A Global and Noble Profession: Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages

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Recommended Citation
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teed, and written biographies of several of the residents. This project met state writing and social studies standards while also providing great joy to the nursing home patrons. Our latest endeavor is a community garden, which has formed a partnership with our local neighborhood association. Students are primarily in charge of maintaining the garden with some teacher assistance. This project has helped to cover science, social studies, and language arts standards while forging a partnership with the community and parents. Older students commented on how service learning made them see the relevance of what they were learning and how the increased level of collaboration made them want to learn more.

Service learning projects are an excellent way for students to meet state and federal standards. Educators need to help the students of today gain the knowledge, skills, and resourcefulness to find the solutions to tomorrow’s problems. Service learning is a way to give students the tools that they need to live prosperous, productive, and collaboratively with others. In an educational system that is filled with mandates, requirements, and federal regulations; service learning provides a way for students to be involved in their education, to enhance their academic performance, and to help their communities. How can we not do service learning in urban schools?

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References:

Published by ScholarWorks@GVSU, 2010
The 2005-2006 data of the National Clearing House on English Language Acquisition (NCELA) report that the Limited English Proficient (LEP) student growth since 1995 has increased by 57.17 percent while the PK-12 growth increased by 3.66 percent respectively. Furthermore, an estimated 5,074,572 LEP students were enrolled in public schools (pre-K through Grade 12) for the 2005-2006 school years. The Michigan Department of Education reported that the number of English Language Learners (ELLs) in Michigan schools have increased by 105% since 1990. Although Michigan’s population is decreasing, the data reflect that its LEP student population is increasing. LEP students are English language learners who almost always need language instruction educational programs (LIEPs) such as dual immersion, bilingual, sheltered instruction, transitional, two-way bilingual, pull-out and push-in in order to help them learn both language and content. Many teachers in Michigan and throughout the country are faced with a number of challenges when it comes to educating these remarkable learners. As a result, the Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) program allows teacher candidates to teach English as a second language (ESL) in public schools, in private and for-profit settings, in adult settings and in international settings. The Grand Valley State University College of Education’s TESOL program collaborates with the Department of English in preparing teachers to teach in various LIEPS in the US and abroad. Dr. Nagnon Diarrassouba has joined the College of Education’s TESOL program from Northern Arizona University. Besides being a polyglot, he has extensive experience and knowledge in three global educational systems (Africa, The United Kingdom and The United States). In addition, he has taught in a number of areas from bi-literacy to African Studies. Between Education and English, TESOL candidates have 6 professors who represent much expertise such as English for specific purposes (ESP), second language acquisition (SLA), sociolinguistics, assessment, dialects, applied linguistics, grammar and usage as well as multilingual/multicultural education. Graduate candidates in the program are as varied, for they represent K-12 teachers (elementary and content areas), teachers of adults, and teachers of English as a foreign language (those who teach English in international non-English speaking countries). Many of the graduates in the TESOL program are teaching throughout Michigan and in places like Panama, China, Korea, Japan, Thailand, Saudi Arabia, Libya, Afghanistan and at The Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center (Monterey, California). Recently, the U.S. State Department’s English Language Fellow Program sought to recruit Grand Valley State TESOL U.S. educators for ten-month fellowships in a number of overseas locations. Qualified TESOL candidates can pursue various credentials such as:

1. K-8 or 6-12 ESL endorsement (21 credits)
2. Masters in Education with an emphasis in TESOL and a K-12 ESL endorsement (33 credits)
3. Masters in Education with an emphasis in TESOL (33 credits)

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TESOL Terms

Dual language program: A LIEP that develops strong skills and proficiency in both the students’ native language and English. It is also called a Two-way immersion program or Two-way bilingual program.

English for specific purposes (ESP): A field of TESOL that concentrates on teaching English for certain careers, such teaching business English to a group of Japanese Business men or medical terms to international doctors.

English as a foreign language (EFL): Teaching English in country where English is NOT the native language (e.g. Brazil, Algeria, Korea, etc)

English as a second language (ESL): Teaching English in country where English is the native language

Pull-out English as a Second Language (ESL) or English language development (ELD): A LIEP that requires ELL students to leave the mainstream classroom part of the day to receive ESL instruction. The focus is mainly on grammar, vocabulary, and communication skills, not academic content. There typically is no support for students’ native languages.

Push-in ESL program: A LIEP that serves ELL students in a mainstream classroom, receiving instruction in English with some native language support if needed. The ESL teacher or an instructional aide provides clarification, translation if needed, and uses ESL strategies

Transitional program, Early exit bilingual program, or Early exit transitional program: A LIEP that develops proficiency skills as soon as possible by initially providing instruction the students’ native language, but rapidly moves to English without delaying learning of academic core content.

Transitional, two-way bilingual: see Dual language program

Sheltered English instruction or Content-based English as a second language (ESL) program: A LIEP that provides proficiency in English while learning content in an all-English setting.
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The choice of credentials a candidate pursues provides various avenues to teaching English. Choices 1 and 2 are pursued by k-12 teachers, while choice number 3 is pursued by teachers of adults and EFL teachers (e.g. a student who majored in Business or an international candidate). The TESOL program has recently increased its international student population by over 300 percent, thus giving the candidates more contact with diverse peers and first-hand experiences of various cultures. Courses in linguistics and culture not only serve to enrich the candidates’ teaching experiences but they also provide insight into the English language and how many languages are structured.

A vital goal of the TESOL program is to work closely with school districts in the greater Grand Rapids area in creating an Academic English Mastery Program (AEMP). The focus of this program is to assure equity in access to rigorous standards-based, college preparatory curricula for Standard English Learners (SEL), English Learners, and other under performing students in Michigan. Speakers of different dialects of English should use Standard English as a strategy for increasing their academic performance. It defies logic to provide English language skills for only LEP students and not for historically underachieving native English speaking students. Particularly, since both groups speak a language/dialect other than Standard English and a number of them share low achievement characteristics. The Los Angeles Unified School District’s Office of SEL Programs/AEMP provides a model for the TESOL program’s goal.

The United States is becoming more of a global partner, and the students in our schools must be prepared to represent the country to the rest of the world. The TESOL program provides graduate candidates with opportunities to teach linguistically diverse learners who represent various cognitive and learning styles. Furthermore, TESOL complements the changing demographics of the classroom while making candidates marketable almost in any learning institution. For example, the international TESOL organization in Washington DC, currently lists over 45 jobs in more than 12 countries in the Career section of its website (http://careers.tesol.org). Most listings on the site require a Masters Degree in TESOL. As we become part of a global world within the US and abroad, the College of Education’s TESOL program leads the way.

For more information, please contact Dr. Ismail A. Hakim (TESOL Graduate Coordinator/Advisor) can be reached at (616) 331-6736 or e-mail hakimi@gvsu.edu.

By Dottie Barnes

Barbara Reinken traded in her grade book for a captain’s log. After 14 years at Grand Valley State University, she retired in May and immediately set sail with her husband aboard their yacht, Hallelujah, to

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**Reinken Retires with a Hallelujah!**

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