



The Passion Flower  
*Passiflora incarnata*  
Tennessee state wildflower

## *A Passion for Teaching*

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## Message from the President – Spring 2010

Many positive changes have occurred within TNTESOL this past year. I am proud to say that TNTESOL continues to grow as an organization and remains committed to its purpose. TNTESOL's mission is to develop the expertise of its members to help them foster effective communication in diverse settings while respecting individuals' language rights. Our purposes are to promote scholarship, to disseminate information, to strengthen instruction and research in the teaching of English to speakers of other languages or dialects, and to cooperate in appropriate ways with other groups having similar concerns. Anyone who is interested in the education of speakers of other languages is eligible for membership. We continue to seek new membership and offer new opportunities to interested individuals.

I would like to send out a huge congratulations to **Edie Barry** and her committee for a very successful 2010 TNTESOL Conference in Chattanooga! Not only were the planning and organization outstanding, the presentations offered were absolutely top-notch. With budget cuts and tight belts, that conference attracted over 400 people. Furthermore, the conference was dedicated to our very own **Sandra Baker**, Secretary-Treasurer, who is about to retire.

### TN TESOL Board of Directors 2010-11

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Jan Lanier  
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She has dedicated over 20 years of her life to TNTESOL, and she will be sorely missed.

I would also like to thank **Todd Goforth** for his exceptional leadership this past year. He is responsible for many of the changes that took place within our organization. I will carry on his excellent vision for growth and service, knowing his shoes will be hard to fill. As we move forward, we must not forget those who are leaving the organization: Sandra Baker, Andy Duck, Joe Reeves Locke, and Teresa Dalle. These folks have been instrumental in the growth of TNTESOL. They, too, will be missed! I would like to take this opportunity to *welcome* and *congratulate* our newest board members: *Dana Siegel, Paula Escobar, Dorothy V. Craig, and Dan Schlafer.*

Mark your calendars and write your proposals for our upcoming conferences! **SE TESOL** will be in Miami, Florida, September 22-25, 2010 ([sstesol.org](http://sstesol.org)). **TN TESOL** will be in Murfreesboro, March 10-12, 2011 ([www.tntesol.org](http://www.tntesol.org)), and **TESOL** will be in New Orleans, Louisiana, March 17-19, 2011 ([www.tesol.org](http://www.tesol.org)). In the near future, Tennessee will host **SETESOL in Knoxville** in 2012.

Last year Todd Goforth challenged you to promote our organization to the fullest. I would like to continue this challenge. By promoting the organization we grow as professionals. Please take the time to check out the *TNTESOL Newsletter* and *TNTESOL Journal*. They both contain a wealth of information from you – our peers and colleagues. I would also like to challenge you to get to know the **TNTESOL Board Members**. This is an amazing group of people who work very hard to keep TNTESOL one of the top state TESOL affiliates in the country. I am honored to serve on this board, and I'm very proud to serve as your president this coming year.

**To Murfreesboro, 2011!!**

*Tracy Bullard*

### Members at Large

Patti Davis-Wiley, 2011, UT Knoxville  
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Debbie Vaughn, 2012, Lebanon Special School District  
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Dan Schlafer, 2013, Monroe County Schools  
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Dana Siegel, 2013, Shelby County Schools  
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## Music & ELLs



Cristina Cottom  
ELL Teacher  
Metro Nashville Public Schools

Do you mentally hum or sing the ABC song when you are putting something in alphabetical order? Do you still sing, "I'm just a Bill" or "Conjunction Junction" from School House Rock when teaching these topics to your class? This phenomenon happens because music is a powerful tool for memorization and learning. Using music in the classroom is an exciting and unique way to teach children new concepts. There has been research that shows music and language learning share a strong connection.

