November 2013
Issue 3

# ESL GO! Newsletter

SLS/ESL Program, Department of English, Purdue University

## Congratulations!

The following students and professors received a "2012-2013 Department of English Excellence in Teaching Award":

**Dwight Atkinson**
**April Ginther**
**Veronika Maliborska**
**Lena Shvidko**
**Tony Silva**

The following students and professors represented the SLS program at the annual INTESOL Conference held November 2 in Indianapolis.

**Aylin Atilgan**
**Margie Berns**
**Kamal Belmihoub**
**Ghada Gherwash**
**Aleksandra Kasztalska**
**Heejung Kwon**
**Song-Eun Lee**
**Josh Paiz**
**Lena Shvidko**
**Suneeta Thomas**
**Cong Zhang**

**Aylin Atilgan's** article "Effects Of Extensive Reading On Writing In Terms Of Vocabulary" got published in INTESOL Journal, Vol 10 No. 1 (2013). You can read it at:
http://journals.iupui.edu/index.php/intesol/article/view/15549/15610

# ESL November Speaker Series

ESL GO is pleased to introduce our October Speakers for the ESL Speaker Series:
**Professor Tony Silva**, **Annie Zhang, and Joshua Paiz** will give a presentation on 2013 Symposium on Second Language Writing held at Shandong University in Jinan, China last month.
**November 22, 5:30 – 6:30 pm, RAWLS 1011.**
A Happy Hour place will be announced later.

# Important Deadlines and Events

***Grant Proposals:***

- **ICaP Graduate Student Travel Grants for Pedagogical Presentations**: For more information:
  Stacy Nall, snall@purdue.edu
  Deadline: November 22, 2013

***Workshops (Sponsored by Graduate School)***

- **Authorship and Publication, General Copyright Issues. Presenter: Ms. Donna Ferullo, Director of University Copyright Office:** November 7, 12:00 pm– 1:30 pm, LWSN 1142. Complimentary pizza and drinks will be provided. To register: http://www.gradschool.purdue.edu/RCR/
- **Human Subjects:** November 14, 5:30 pm – 7:00 pm, LWSN 1142. Register on: https://ias.itap.purdue.edu/rgs/wgb_workshop.disp_online_workshop

# Our Experiences

Sometimes a simple conversation can change your life. One such conversation was the impetus for much of my work over the last two plus years. I was slouched on my usual couch at Vienna Coffeehouse my first semester in graduate school when I met now Professor, Josh Iddings. In our subsequent conversation he mentioned, and spoke highly of, the Oral English Proficiency Program (OEPP) at Purdue. As a language teacher and learner, I was immediately interested. Soon that interest turned into a curriculum description project for English 518 where I had the opportunity to comprehensively examine the instructor's manual, observe a number

of classes, and interview the director and staff. Before I knew it I was applying for a position as a tutor and was fortunate to be hired the next fall.

As a tutor I benefitted from the comprehensive curriculum project the semester before, but still had a lot to learn. Fortunately, I shared an office with three other experienced tutors and instructors who were always willing to answer my questions. Learning from the interdisciplinary staff of applied linguists, assessment specialists, language/literacy educators, linguists, and speech pathologists has been one of the most rewarding aspects of teaching and tutoring at the OEPP. Many of the materials, exercises and activities I now use were adapted from their material or are from a resource they directed me to. The director, staff, tutors, and instructors have undoubtedly aided in my development as a teacher and professional.

Of course developing as a teacher would be tough without students! The students at the OEPP are from across the globe and disciplinary spectrum which presents unique challenges. However we are fortunate at the OEPP in that we not only have a wide array of resources-a computer lab, language learning software, library-to name a few, but we are also able to systematically evaluate each students' Oral English Proficiency Test (OEPT) at the beginning of each semester. This serves as a basis for what language skills will be addressed and allows instructors and tutors to hit the ground running when the semester begins.

