



ConnTESOL QUARTERLY

The Connecticut Affiliate of the National TESOL Association

ConnTESOL Conference: Powers of Language



Attendees at the annual board meeting

The 47th annual ConnTESOL Conference was held on October 14, 2017 at the Sheraton Hotel in Rocky Hill, Connecticut. Over 200 participants were in attendance including teachers, college students, and our four lucky scholarship recipients. The event began promptly at 9:00am with the ConnTESOL board meeting. Attendees received information on ConnTESOL's ventures and successes during the past year as well as what the organization's vision for the next year. After the board meeting, attendees enjoyed the keynote address from Dr. Gina Barreca. Dr. Gina

Barreca has appeared on *20/20*, *The Today Show*, *CNN*, and even *Oprah* to discuss gender, politics, and power through the use of humor. The room was filled with laughter as Barreca recounted personal experiences and provided insight into the true powers of language using captivating stories. Guests raved about Barreca being "*truly impactful*" and an "*uplifting experience*". After the keynote address, attendees experienced three sessions of presentations, as well as a three-course lunch and the opportunity to shop from vendors selling educational resources and materials or hand-made jewelry from Guatemala whose proceeds benefitted orphanages in that country. Descriptions of (*cont.*)

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"If you talk to a man in a language he understands, that goes to his head. If you talk to him in his language, that goes to his heart."

- Nelson Mandela

the presentations offered during the conference are provided below, many of which provided free samples of educational resources.

Session 1

Supporting Undocumented Students: Barriers & Best Practices

Tashi Sanchez Llaury and Stefan Keller, CT Students for a Dream

Supporting English Learners: Building the Bridge from Standards to Achievement

Barbara Andrews, National Literacy Consultant

Beyond the Page: A Deeper Dive into the CELP Standards

Maggie Stevens Lopez, ACES Educational Consultant

Engaging Learners in Conversation Using Games and Activities

Andy Burrows and Ray Clark, ProLingua Associates

Culturally Responsive Instruction: Fostering Student Collaboration in Writing

Wendy Seger, Education Consultant & Loriee Cabrera Donovan, District Literacy Coach for Springfield Public Schools

Parents as Educational Partners

Elizabeth Love, Nicole Papa, & Patty Figueiredo, PEP Instructors



A glimpse of one of the session presentations



Barbara Andrews presenting "Early Intervention for K-2 Students in English and Spanish"

Session 2

The Power of History in Illuminating Contemporary Social Justice Issues

Mary Romney, ESL Administrator at Capital Community College

Cultivating Success Through Activating Cultural Assets: Social Emotional Benefits of English Learners Using Their Native Language in the Classroom

Dr. Teresita Galarza, Bilingual Specialist, Hartford Public Schools

Early Intervention for K-2 Students in English and Spanish

Barbara Andrews, National Literacy Consultant

Engaging Activities for Interaction

Monica Lahiri Hoherchak and Cynthia Manifold, Curriculum Associates for Professional Development for ELL Instruction, Stamford Public Schools

Dream, Create, Travel, Learn, Inspire: Fund For Teachers Fellowships

Lisanne Kaplan & Lisa Halloran, Montville Public Schools & Alan Reichle, New London Public Schools