Music is a universal language in human culture, because all cultures across the globe share in the joy of listening, playing, and dancing to music. Language is also another form of communication that is universal; all cultures understand what it means when a baby cries, which shows us that music and language are multi-cultural and have no barriers. Music can speak to a person of all languages, which leads us to the assumption that music in the classroom could be beneficial to ELL students (Abril, 2003). Music is a great medium to use in the classroom to break through cultural barriers and to teach ELL students about the different backgrounds of their classmates. As Jensen states "Music, in fact, breaks down barriers between races, religions, cultures, geographic distinctions, and socioeconomic strata" (Jensen, 200). There are few things that are enjoyed in life by people that can cross cultural lines.

Research that has been conducted has shown that there is a strong connection between music and second-language learning. It has been discovered that ELL students learn more new words when music or sign language are used in addition to their vocabulary lesson. Singing helps ELL children learn new vocabulary, rhyming words, and a better appreciation for language learning. Studies have shown that children learn how to sing before they learn how to speak, so if songs are implemented into the ELL classroom, the chances for language acquisition increase. Walking into a classroom, hearing languages students don't know, can be uncomfortable for an ELL and can make them feel uncertain and raise their affective filter. Using music in class can help create a relaxed learning environment and the student will begin to feel more comfortable and their affective filters will begin to lower, and in turn will

## Reflections from Chattanooga...

The smoke has cleared in Chattanooga from all who came "Aboard for ESOL". As I reflect on the TNTESOL 2010 Conference, I want to think that all who attended have hauled a freight load back with them that can be used to empower English Language Learners on the fast track to success.

Engines were fueled by keynote speakers Dr. Margarita Calderon and Dr. Silva. The presenters of breakout sessions rolled in with their flatcars, boxcars, and hoppers full of valuable cargo to share with the rest of us passengers.

The group of ELLs from East Side Elementary gathered at the depot and stole the show with "Chattanooga Choo Choo" and "Rocky Top."

Friday evening found us boarding the Southern Belle for an evening of cruising the Tennessee River, dining, music and dance, and taking in the lights of Chattanooga.

My heartfelt thanks go to the whole crew who kept this train running smoothly to the end of the line.

Edie Barry  
TNTESOL 2010 Conference Chair  
1<sup>st</sup> Vice-president, TNTESOL 2010-11  
Hamilton County Schools



produce an improved emotional state in the student.

In order better to assist ELL students, teachers will often implement music in their classrooms. Teachers do so because reports have revealed that music helps ELL students acquire vocabulary, improve spelling skills, and help expand reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills (Mitchell, 1983). The act of singing songs and listening to music can help students relax which creates a classroom environment that is more conducive of attentive behavior, and the idea of a "safe space" allows ELL students to leave their apprehension about learning a new language at the door.

A study conducted by Medina (1993) also showed that there are significant effects of using music with ELL students. In the study, 48 LEP students were divided into two groups. One group read a story with no additional support, while the other group sang the story. The results proved that more words were acquired when they were sung than when the words were simply spoken. This study further proved that using singing in the classroom helps to stimulate memory, which is beneficial in language learning.

So do you still have the ABC song playing in your head?

## English as a New Language (ENL)

K. Keith Pafunda

2009 Gundi Ressin Award Recipient

2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade ELL Teacher, Lenoir City Elementary School

In February 2009, I received an emailed article from the National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition and Language Instruction Educational Program, calling more ELL-teaching professionals to pursue National Board Certification. I wasn't aware of National Board Certification and was intrigued. I went to the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) website to find more information. I researched the requirements, both financially and professionally. After making the necessary initial payments, my "box" arrived in the mail and the journey started. I started in March 2009.

I needed to find someone who had already earned their National Board Certification in English as a New Language. Our school system has one person who is Nationally Board Certified, but in a different area. She was able to provide encouragement and support with regard to the timing of the work. Tennessee has only three teachers Nationally Board Certified in English as a New Language/Early Adolescence through Young Adulthood and five who are Nationally Board Certified in English as a New Language/Early and Middle Childhood. A fellow ELL teacher had met Debra Vaughn over the summer during the state textbook-adoption meetings and suggested I contact her. Ms. Vaughn is the first Tennessee teacher to receive National Board of Professional Teaching Standards Certification. Her certification is in ENL: Adolescent-Young Adult. I was able to bounce ideas off her and share my thoughts with her as well as ask her to provide feedback in areas I was working on. Having a Nationally Board Certified professional to talk with about this process is what all National Board candidates should have.

