

2007 Ohio TESOL Conference
November 16-17, 2007

What a great opportunity the conference presented to meet other educators and professionals in related fields, to hear about new ideas and old ideas long-forgotten! As the fulfillment of the requirement for being reimbursed, I'd like to share some of the highlights of the conference with you. I'd also like to comment on some of the aspects of the conference which I think could be altered.

I was delighted at the wealth of web sites, bibliographies, and email addresses which were shared. One, shared by Kathy Olson, is already one of my favorites. It's providing a complete lesson for my students next week. Every presenter, without exception, provided a way for us to contact her. What would we do without email? Each presenter also provided handouts, which often included bibliographies, or notes. Presenters, for the most part, had so much to share, that there was little time for questions. Although when there was questioning, it was fruitful too.

Specifically, Kathy Olson's presentation on reading included so many clever suggestions. I have to say, that I had heard several of them in my TESOL graduate classes, but you forget. Upon reflection, I think the "True Stories" would lend themselves to some of the treatments she suggested. She suggested: giving the students only part of the text, and having them finish it; looking at the pictures and predicting what will happen; cutting up the text and piecing it together again; acting out the text and reconstructing it as a commercial or a news story; going back and substituting some of the words for different words; and extending the text by writing what might happen next.

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Wendy Buckley presented on synchronizing classroom events to real-life events, such as birthday parties or seasonal celebrations. Again, some of her ideas weren't brand new, but they are timely. This year I have a class of pre and low literacy students who I think would love if I implemented some of her ideas. For example, we could play Concentration (with simple vocabulary and picture cards), BINGO, Hangman, or Pictionary. I could reinstate my picture taking for this class and create scrapbooks the students would help make. For the past couple years, I had taken photographs of each student and pinned it to a bulletin board. I stopped doing it this year, but I could do it just for this class, and have them help me. I've just discovered that these students love to sing and recite, so perhaps we could start to perform as well. I have a camcorder which is gathering dust and could be put to use filming them. Wendy suggests having *My Country* reports where students share facts and items from their countries. Of course, all these suggestions could be springboards for further writing and talking.

Mike Dombroski from Ohio University shared his university's Audio Lab, which seems to have unlimited uses. Mike showed me how to, not only download a pod cast, which I've never done, but create one and make it available to my students. Fortunately, or unfortunately for Mike, I have his email address, so as I try to do what he suggested, I'll be able to contact him and ask him why it's not working!

In a poster session, Barbara Wookey and others showed where thirty instructors who all went to China, hailed from on a world map. They all taught an intensive English and American culture class for four weeks. The instructors at Max Hayes used to talk about such a trip. Hearing Barbara speak of their trip, rekindled my desire to travel. Again, I have a web site address of the program.

Thank you for the opportunity to attend the conference free of cost. It's a great privilege, and I do appreciate it.