Opening Doors and Windows/ Advocacy for English Learners

Nancy Tracy, Regional EL Coordinator EdAdvance

Session 3

Supporting Undocumented Students: Barriers & Best Practices

*Tashi Sanchez Llaury and Stefan Keller,
CT Students for a Dream*

Self Publishing ELT Materials for Educators and Students

Walton Burns, Senior Editor Alphabet Publishing

Cracking the Code: Building Digital Literacies with Emerging Bilinguals

Dave Weinreb, Sixth Grade Bilingual Teacher, New Haven, CT

Dream, Create, Travel, Learn, Inspire: Fund For Teachers Fellowships

Lisanne Kaplan, Lisa Halloran, & Alan Reichle, Montville Public Schools

The Power of Academic Language in Close Reading

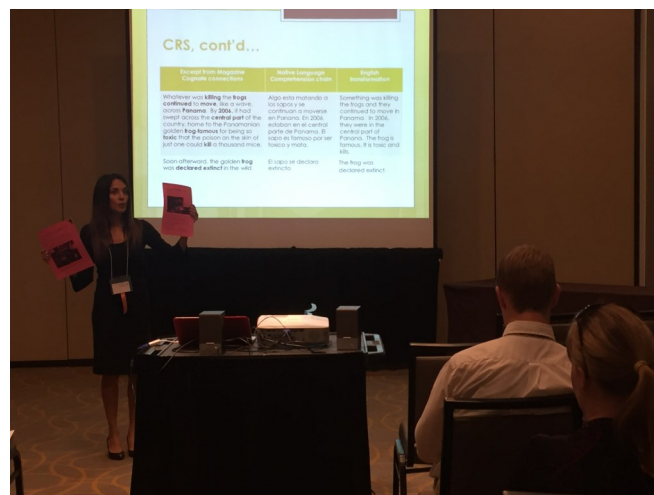
Jacqueline Matos, Bilingual Staff Developer for Waterbury Public Schools

Promoting Multilingual Student Engagement and Success

Dr. Tim Boals, Founder and Director of WIDA at the University of Wisconsin



A standing ovation by attendees captured at the ConnTESOL Conference



Dr. Teresita Galarza presenting "Cultivating Success Through Activating Cultural Assets"



ConnTESOL board members (left to right) Bradley Manwaring, Christina Jaramillo, Sue Miller, Eloy Jaramillo, Glorianne Rusate, Laura Vega, and Pam Loh



Dr. Gina Barreca giving her keynote address

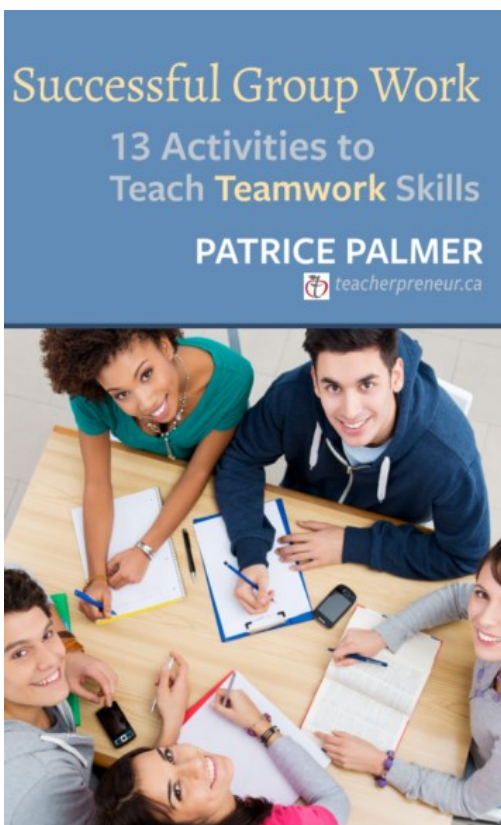
Successful Group Work: 13 Activities to Teach Teamwork Skills

Review by Pam Loh

When working with students, I always find that the best way to acquire language is using authentic tasks and everyday conversation. If you are looking for new strategies to build authentic experiences, as well as create or improve relationships between students in your class, one resource you might like to use is Patrice Palmer's **Successful Group Work: 13 Activities to Teach Teamwork Skills**. She outlines how to establish relationships, how to work as a team, and how to reflect on those experiences in order to grow as a student.

Our ESL classes are so culturally and linguistically diverse. It can be difficult as you begin teaching team activities if students are not used to working with people from different backgrounds. Using strategies from this "*teacherpreneur*" will help you to build the classroom culture necessary for students to tackle projects, to be comfortable in taking risks in the classroom, and to remember that everyone has room for growth as they reflect both individually and in groups.