The process of National Board Certification has taken me ten months so far. The last Saturday in February I mailed "the box", certified, priority mail. I have scheduled my computer assessment, the last part of the Board Certification process, for a Saturday in May when the ELDA has long since past, the ELSA (our new charted TCAP) has been administered and packed off, so that I can once again focus on my long, long-term childhood goal of being a child advocate. It never occurred to me that I would have more than fulfilled this professional goal by being an Elementary English Language Learner Teacher, but I have. Pursuing National Board Certification has caused me to reflect on, analyze, and even explain why I do the things I do in my classroom. It has allowed me to be rejuvenated in the realization that I have done what I always said I would do, be a child advocate. Robert Frost, in his poem

*The Road Less Traveled*, said "I took the one less traveled by, and that has made all the difference". Such has been my professional journey.



*Music, from p. 3*

Music is a constant in life, and augmenting experience with music can only help students with learning. ELL students are going to be more open to learning a new language if they are in a class where the learning is presented in a way in which they feel comfortable, safe, and enjoying the learning process. Research clearly shows that there is a plethora of effects that music has on learning, and teachers should be confident about implementing music into their classrooms to assist with language learning. Because of the obvious benefits and with the support of research educators, teachers should feel encouraged to create ways to implement music in their classrooms to help not only ELL students but all students in their classes.

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## News from the State



Jan Lanier  
ESL Coordinator, State of Tennessee

Thank you for another great TNTESOL conference. Special thanks to Dr. Valerie Rutledge and Edie Barry and their team. Chattanooga hosted a wonderfully designed conference.

Thanks to the Special Education Department who came to discuss Response to Intervention (RTI) for us. This program is a wonderful one for us to use with our English Language Learners. We now have a better understanding of the program design and where we can go for guidance.

To those of you in public education, thank you for completing another year of English Language Proficiency (ELP) assessment with the English Language Development Assessment (ELDA). We hope to have assessment results for ELDA back by early summer. All assessment inquiries should be addressed to Steven Nixon at [steven.nixon@tn.gov](mailto:steven.nixon@tn.gov) or 615-253-4515.

The Tennessee English Language Placement Assessment (TELPA) has new cut scores. All incoming ELLS for the 2010-11 school year should be screened with the TELPA. Your district needs to plan the change from any other screener being used to the TELPA.

This could be the year for the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, recently called No Child Left Behind (NCLB). If you are interested in reading the Blueprint for this reauthorization, please go to <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/blueprint/index.html>

As you probably know by now, Tennessee was one of the two recipients of the *Race to the Top Award* for this next year. Tennessee will be receiving approximately 500-million dollars to aid in the improvement of our schools.

If your district is interested in a vocabulary workshop or a workshop for pre-service or new teachers, please request this through your NCLB Consultant. We will offer these workshops as requested in the nine NCLB regions of the state. If you are interested in your district hosting a workshop, we would appreciate your hospitality. There is also a possibility for new teachers to join a cohort at the state. This cohort is for all teachers who have been in the classroom fewer than two years. It is open to content, ELL, and other special-classroom teachers. Cohort members will receive two days of strategies for teachers, one day of ELL strategies, and one day of Special Education training. The cohort remains together for three years for two days of training the second and third years. This training is being hosted by Etta Crittenden in the Department of Teaching and Learning.

As always, it is my pleasure to represent you, collaborate with you, and serve you. Please contact me for any program concerns or questions. ▽

## NCLB Reauthorization – Title III

Jan Lanier

Although it has been a busy year for federal legislation, it seems that the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, signed into law during Lyndon Johnson's presidency and updated over the years, is likely to be reauthorized during 2010. During the last administration, there were sweeping changes in accountability, and it was called No Child Left Behind. With this development, ELLs changed from Title VII to Title III (a title being a chapter in the Act.). With reauthorization in the wind, we may again change Title numbers, but that is irrelevant. There are more relevant changes to be considered. If you would like to read the blueprint for the reauthorization, go to <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/blueprint/>