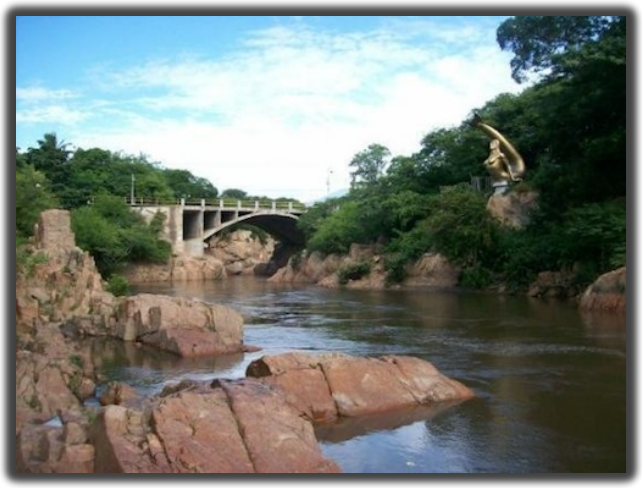
Working as a tutor, instructor, and mentor at the OEPP has been a challenging and rewarding experience-one which I may never have had without that first conversation. So the broader message here is the importance of connecting with your professors and fellow students. As the semester grinds on, take a break and have a conversation with your classmate, officemate, professor, or the person sharing your table at the local coffee shop. You never know what will come of it!

# Places We Come From

***Today our cultural tour guide is Rodrigo A. Rodríguez Fuentes from Colombia and he will share with us some interesting things about his hometown.***

***Lena: Rodrigo, tell us a little bit about your hometown.***

***Rodrigo:*** My hometown is called Valledupar. It means "Valley of Upar". Upar was an indigenous warrior, a leader. It's located in the northern Colombia, and it's the capital of the department. And that's the only department in Colombia that doesn't have the beach. So people in my city usually like the beach because we have it near but it's not ours! We share a lot of characteristics of people from the northern Colombia: very hardworking and really open. One of the stereotypes about our city is that we speak loud and we are really confident people. And I think that Latin people are in general nice, but we are somehow friendlier. We are not just nice, but we go beyond, we are helpful, we are very supportive.



***Lena: What would be an example of this?***
***Rodrigo:*** Usually in other cultures, when people have a problem, others try not to bother you, but we actually bother you and try to solve the problem with you! But sometimes it doesn't have good outcomes because people from other countries do not understand this. But now I think most foreign people in Colombia know that we like to get involved in your problems. It could be the smallest thing, for example, a problem with printing. We wouldn't just say "Sorry!" but we would take your computer and help you fix the problem.

***Lena: What do you like the most about your country?***
***Rodrigo:*** That's a good question… I think the "human" part of it. You can move the whole country to a different place, but that's the people that really matter, not the geography… And that's why we are not a very developed country in many aspects because we focus on a human condition instead of trying to develop something. We just try to help people; we wouldn't, for example, pass over a person to get what we want. We would always put ourselves in another person's position… We appreciate the importance of "being".

***Lena: Does this transfer to academic environments as well?***
***Rodrigo:*** Yes, most teachers are very "human" and they take into account the human factors that are important in your daily life. And it doesn't mean by the way they are not strict. They are just very understanding…

***Lena: That is wonderful. Rodrigo, can you share with us one Colombian tradition that you wish other people in the world adopted?***
***Rodrigo:*** There is something that is actually very small and it is called *parandas*. It's basically people getting together to celebrate things, but it's very intimate and very small. But when you pass by, you can always join. It's also impromptu: people just get together, start playing music, maybe cook something on their backyard, and have fun! I wouldn't even dare call it a party. It starts very spontaneously. Other people walk by and they see several people playing their instruments and they stop and start clapping and suddenly there are lots of people there! And some people like to improvise things by saying what's happening, and it's very random, it doesn't have any structure. We call it "versos", it's like playing rhymes. For example, I can say that you have a nice sweater, and other people start improvising on this theme… And there are some really talented people that can improvise and put together very nice verses… And people who watch it just have so much fun! And of course traditional music is involved and you don't even have to know how to sing in order to sing there.

***Lena: Why do you want other people to adopt it?***
***Rodrigo:*** Because this is how you get close to each other. Usually when there is *paranda*, you get more friends… And it starts in your house for example, but then your house becomes my house because you make me feel so…

***Lena: It sounds very fun! Makes me want to go there.***
***Rodrigo:*** Yes! And something that I really like about Colombia too is that we have everything. If you want to see snow, go to Chile. If you want to see beautiful beaches, go to the Caribbean. If you want to go to the mountains, go to Peru. If you want to see the Amazon jungle, go to Brazil. But if you want everything, go to Colombia because Colombia has it all!

