we returned from Spring Break...and Amy was gone. Jack was at school, but he told us in his sweet English, "I go new school tomorrow." After having our interpreter talk with Dad, it was made clear that Amy and Jack were moving to New York to live with an aunt and go to school. I felt like I'd been punched in the gut. That day would be my last day to see Jack, and I wouldn't even get to say goodbye to Amy. All day, I dreaded the end of school when I would put Jack on the bus for the last time. When the time came, Jack gave me a big hug and said, "Goodbye, Mrs. Morrison!" I'm not ashamed to say that I went back into my classroom and wept. These students had touched my life, and I hoped I had touched theirs, whether or not they will remember Mrs. Morrison when they are grown.

What does this have to do with current politics? Everything. Teachers invest more than their time and intellect in their students. We invest our emotions. We invest our hearts. We invest our lives. That is why we get angry when lawmakers decide to cut educational funding and reduce our classroom resources. For the majority of teachers, the main issue is **not** about our salaries or our benefits—although those *are* crucial; the main issue is about our students. We invest our lives in them, and we only want to see our states and our country invest the same way. If our country doesn't decide that educating our children is **the** most important investment in our future, I shudder to think of what that future will look like.

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Social and Political Issues Highlighted on MIDTESOL Website

Please have a look at the new page at our MIDTESOL website devoted to social and political issues which have an impact on our students' lives.

There you will find a link to the TESOL advocacy page. You do not need to be a member of TESOL to have access to all of the information here, on hot issues such as Language Policy Legislation, the DREAM act, and No Child Left Behind.

Also learn about the project to bring together our English Learners with native speaking students. This idea grows out of research which shows that even very simple social contact can help English native speakers be more receptive to English learners.

The Chair for Sociopolitical concerns would like your ideas for other resources that could be added to this new page. Contact Joan Chamberlin, joancham@iastate.edu.