Nationally, the demographics are positive. For Monitored Former Limited English Proficient (MFLEP) students, know as Transition (T1 and T2) students in Tennessee, 68% scored proficient in math in 2006 compared to 69% of all students proficient in math; for English language arts, 71% of MFLEPs were proficient, while 78% of all students were proficient. The recent analysis of the lowest-performing schools indicated that the bottom 5% of these schools have a disproportionate number of ELLs. The new blueprint has English Learners (ELs, no more Limited English Proficient [LEP]) as a cross-cutting priority across Titles. This group will be recognized as needing more support across the federal-funding stream. Title III will not be alone in the programming for this at-risk group. We will see some major changes:

- Some funding will be competitive
- ELP standards must be linked to content standards
- Districts will be required to evaluate and restructure programs as needed
- Districts will be required to do a needs assessment
- Peer reviews will be held for English Language Proficiency (ELP) assessments
- Data will likely be disaggregated for students with interrupted formal education (SIFEs), language-proficiency levels, special needs, students in a program for more than five years
- The *n* size may be consistent across states
- And more information will be translated or interpreted for parents of ELs

In the past year, of the more than six-thousand Office of Civil Rights (OCR) complaints, only sixty-four related to ELs. This fact has prompted the Office of Civil Rights to take a look at the procedures. There will be more investigations of ELs and increased participation with the Department of Justice. In fact, OCR has moved into an

*Continued on p.6*

**TNTESOL** is an active and vital organization and we encourage and promote all TESOL professionals. If you know someone who would be interested, please let us know. We look forward to hearing from you.

The ***TNTESOL Newsletter*** is published three times a year. Submissions are accepted on a variety of topics. We welcome book reviews, issues in the fields of K-12, Refugee ESL, Adult Ed, Higher Ed and more, as well as articles on teaching strategies, news related to TNTESOL or the field, jokes, classroom anecdotes, even recipes. The style for submissions can be informal and articles are typically 500-1000 words. Of course, exceptions can be made! A bibliography is not necessary unless the article is research-based.

Send your ideas via e-mail, an attachment, and your personal information by the issue deadline to **Lee Martin**:  
[lee.martin@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:lee.martin@vanderbilt.edu).



## 2010-11 Deadlines

July 1  
December 1  
April 1

## Issues

Summer-Fall  
Winter  
Spring

*NCLB, from p. 5*

office space adjacent to the Department of Education so that work may be coordinated. The OCR encourages districts to look at the quantity and the quality of staffing. English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers who are not native English speakers should have English abilities in all four domains (reading, writing, listening, and speaking) assessed before being placed in the classroom. ELs should have equal access to gifted and talented programs as well as honors and Advanced Placement classes. The gatekeeper for these programs may not be a test given only in English. Special Education services need to be considered on a case-by-case basis. Materials and facilities for ELs should be equal to all other programs.

Parental rights are in the forefront of all planning. A request for a social-security number cannot be put on a form, such as an enrollment form, unless it is explained to the parents that they do not have to give this information. The district must explain why they are asking for the number and give an assurance that this information will not be shared with agencies that will use it for any other purpose than education of the child. For example, you should never ask an immigrant or undocumented family to fill out the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) because this information is often shared with third-party agencies. A district is not allowed to ask for immigration documents. The district may ask for proof of local residency. A district may not require a birth certificate, but may ask for one. If there is no birth certificate, an affidavit may be used. This should not "chill" or procrastinate the enrollment of the child in any way. Because health is a safety issue, districts may require immunization documentation.

All school documents should be translated or interpreted for parents. If the parents do not read, interpretation must be used. Giving a parent a translated document does not meet OCR requirements unless that document may be read and understood by the parent. The district may not ask a parent to bring an interpreter. It is the obligation of the district to provide the translator or interpreter. A child may never be used for interpretation. An 18-year-old student or former student may be used only if the s/he is employed by the district. Translators and interpreters fall under Title VI of OCR, so to use funds from Titles I, IC or III is supplanting.