***Lena:*** Thank you so much for sharing this with us!
***Rodrigo:*** Thank you!

# Voices From the Classroom

## Argument Paper & Creating website

***By Mariam Alamyar***

I recently developed a project for my 106 class which seemed to be quite successful and students really enjoyed and found it useful. The primary purpose of the project was two-fold; writing an argumentative paper skillfully for broader audiences and introducing the concepts and skills of building a basic website. The secondary purpose of the project was to provide students with the opportunity to experience working collaboratively with other writer as a freshman to develop their teamwork strategies.

For this project, they worked in pairs. I asked them to choose their partners themselves because I wanted them to find someone who was interested in the same topic to write an argument on as them as well as who they could find ways to work and communicate easily throughout the project.

For the first step of this project, students took a position on one of the following broadly defined topics: 1)Your Generation and Technology 2) Your Generation and Fashion 3) Your Generation and the Economy 4) Your Generation and the Social Media 5) Your Generation and Sexuality. Then I asked them to follow certain criteria for their argument by proving them an assignment guidelines sheet to consider elements of argumentative paper and their overall writing. Once they were done with writing their argument paper, they started to work on creating a website and placing their argument paper content on it along with charts, images, graphs or any other supporting elements within their content. In the same assignment guidelines as argumentative paper, I included criteria to consider in creating and

developing their website. They needed to create a website with two or more pages. However, they could have had more than two pages if they felt they needed more space to place their content or want to use them in the future. I provided students with the guidelines, tutorials, and additional materials to assist them in creating and designing their website. Additionally, students were giving time to work in the class as well at least for three sessions. They used http://www.weebly.com/ "a surprisingly easy way to create a unique website" and for designing a few options of http://www.picmonkey.com/ editing website. These two websites requires less technology skill both for the teacher and students.

Once, they were done with their assignment, they wrote a one page double or single spaced reflection on what went well, what didn't, what could have you done differently, and how you might improve this assignment even better in the future. The reflection was helpful for me and students to do things differently in the future and keep the things that went well. Afterwards, we had a showcase of your website and presented their argument.

Overall, I was amazed how students work with each other in an engaging manner to develop this project. Students seem to like, especially the second part of the project which was creating website to place their argument paper content. At the beginning when I mentioned about creating website, they thought it would be the most difficult task for them since they had heard of the creating website through HTML or other software programs in which they had to use the coding system which made their task hard and complicated. However, when they signed in and created their website through Weebly, they were so happy and worked a lot to design well their website. Some of the students use their creativity and innovations and went beyond what was required for this project when it came to designing, choosing the content, images etc for the website. When they had the showcase, most of them took pride in showing their website to others in the class and, especially after receiving compliments from their fellow classmates and me, they all looked cheerful and satisfied. They thought they would definitely use the skills they learnt through this project.

I think creating writing project with the integration of technology in classes like composition 106 or 106i is very useful and motivating. Working in pairs or group can be excellent tools to promote students' interaction, increase creativity, improve their writing, discovery and sharing of ideas skills. Plus, our life is revolutionized by technology and students are technology Savvy. They enjoy working on the computer and don't find such projects boring. This project can go well with 106i students, too. Instead of writing an argument paper, students can write biography or autobiography or any similar assignment first and then create the website to place.