Palmer's obvious audience in the book is



more of a middle school to higher education setting, however, it wasn't hard to see how these activities could be adapted for the elementary classes as well. These strategies are also great to implement if you are beginning/continuing/considering restorative practices in your class.

My favorite parts of the book were the mini-lesson plans that break these activities down into easily digestible information (*both for students and teachers*). I believe that these strate-

gies would be easily implemented in mainstream as well as ESL classrooms, and would be a great way to bridge the cultural gap between our ESL students and native English speakers.

Ebook price: \$1.99

Paperback price: \$7.00

More information on the book itself can be found at:

<http://www.alphabetpublishingbooks.com/book/successful-group-work/>.

Scholarship Recipient Essays

Every year, four students are chosen to receive a \$1000 scholarship in order to further their studies. The recipients this year are as follows: **CAPELL**– *Khushbu Patel*, Southern Connecticut State University, **Adult Education**– *Matthew Diamond*, Temple University, **Two-Year College**– *Natalia Rodriguez Espinal*, Gateway Community College, and **Four-Year College**– *Jose Manguia Gallindo*, UCONN. Congratulations to all four winners!

The Eye Opener

by Jose Manguia Gallindo

I first became interested in learning English at the age of six while on a trip to the U.S. During that trip, I began to envision my future goals, and I knew that the first step in achieving them was to learn the English language. Prior to this, I barely had any knowledge of the existence of cultural diversity beyond my own Ecuadorian culture. The quote, “**The limits of my language are the limits of my world,**” by Ludwig Wittgenstein best portrays my state of mind at that time. When I began learning English, my life began to change for the better.

My initial experience in the U.S. motivated me to learn not only the English language, but more about the American culture, and more about myself. This motivation helped me find additional methods for learning a new language. For example, I discovered new learning tools, such as the Internet, because I recognized that my own English language teacher in Ecuador was limited in the amount of language she could teach us. As I continued learning the language, my ambitions began to become more complex. For example, I did not want to learn English just to be able to pass a class, but rather to become a fluent speaker who could communicate with

people whose first language is English.

Learning English has helped me become more confident. I had to force myself to shed my fears and speak to others in a new language. This has not only helped me become more confident in my ability to learn a new language, but I have also noticed significant improvement in various other areas of my life, such as the social, educational, and other realms. Additionally, I have become more open with people, which was a trait that I had not originally possessed. As I practiced the English language, and began having conversations with native English speakers, both my pronunciation and listening skills began to improve. Furthermore, I have experienced the added benefit of expanding my social skills. As I have become more confident, I have begun to recognize improvement in all other academic areas. I was able to move from being an average student to a student who is excelling.

Learning English has helped me to create long term plans at a very young age. As a child, I did not have any plans that involved leaving Ecuador because I lacked the knowledge of the world beyond my own country. My plans as a six year old were to finish high school and work in a local pizza place just

because I really like pizza. As I kept learning English, and all the ways in which I could use it, I became more and more ambitious. Visiting the U.S. helped me decide what I want to do, such as attend an Ivy league school, visit new countries, and do something which will benefit the world. I always knew that if I did not seize an opportunity as soon as one was presented to me that I would probably be stuck in my country forever. That is why I am so grateful to be here.

To conclude, I would like to say that learning English has helped me to break the limits that I felt before, and as a result, I have changed my life for the better. I have realized that I would not be the person I am today if I had not learned English. I would not have the ambition to explore the world and learn more about its diversity, and I would not believe that I am capable of everything that I propose I am capable of. Since I have proven myself capable of overcoming a challenge once, I know that my potential for success is unlimited.



*Jose Manguia Gallindo (center),
and family at the ConnTESOL Conference*

Essay

by Matthew Diamond

I cannot speak on how English has influenced my life because learning English has literally changed every aspect of my life forever! As a young man growing up in China, the hopes of one day conversing in English was almost like a dream. However, that dream turned into reality when my parents stepped into my life when I was thirteen and took me to my new and forever home in Connecticut.