According to OCR, a school should never retain a child if that retention can do damage to the child. It is illegal to retain an EL because of his/her ESL status. It is the obligation of the district to see that all students, including ELs, have full access to the curriculum. Teachers must make accommodations to allow for language-ability differences. It was advised that an EL in a pull-out program should not be pulled from math, but it was permissible to pull from art, music, or physical education.

Beginning in the 2011-12 school year, the program for ELs will likely have the same formula grant that exists today and a competitive grant. At this point, the entire Title III grant minus administrative expenses flows through to the districts for use with program and professional development. The 2011-12 budget proposal includes 50-million dollars for competitive grants for which districts may apply. The grants will need an innovative edge to be competitive.

Jan Lanier: [jan.lanier@tn.gov](mailto:jan.lanier@tn.gov)

## A New Wrinkle

Alicia R. Hannah  
Hamilton County Schools

Nowadays, students constantly walk around with iPods and ear buds. For one teacher, using this technology educationally seemed like a natural way to help her ESOL students. "iPods for Education" was the name of the \$800 grant written by Alicia Hannah, a fifth year ESOL teacher in Hamilton County. The program was funded through the Unum Strong Schools program. "We are so thankful that Unum funds projects like this. This is an idea that schools would never have the money for but Unum saw the value in such innovative approaches," Hannah said, "Hearing native speakers increases fluency and dramatically speeds up second-language acquisition. It is a great way to reinforce language for struggling English Language Learners."

The iPods will be used to reinforce language acquisition for beginning and intermediate students. In the past, when I tried to send home items on CD or DVDs, I found that it was very costly and many students did not have any resources at home (no CD players, computers, etc.). Last year, intermediate & advanced ESOL students were reading their first full-length book in English. They read Madeleine L'Engle's *A Wrinkle in Time*. Because it was a mixed-level group, Ms. Hannah sought other types of media to reinforce the text. The students would watch clips from the movie and listen to the book on a CD. Several students asked if they could take the CDs home so they could listen as they read. This modification was a natural one since an English Language Learners listening skills are often much better than their reading skills. That was when Hannah got the idea to try to find funding for a classroom set of MP3 players.

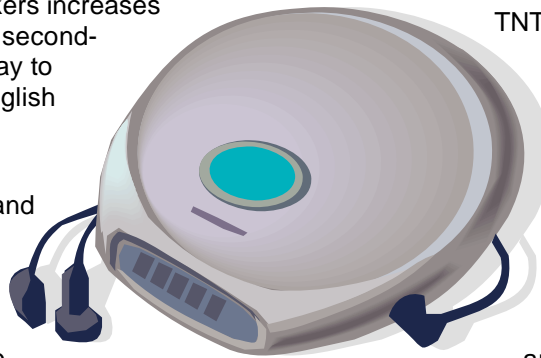
Examples of things that will be put on the iPods are:

- Songs (usually with a story)
- Poems read aloud by the authors (such as Shel Silverstein)
- Conversations/Dialogues between native speakers (from the internet and teacher-created)
- Books on tape (example: intermediate students who are still struggling readers will be able to listen to *A Wrinkle in Time* on tape while they do the assigned reading at home)

In addition to ready-made reproducible materials that can be found on the internet and for sale, the advanced students at East Ridge High School plan to make some language-specific recordings for newcomers. For example, if a new student arrives who speaks Arabic, ideally the teacher would be able to give him an MP3 player to take home on his first day. The player would be loaded with lessons, conversations, key vocabulary,

essential phrases, etc. that are translated into his native language. The hope is that this will jump-start some of the beginners and be a tool that will aid them throughout the entire language-learning process. Hopefully, if the program is successful, it will be something we might see in ESOL classrooms across the state. Some of the East Ridge students have even talked about applying for a small-business student loan to begin marketing and selling the materials they create! ▶

## Thank you!



TNTESOL Board of Directors and  
Members at Large:

Please accept my gratitude and appreciation for honoring me as the West Tennessee ESL Educator of the Year. I am both honored and humbled by this award. The TNTESOL organization has been extremely beneficial in my educational growth, and I'm grateful to be a part of it.

