

Issue 2

November 2012



SLS/ESL Program, Department of English, Purdue University

# ESL GO! Newsletter

## Designing Teaching Materials: A Workshop

On October 25-26, 2012, a Workshop on Writing at a University Level was held at the English Department, Faculty of Philology, SS Cyril and Methodius, R. Macedonia. It was initiated by Mira Bekar and organized in collaboration with the British Council and with the Faculty of Philology in Skopje, R. Macedonia. Participants, who teach writing in English, from six Macedonian universities, were involved: SS Cyril and Methodius University, SEEU (South-East European University), FON, University American College Skopje, State University of Tetovo, and Goce Delchev University. The workshop was aimed at revision of the existing materials (originally created by my Department of English) and design of new course materials for teaching in a foreign language

(English) to Macedonian and Albanian students at a university level. This workshop was a follow up to the Writing University Project my colleagues and I participated in. Specifically, in the period of 2004-2007, five seminars were held in Macedonia under the guidance of Dr. Teresa O'Brien, an expert from the University of Manchester, UK. Writing syllabi and original materials were created for years 1, 2 and 3. Year 4 was sketched around the requirements of the IELTS exam. Assessment of some of the materials was done through a questionnaire. Two members of the team had a chance to visit the University of Manchester for a short study visit and observation of classes. Three members presented a paper on the Writing University project at Sabanci University. Two papers related to

the project were published in the SS Cyril and Methodius University Proceedings. With this year's workshop, five years later, the seed for networking with other writing instructors from five Macedonian universities was planted. We are hoping for a fruitful collaboration on improving the advanced literacy of our students at a university level.

Mira Bekar

## Professor Margie Berns Presents at MEXTESOL

Professor Margie Berns, at the far left of the picture below, was in Mexico recently to give a plenary talk and a keynote address at the 39th MEXTESOL Conference held in Puerto Vallarta

October 18-21. After the conference she gave a series of presentations to university teachers and students at the Universidad Bonaventura de Panamericana, Aguascalientes; School of Languages,

Universidad de Colima; the School of Social Sciences and Humanities, Universidad de Guadalajara; Guadalajara Bi-National Center; and to public school teachers at an event arranged by the State of Jalisco Secretariat of Education. More detailed information will follow on this event in our next newsletter issue.



# An Ever-growing OWL: The Purdue Online Writing Lab and Supporting L2 Writers

By: Joshua M. Paiz, Purdue OWL Coordinator

At the end of my second semester as a Second Language Studies (SLS) doctoral student here at Purdue University, a call for applicants was issued by the Purdue Writing Lab. The then current OWL Coordinator, a rather brilliant Liz Angeli, was graduating and someone new would be needed to take her place. At first, I didn't even think of applying. But, after some gentle prodding from a friend and fellow SLS doctoral student, one Ms. Ghada Gherwash, I decided to apply. I wanted to increase my work on the Purdue OWL, because while it is already the premier free, online, writing resource in the world, I have always felt that there was more that could be done to support L2 writers through the Purdue OWL, and that was the agenda that I advanced with the rest of the Purdue OWL staff.

## A Plan in Action

When I stepped into the coordinator's position at the Purdue OWL, I was greeted by a website that sees over 30 million unique hits a year. That is, a website with over 30 million unique visits every year. The Purdue OWL contains hundreds of static instructional resources, sample papers, *PowerPoints*, and grammar exercises. It had also just started deploying dynamic resources in the form of short vidcast lectures on the Purdue OWL YouTube channel, *OWL@Purdue*. However, despite the size of the Purdue OWL, the resources dedicated specifically to L2 English writers were limited. This has led to an aggressive plan to expand the dedicated static L2 English writing resources (e.g., the APA citation guides) that the Purdue OWL has to offer.

This plan has been one that has received strong support both from the rest of the Purdue OWL staff--the Writing Lab Director and Associate Director--as well as from our various content developers--the people that help make the Purdue OWL what it is. During the summer 2012 development cycle, 3/4 of the content development projects undertaken by the Purdue OWL were dedicated to traditionally-defined ESL instructional resources. At the end of the summer 2012 development cycle, we launched an



expanded and revised section of "tips for writing in North American academic contexts," developed by Michael Maune. We

also launched a section on plagiarism geared towards ESL students, which was developed by Stacy Nall. The summer ESL expansion was rounded out with the development of a Revision check list, developed by Hwanhee Park.