# Our Research

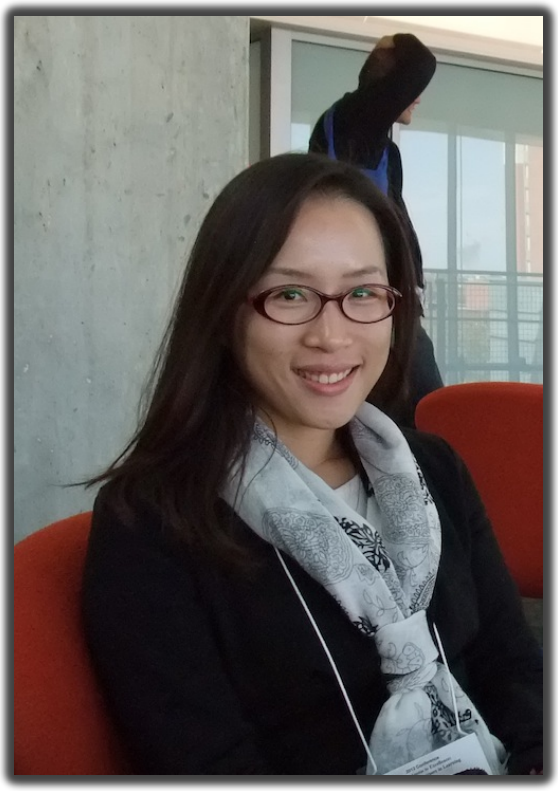
***Masakazu Mishima**:*

Hi everyone, I hope you are having yet another great semester crying and sweating!

As a 5th year Ph.D student, I'm currently working on my dissertation research and in this small space, I would like to briefly share my dissertation research so that I may receive some valuable inputs from you.

My research study is a situated case study looking into second language writing feedback with a particular focus on the impact of contextual forces surrounding the instructor and student in a specific instructional

context. My study is simply put, an antithesis to decontextualized highly abstract feedback studies in our field, which presume the mind and text linearity of teaching and learning. With this backdrop, one related and important question that I'm asking myself is where does instructor feedback come from? The Brain! The Mouth! The Deep Ocean! I hear you alright. My fundamental assumption in this undertaking is that instructor feedback is never isolated from the larger discourse, personal beliefs of the instructor, prior teaching experience, assignment requirements, and perhaps more. Writing instructors do not merely respond to students' texts but they draw on many different sources to make a highly selective choice with regards to what kind of feedback to be given and not to be given. My research investigates this complex interaction of different contextual forces and their impact on instructor feedback. In my research, I am also looking into students' revision processes and subsequent evaluation of the instructor on students' texts. As we all know, feedback – revision – evaluation is a three level cyclical process commonly observed in a writing classroom which employs a process approach, and each level feeds into the next level and creates a dynamic and contextually dependent system which only exists, in a very strict sense, in the temporary space of a given instructional context.
In order to make this complexity visible and provides rich descriptions of the dynamic system embedded in instructor feedback, I collect data from multiple-sources; observation, fieldnotes, interviews, and surveys to triangulate data. As you may see, this is a highly time-consuming task but at the same time, it is highly rewarding experience for me as a researcher in training.
I am yet to collect another case this Fall from one of our fellow colleagues and using this space, I would like to extend my appreciation to those who are helping me in this endeavor.
Thank you so much, and I hope I can share my findings sooner than later with our ever-growing scholarly community here at Purdue.



***Yunjung You:***

Hello, all ESL-ers! I am Yunjung You, a Ph.D. student, and this is my fourth year in the Department of English at Purdue. Now I'm working on my dissertation entitled "Relationship between Lexical Proficiency and L2 Oral Proficiency." This study has three purposes: 1) to compare the different lexical features among different levels of L2 oral proficiency; 2) to compare the different lexical features between the L1 and L2 in spoken language; and 3) to compare the effectiveness of measures of lexical proficiency in terms of their ability to predict the quality of L2 spoken production. Under these research purposes, I analyze the speech samples from the Oral English Proficiency Test (OEPT) and use two software programs to measure lexical proficiency: VocabProfile 3.0 and Coh-Metrix. For generating statistical inference, I employ Multiple Linear Regression. If you have any questions or advice for my research, please feel free to email me: yunjung.you@gmail.com or yeyou@purdue.edu. Thank you! ☺

# Upcoming Conferences

***Mark your calendar for the following date:***

**Nov 16-18:** International Association for World Englishes (IAWE), Arizona State University, Phoenix, AZ: http://iawe.asu.edu/

## Enjoy the rest of this semester
## and
## Happy Thanksgiving!

ESL GO! Website:
http://web.ics.purdue.edu/~eslgo/index.html

SLS/ESL Facebook Page:
https://www.facebook.com/groups/117624535104094/

ESL GO! Newsletter Editor
Lena Shvidko

Please send any suggestions, questions, or contributions to eshvidko@purdue.edu