Mr. Todd Goforth, our outgoing TNTESOL president, has been instrumental in my growth as an ESL teacher, as well. His leadership inspires all of us to guide our students to success, not only in the classroom but in all of life's situations.

Again, thanks to both TNTESOL and Mr. Goforth for bestowing this honor on me. I am privileged to be a part of such a worthy organization.

Sincerely,  
*Lee Ann Kelly*, ESL Teacher, Shelby County Schools



TNTESOL Convention attendees, Chattanooga, March 4-6, 2010

## East TN Migrant Program to Partner with Boys and Girls Clubs

Paula Gaddis

Migrant Education Consultant/Title VI/Private Schools  
Tennessee Department of Education

Migrant students in the East TN counties of Hamblen, Jefferson, and Cocke will be able to participate in the Boys and Girls Clubs of those counties thanks to a cooperative agreement in the works between the State migrant program and the Clubs. Once enrolled, migrant students will have access to all services and activities of the Clubs for a year at no expense to the family. Students will have access to sports, recreation, health, and educational services at the Clubs. Lunch will be provided to the students during the summer, also at no cost to the family. Migrant summer programs in those counties named will be held at the Club locations with migrant, with bilingual instructors on site for migrant students to provide hands-on science lessons designed to address grade level reading/language arts, mathematics and science standards. It is hoped that we will be able to add Grainger county migrant students to this program as well. If you know of any migrant students/families who would benefit from participation in this partnership, please let Jessica Castaneda at TOPS know so she can be sure to include them. Jessica Castaneda [migrant@blonmand.net](mailto:migrant@blonmand.net). ✓



### HARD AT WORK!

TNTESOL Past President, Todd Goforth of Shelby County, and newly elected President for 2010-11, Tracy Bullard, of Williamson County.

**Thanks for all you do!**

Teresa Dalle, first *TNTESOL Journal* Editor, University of Memphis, presenting an award to Secretary-Treasurer Sandra Baker, UT-Martin. →

## Views from TNTESOL 2010 Chattanooga, March 4-6



Conference Chair Edie Barry and friends.



Board Members LaWanna Shelton and Andy Duck.





## AWARDS.....

**TNTESOL Service Award:** Sandra Baker, UT-Martin

**President's Award:** Teresa Dalle, U. of Memphis

**Gundi-Ressin Award:**

- Deborah Sams, Sevier County Schools
- Kathryn Pafunda, Lenoir City Schools

**TNTESOL Educator of the Year:** Deborah Sams

- **West Tennessee:** Lee Ann Kelly, Shelby County
- **East Tennessee:** Deborah Sams

**Charles Gillon Award:** Rev. Michael Feely

**Teacher of the Year,** Lebanon Special School District (5-8): Debbie Vaughn – also a finalist for Upper Cumberland Region Teacher of the Year (firsts for an ESL teacher in TN).

**Travel Grants – Best of TNTESOL:**

- Carol Irwin & Julie Carey
- Mark Littlefield
- Robinson *et al.*

**Congratulations on jobs well done!**

## Sandra Baker Honored at TNTESOL 2010 Conference

Teresa Dalle  
University of Memphis

On March 6, at its 2010 conference in Chattanooga, TNTESOL honored long-time secretary-treasurer, Sandra Baker. After acting as its secretary-treasurer from the beginnings of TNTESOL, Sandra officially retired from the executive board this year. Conference participants at the Saturday luncheon in Chattanooga applauded Sandra for her extraordinary achievements, noting that she has played an important part in the history of TNTESOL.

Sandra Baker became a charter member of TNTESOL in 1978. She was present on February 3, 1979, for the first official meeting of the executive committee of TNTESOL, where she officially became Secretary-Treasurer, a job she continued to perform until this year.

For more than 30 years, Sandra not only kept TNTESOL minutes in her role as secretary but also dealt with banks and the IRS in her duties as treasurer. Working in a quiet, competent manner, and with a permanent smile on her face, she has always been there for TNTESOL. The organization grew accustomed to relying on Sandra, and her name will forever be associated with it.