Upon arrival to the United States, I was not able to communicate with anyone that did not speak Mandarin. I couldn't even speak to my parents. That is when I discovered the power of the index finger—I would point or draw out in the thin air the things that I needed. From ordering or asking for food, to the key card to get into our hotel room, everything was a struggle in terms of communication. I remember my first day of middle school in the States, it was history class and our teacher led me to the front of the room and began to introduce me to the rest of the class. The teacher shared with the rest of the class that I did not speak any English and I had just arrived to this country. I remember feeling embarrassed because I simply can't say anything. I was not even able to introduce myself, but I fought to learn English and the ability to communicate. With the loving support of my parents and teachers, my journey of learning this intricate language began. Gradually, my English improved. This is not to say it was all

smooth sailing and that I experienced no challenges. But as the great Confucius put it, *"It's not about whether or not you fall, it's about whether or not you get back up."*

I am now a sophomore college student at Temple University in the great city of Philadelphia! From presenting Chinese economic reform policy presentations to saying *"Hello!"* to a stranger walking down the street, I really can do it all now! Nevertheless, even to this day I continue to learn English. Every book I read, there is always a new word I don't understand. I then open up my vocabulary notebook, copy the word down and proceed to look up the definition in the dictionary.

With the hope of one day creating and implementing policies that would increase the quality of life among the unprivileged and the poor, I will continue to fight. There is a great, cherry red banner that can be seen a mile away on the public road that leads to Temple University. It reads: *"Greatness Doesn't Quit,"* so I won't.



Matthew Diamond, second from left, and family at the ConnTESOL Conference

Nacho

By Natalia Rodriguez Espinal

It all started with reading. The recognition of sentences and phrases, letting your sight give significance. The moment my tiny hands grasped the paperback full of illustrations with labels in every page, my eyes searched for understanding, for learning between the lines.

M-a-d-r-e. A loving body with curves hugged her child.

Then they drifted to another one.

Padre. A bearded man smiled, putting a hand in the shoulder of his boy.

The connection between the illustration and the word. The need for more.

"Who can tell me the meaning of the word acquaintance?" my English teacher asked to the mass of teens gathered in the small classroom. The windows letting in humid air from outside, distributing across the confused expressions. She stood still, eyeing the pairs, whispers could not be heard, everyone was focused on something else. My mind was searching for the definition, trying to remember if I had read that word somewhere. If I had seen the word. A few seconds passed and my brain pieced the word, making a visual representation that raised my hand in a crowd of students with their heads low. The teacher nodded my way to

answer her question.

“Umm...it means a person you barely know” I said with a distinctive tone as the teacher looked at me, amazed with my answer. I was only thirteen years old and was placed in the English 5 Teen Class of the ELI (English Learning Institute) of *Santiago de los Caballeros*. How did I recognize the word acquaintance? Maybe I saw it in a sign somewhere, or browsing on the Internet. The truth is, English has completely influenced my existence, from the simplest words to the complicated emotions. Every day that passes challenges my knowledge on the contrast between Spanish and English, recognizing both helps me with more languages, like French and Portuguese, which I hear several times through the day. English has changed my experiences and my learning abilities, taking by the hand my dull weaknesses and putting them to the test. It transformed my career goals, opening new possibilities for my future profession, writing and composing in English creates a spark of knowledge, a power to fill journals that will inspire millennials like me who want to succeed in another language.

I was born in an island, and my Hispanic relatives are as humorous as they can be, the spice they brought contrasted the shyness that accompanied me for most of my childhood, trapping a person who wanted more and desired ideas to be spoken. English became the push, the nudge I needed to fight the insecurities that layered upon me, the fear of speaking, the fear of singing, the fear of being myself in an open

space. It was the only subject that made me stand out, making me leave my comfort zone and enter a new world of dialect that created passion for a new generation in the making. I picked the book *Nacho, and my path shone through and bloomed*.