The expansion of ESL resources continues in the Fall 2012 development cycle, where all but about four of the open projects have an ESL focus. These resources will come online during the Spring 2013 semester and represent the first batch of resources being developed in conjunction with the Purdue Writing Lab's new ESL Coordinator. These resources will include two new, and one revised ESL static resource and our first two vidcasts for ESL writers, both being developed by veteran OWL Developers Stacy Nall and Grace-marie Mike.

## A Border-hopping OWL

As mentioned earlier, the Purdue OWL is used around the world. However, all of the content has been developed by either an L1 English audience, or for the traditionally-defined ESL audience. Our users in the traditionally-defined EFL context may find it necessary to spend more time scaffolding OWL materials in their lessons, or the practitioners may only use the OWL for their own resource, finding it's material to be ill-suited to their context. In order to better understand how the Purdue OWL is being used in the so-called EFL context, and to better guide our growth in the future, the

Purdue OWL staff has designed and deployed a usage and attitudes survey. This survey has been rolled out to L2 writing practitioners all over the globe through professional organizations like TESOL International, Writing Program Administrators, the International Writing Centers Association, the European Writing Research Group, and a number of others. The Purdue OWL staff will use the results of this survey-research to decide how best to serve OWL users around the globe. At the very least, this will lead to an increased conscientiousness as we continue to develop our L2 writing resources. However, depending on the results of the survey, we may also see the creation of dedicated EFL writing resources.

While the Purdue OWL is already used all over the globe as an instructional tool to teach L2 writing, we are committed to delivering relevant and useful content to our users. To that end, we are actively seeking to expand and improve our

*Joshua Paiz: "I have always felt that there was more that could be done to support L2 writers through the Purdue OWL, and that was the agenda that I advanced with the rest of the Purdue OWL staff."*

# ESL Speaker Series

*ELT Professionals Publishing in International Applied Linguistics Journals: The Case of Mainland China*

Kyle McIntosh gave a presentation November 2nd on publication activities of English teachers in mainland China, followed by questions from the audience.



## Upcoming Presentation

*Investigating Task Difficulty in ESL/EFL Speaking Assessment: The Effect of Pragmatic Task Features on Response Latency*

Lixia Cheng presents on the influence of pragmatic features of speaking on Chinese English learners' response latency, and potential relationship between English proficiency, context, and pragmatic task features.

Date: 11/30/2012

Venue: RAWL 1071

Time: 5:30-6:30pm

## Tip of the Month: Succeeding in Graduate School Your search starts today! By: Kyle McIntosh

As a fellow graduate student in SLS/ESL who is currently on the job market, the best advice I can give to you is this: **DON'T WAIT! START TODAY!** Of course, that doesn't mean you need to start perusing the *TESOL* and *MLA* job lists anytime soon (unless your funding is about to run out), applying for every single position that mentions "ESL" and "tenure-track" in the same sentence. But I do wish to point out that it's pretty easy to get wrapped up in coursework, prelims, prospectus, thesis and/or dissertation – all essential to getting the degree you'll need to qualify for your dream job. However, when it comes to actually *applying* for that job, you'll find that the work we do as graduate students proper only makes up a fraction of what most prospective employers are looking for. Conference presentations, publications, and service (like being an officer in ESL GO!) will be what distinguish you from every other candidate in the field. If you've never attempted any of these things before, start with our annual Graduate Symposium and work your way up: *INTESOL*, *MwALT*, *AAAL*, etc... and whenever you receive positive responses to a presentation, start revising it for publication right away. Sitting on it for a year or two won't do any good. Even if it gets rejected, the feedback

will help you turn it into a better paper or find it a better home. Then, every time you present, publish, or do anything else related to your professional development, be sure to update your CV immediately.

You'll also need to start collecting sample syllabi, lesson plans, and student evaluations in case search committees ask for these. A teaching philosophy will likely be required. Most of us start working on this document in mentor group during our first year and then set it aside until we start looking for jobs (at least that's what I did). But a lot changes between your first and, say, fifth or sixth year in grad school, and it's a lot easier if you keep modifying all of your documents as you progress in education and experience instead of waiting until three weeks before an application is due to revise something that you wrote while teaching your second semester of ENGL 106. Speaking of which: don't just teach ENGL 106. I know most of you will also teach 106i for at least a year, but please take full advantage of the many other professional development opportunities we are fortunate enough to have here at Purdue: work as an instructor or tutor in the OEPP, Writing Lab, or un-

*Kyle McIntosh: "It's better to do as much as you can NOW and save yourself having to do more when you're writing a dissertation and have even less time."*

dergraduate linguistics (ENGL 227) to give yourself a wider range and broader appeal.