Beyond so competently fulfilling her extensive duties, Sandra also became a friend and mentor to many TNTESOLers. She has helped lead TNTESOL into the vibrant and active TESOL affiliate that it is today. The members of TNTESOL wish Sandra the best and salute her with a hearty and sincere "Thanks!"

## The Ultimate Profession

Debbie Vaughn  
Lebanon Special School District

I see teaching as the ultimate profession, the one I discovered after two other very different careers. I did not 'do it right': go to school for 12 years, college for four, and then go to a school to work. Because of this variance, my perspective of the profession is different from others'. When I think of ways to improve education, my thoughts have to do with taking an admirable and important profession and lifting it to an even higher level of excellence. I am confident that we can do so through initiating and encouraging collegial collaboration, widening the scope and significance of assessment, and broadening all stakeholders' exposure to and acceptance of our cultural and experiential differences.

In my school district, I spend half of my day teaching fifth-grade English as a Second Language (ESL). I have several language groups in my classes, with students at various levels of English proficiency. To serve these students better, I have an open communication with content teachers, suggesting accommodations and coordinating activities that assist these language learners in achieving mastery of English and more understanding of content.

The other half of my day is spent traveling to the other schools in my district, as the ESL Specialist. This situation is the ideal: I am still in the classroom every day, so am still 'in the trenches', with a close relationship with the other teachers at my school. On the other hand, I get out of the classroom to help teachers at other schools with professional-development issues such as accommodations for ESL children, placement and testing for the Special Education Department, and modeling best practices for instruction of ESL students. I also offer formal workshops in Best Practice and Operations, successful strategies in delivering content to ESL students, and how best to address the legal issues relevant to our ESL population. I believe this interaction makes our district a better place, with a program model in place that best serves the needs of ESL children of all grade levels. I would like to see a protocol put in place to improve collaboration, not only grade-level consultation, but open and effective communication, at the school site level and at the district level as well.

Assessment has become the golden chalice, the ultimate sign of success with all students. AYP, AMAOs, Cumulative Gains...the list is long. While I understand the validity of true and reliable assessment models, I do believe that true progress can be measured in many ways. I think we should concentrate as much on personal development as on cumulative data, as much on student growth as on annual scores, and make 'working to potential' as critical as showing proficiency. A test is, at best, a snapshot, a quick glimpse of a student's learning progress. I would suggest a more holistic look, taking into consideration several factors, such as educational history, home influence or interference,

*Continued on p. 11*

## Message from the Past President

As I close this year as President of TNTESOL, I once again want to thank the TNTESOL Board and all of the TNTESOL Membership for their support and contributions this past year.

It was an outstanding year for the organization. I truly strived to open the lines of communication in order for all TNTESOL members to become more involved in our outstanding ESL family.

Edie Barry, Dr. Valerie Rutledge, and their Chattanooga planning team organized one of the best state conferences in our history. The wonderful sessions and warm hospitality were outstanding during our visit to Chattanooga.

Congratulations to Deborah Sams on becoming the Tennessee ESL Educator of the Year. This honor was truly deserved as Deborah has been such a resource and positive force in the TNTESOL organization over the years.

This coming year will be one of the best ever with Dr. Tracy Bullard as our new President.

I do hope decisions made this past year will be of much benefit to the entire TNTESOL family in future years.

The best to you always,



Todd Goforth



- Teach them to set reasonable goals and to resist distraction.
- Use art, music, drama, and literature to enrich the mind and spirit.
- Inspire students with stories of individuals from diverse backgrounds who succeeded in spite of the odds.
- Empower students; lead them to feel like part of the solution.
- As you show kindness, challenge students to be kind to others and to 'pay it forward.'