Natalia Rodriguez Espinal (center), and family at the ConnTESOL Conference

A Different Language is a Different Vision of Life

By Khushbu Patel

I spent my childhood life in a small village in Gujarat, India. It has been only 3 years since I moved to the USA. Although I grew up in a different country with different cultural values, beliefs and traditions, I managed to adapt to this new culture. Although I strongly believe and respect my culture and its language, I am truly so grateful and pleased to have learned English - which offered me a unique sight to observe and learn the surrounding world. Due to the inability of my parents to speak in English, I had to take responsibilities at an early age to manage the bills, make any appointments and basically do anything that requires English as a communica-

–tion skill. Despite the responsibilities, I’ve earned excellent grades in school through my hard work and dedication as I’ve become fluent in English. Learning English has always influenced my life and my future plans, including my pursuit to become a pediatrician.

In my Capstone Experience course last year, I conducted my research on how adolescents’ lack of sleep affects their performance in school academically. I would not have been able to write a well-developed research paper if I did not learn English. As I became more comfortable speaking English, my communication skills and presentation skills developed throughout the years. I gained the potential to give a 20 minute presentation to Sheehan Staff on my research topic “Starting Later School Start Times” as a way to improve adolescents’ academic performance. Learning English as a second language influenced my self-esteem and built confidence in me to achieve my dream

Throughout my high school years, I’ve achieved many accomplishments and awards such as Certificate of Outstanding Work and Leadership in Geometry, Certificate of Excellence in Spanish I, Certificate of Superior Academic Achievement in Biology, and Certificate of Successful Completion of the Wallingford Public Schools’ Capstone Program. I am proficient and excel at speaking, reading, and writing in English, Gujarati, and Hindi. However, the Certificate of Excellence in Spanish I made me believe that every language can make the vision of your life even more beautiful and bright. With

great honor and pride, I’ve earned the title of being named as “Varsity Scholar” for my graduating class of 2017. I hope to continue to be exceptional and successful in my future career goal. The Connecticut TESOL High School Scholarship will provide me a chance to become successful as I work toward my goal. This Scholarship will also provide me an opportunity to stay more focused on my studies and reduce my stress over the lack of money. By reducing financial barriers, it will make my education and career goals less challenging to obtain. With great honor and appreciation, I thank the Scholarship Selection Committee for their valuable time and consideration.



*Khushbu Patel, third from left,
and family at the ConnTESOL Conference*



*All four scholarship recipients
at the ConnTESOL Conference*



Tech Corner

By Jennie Farnell



ABC Galaxy by Studycat

Synopsis: ABC Galaxy is a winner for the prize. It provides an interactive, engaging introduction to the alphabet in controlled manner, while also introducing phonetic principles and new vocabulary (*new for ESL learners anyway*). For teachers struggling with students in their classrooms with varying levels of English proficiency, ABC Galaxy could provide very useful additional practice or support for absolute beginners or beginning English speakers with low literacy skills. Although aimed at children, adults may also find it engaging, depending on their tolerance for games. The level ups are comfortably predictable, so learners can focus on the new information without struggling with learning new game expectations. All in all, this is an excellent support for early literacy and could be easily used in class or at home as a support for ELLs.

Link: <http://studycat.net/apps/abc-galaxy/>

Platform: iOS only

Cost: free for limited access, \$4.99 for full app

Age: 3-10

Proficiency: beginning

Pros: interactive and engaging, based on pedagogically sound research of learning through play; controlled input and repetition through a variety of activities

Cons: no direct instruction which might benefit learners already literate in another language; no directions for games (*probably more problematic to adults than children*)

Storycorps

Synopsis: Storycorps is a rich multimedia site. It is mobile friendly; however, internet / mobile connection is needed to watch the videos (*although they can be downloaded from YouTube and watched later offline*). Videos are beautifully animated true stories and definitely worth investigating, for both students and teachers. Free podcasts are available for audio stories. Many of the stories will be immediately relevant to the lives of ESL/ELL students, especially teens, as they focus on issues of growing up in America while dealing with issues of race, ethnicity, sexuality, and other differences (*although three are a lot of stories are set in past decades as well*).