On a side note, you'll need to take Phonology I, Syntax I, and Semantics just to be eligible to teach ENGL 227.

Regardless, I think it's a good idea to take these courses because many universities are looking for someone who can teach both ESL and linguistics. Throw in a couple of core Rhet/Comp classes (I personally recommend ENGL 591: Introduction to Composition Theory and ENGL 605: Computers in Language & Rhetoric), and you'll find your prospects increase dramatically. In the end, this will mean something of a trade-off. You need to acquire the depth to position yourself as a second language specialist, but the breadth to re-position yourself to meet the demands of a highly unpredictable job market. It's better to do as much as you can NOW and save yourself having to do more when you're writing a dissertation and have even less time. Trust me, I know.

**CONTACT**

Department of English  
Purdue University  
500 Oval Drive  
West Lafayette, IN 47907-2038

**Email**  
ou@purdue.edu

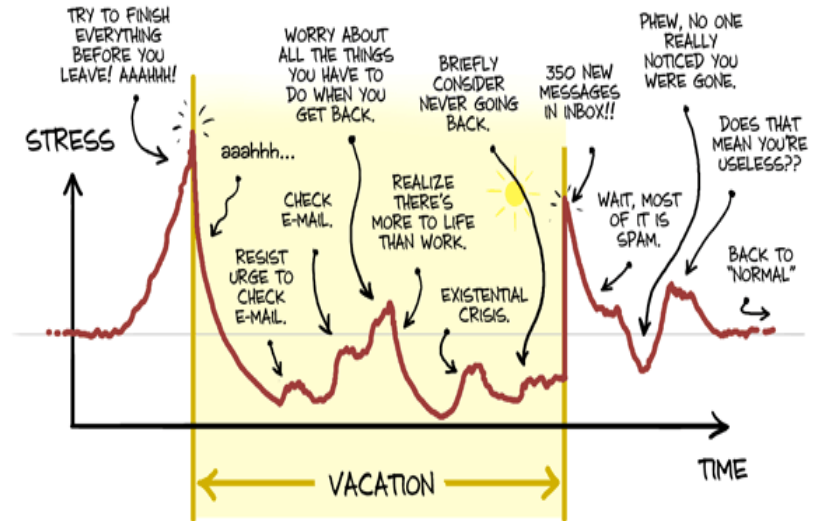
**Boiler Up!**

**Our Website:**

<http://web.ics.purdue.edu/~eslgo/index.html>

HAPPY WINTER BREAK!

**VACATION RELAXATION?**



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## Call for Papers

### Second Language Acquisition Graduate Student Symposium 2013: Contexts of Learning

There is a call for papers for an SLA Symposium. The deadline for submitting abstracts is January 21, 2013. Abstracts can only be submitted via email. This is the email address: [studorg-flares@uiowa.edu](mailto:studorg-flares@uiowa.edu). The conference will be held at The University of Iowa's UCC Conference Center April 19-20, 2013. Here is a link for more information: <http://www.uiowa.edu/~flares/symp13/call.html>

### University of Cincinnati Graduate Student Conference in Rhetoric and Composition

The deadline for submitting abstracts is December 30th, 2012. The conferences will be held April 6th, 2013 at the University of Cincinnati. The theme is Being Undisciplined: An Interdisciplinary Graduate Student Conference. Here's a link for more information: <http://beingundisciplineduc.wordpress.com/>

### The Economics of Language Policy

There is another call for papers for a conference on The Economics of Language Policy. It will be held July 26-27, 2013 in Venice, Italy. You can submit your paper at [www.cesifo.org/venice](http://www.cesifo.org/venice). The deadline is April 5th, 2013. This is a link for more information on the call for papers: [http://www.cesifo-group.de/portal/page/portal/CFP\\_CONF/CFP\\_CONF\\_VSI/VSI%202013/vsi13-elp-Wickstr%F6m/vsi13-cfp\\_wickstroem\\_02.pdf](http://www.cesifo-group.de/portal/page/portal/CFP_CONF/CFP_CONF_VSI/VSI%202013/vsi13-elp-Wickstr%F6m/vsi13-cfp_wickstroem_02.pdf)

### Language Testing

15 January 2013 is the deadline for submitting abstracts for the Second International Conference on Language Testing at the University of Antwerp in the Netherlands. The conference will be held May 27, 2013. You can find more info under this link: <http://www.ua.ac.be/main.aspx?c=LT-CEFR2013&n=111437>