Finally, it is essential that we develop our own supportive communities through networking with other teachers, the school nurse, counselors, principals, and TNTESOL/TESOL colleagues. These networks will provide techniques, resources, and support for the emotional strength necessary to do our work. With these strategies, we help our students overcome difficulties, build self-esteem, and prepare them for a better future ahead. ✓

## Supporting ELLs During the Economic Downturn

Deborah Sams, PhD  
Sevier County Schools  
Sevierville, Tennessee

The current U.S. economic downturn negatively impacts families, including those of English language learners. To be sure, the weak economy exerts pressure on families that filters down to our students. As ESL teachers, how can we best support our students during the current recession? How do other ESL teachers support English language learners in these harsh economic times?

Last fall, I posted a question to four professional listservs (TennesseeESL, TESOL Elementary Interest Section, TESOL Secondary Interest Section, TESLK-12) to prompt discussion on how to support ELLs through the current recession. Responses to my query provided ideas that comfort and support ELLs, addressing both basic and academic needs. Respondents contributed the following recommendations.

### Basic Needs

While it is not possible to change circumstances outside our schools, we can provide a supportive environment within the classroom. This environment contributes to a feeling of security and stability for students. Routines maintain stability while keeping academics a priority. ESL teachers recommended the following strategies to meet students' basic needs:

- Listen to students. Allow them to come to your room for lunch, have a chat or a snack together.
- Gather information for families on outside resources such as parenting classes, Adult ESL classes, churches, food banks, and cultural or language liaisons.
- 'Turn up the radar' for student needs (coats, glasses, dental exams, etc.). Seek help from churches, the local food pantry, organizations such as the Rotary or Lion's Clubs, Sunday School classes, and Bible-study groups for help. Look for winter hats, scarves, and gloves on sale.
- Organize healthy snacks for those who are hungry; give snacks to reward students for doing jobs, good work, or just to make the day better.

### Academics

Fostering ELL success in the mainstream classroom is a primary goal for ESL teachers. Use these strategies to support ELLs academically during the downturn:

- Teach students problem-solving skills and to cope with failure in positive ways.

← *Continued to the left.*

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*The Ultimate, from p. 9*

and each student's intrinsic motivation. When we look at these and other factors, we might realize how limited a view we get when we use annual standardized test scores as our main indicator of 'success'.

A final suggestion about improving this marvelous profession is to look beyond our own cultures, politics, and points of view to embrace the diversity that now defines our school systems. As an example, ten years ago, there were 12 English as a Second Language students in my school district. Now, there are almost 400. There were three language groups; now there are ten. This ratio of growth would hold true in several districts in Tennessee, and research indicates that this trend will continue. This explosion of multiculturalism in our school communities makes it imperative that we learn more about the families of our students. What are their goals? Their priorities? Motivations? Only when we learn these things, when we put differences aside, can we truly teach at the optimum level. Or, as Native American chief and statesman Sitting Bull said, "Let us put our minds together and see what a life we can make for our children." ▀

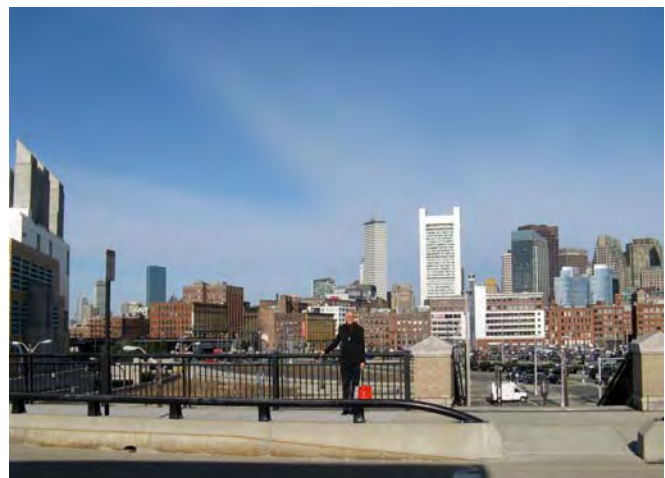
**TNTESOL was well represented  
at TESOL in Boston,  
March 24-27, 2010...**



Edie Barry and friends Claudia Thorndike and Patti Lucas at Harvard Yard



Cheers! *Where everybody knows your name - oops!*



Lee Martin on his way to the Convention Center (w/red bag)