Link: <https://storycorps.org/>

Platform: internet, iOS and Android, downloads

Cost: free

Age: teen and up

Proficiency: beginner and up

Handy Speech

Synopsis: Although pricey, this app could alleviate a good deal of frustration for ESL learners with low oral proficiency, as well as being beneficial for learners of any proficiency level who struggle with pronunciation. Even though most online dictionaries provide pronunciation, the off line accessibility of Handy Speech makes it a more convenient option. This would be a particularly useful app for adult learners who often have strong grammar and writing skills but difficulties with word stress and speech, rhythm, and intonation, since the app produces very natural sounding speech. Additionally, often English teachers encounter students who may have undiagnosed learning disabilities, make this a two in one solution for some of the issues these students might face. Handy Speech is more suitable for use on a tablet, although available for phones; the small screen size of some smart phones make it a bit difficult to use. All in all, this is an app truly worth investing in, either by teachers who might want to have it on hand in classrooms for ELLs or for ESL students themselves.

Link: <http://www.ispeak4u.com/overview.html>

Platform: iOS and Android

Cost: \$19.99 Android, \$29.99 iOS, \$2.99 30-day trial available on iOS

Age: elementary and up

Proficiency: beginner and up

Pros: easy to use, extremely good handwriting recognition, both print and cursive, natural speech intonation

Cons: price

Let Us Feature YOU!

We have already received entries from our ConnTESOL Conference that will be featured in our next newsletter. Don't miss out on this opportunity! We want to feature the voices of those who are immersed in the English Learner field each day. Current newsletter articles of interest include "Politics and English Learners", "Through the Eyes of a Teacher", and "Research on Best Practices". Have something else in mind? Feel free to submit that too!

Follow us to stay up to date on all of the latest ConnTESOL news!



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Facebook: [ConnTESOL](https://www.facebook.com/ConnTESOL)

Would you like to write an article for our newsletter?

Email us at conntesolnewsletter@gmail.com



CONN TESOL QUARTERLY

The Connecticut Affiliate of the National TESOL Association

Get involved! It's never too late to become more active in ConnTESOL. Our ConnTESOL organization has vacant positions that may be of interest to you. Please consider joining our team to support Connecticut teachers of English to speakers of other languages.

Executive Committee

First Year Co-Chair: **VACANT**
 Second Year Co-Chair: Eloy Jaramillo
 Recording Secretary: **VACANT**
 Treasurer: William Thomas
 Membership Secretary: Meg Cooney
 Past Chair: Pam Loh

Representatives

Adult Education Representative: Aileen Halloran
 Advocacy Representative: Violeta Kovaci
 Bilingual Education Representative: **VACANT**
 Community College Representative: **VACANT**
 CT State Department of Education Representative: Megan Alubicki Flick
 Elementary Education Representatives: Katherine Feltes and Susan Miller
 Higher Education Representative: Barbara McCleary
 IEP Representative: **VACANT**
 Secondary Education Representative: Violeta Kovaci
 Student Representative: **VACANT**
 Teacher Education Representative: Joy Jo
 Vocational Education Representative: Laura Vega

Liaisons:

CT Administrators of Programs for ELLs Liaison: Sally Vernaglia
 CT Council of Language Teachers Liaison: Dorothy Mulford
 LAsERS Liaison: Jessie Lavorgna

Appointed Positions

Newsletter Editor: Christina Jaramillo
 Social Media Specialist: Billy Conroy
 Webmaster: Jennie Farnell

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