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Cozy up with a drink and the AU TESOL newsletter!

Edited By: Elise Gorman
CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR DECEMBER 2012 GRADUATES!

MA TESOL
Molly Exten
Dara Hakim
Michelle Joubert
Marissa Klein

Graduate Certificate in TESOL
Andrea Duarte

“Cool and refreshing”

“To make this drink, I place dried hibiscus flowers in boiling water for 5 minutes. Then I strain the liquid, and I add sugar and mint leaves for additional flavor. The drink can be served hot, but I usually chill it.”
PROGRAM UPDATES

AU TESOL at Upcoming Conferences

Molly Exten (MA TESOL 2012) will present her paper "Russian Heritage Language Beliefs from the Perspective of a Mother and Daughter" at the American Association of Applied Linguistics (AAAL) Conference (Dallas, TX; March, 2013).

Heather Benucci (MA TESOL 2011) will present at the Electronic Village of the TESOL International Convention: "E-Teacher Scholarship Program: A Global Distance Learning Experience" (with Leslie Opp-Beckman) on Thursday, March 21 and "Trace Word Soup" and "Phrases in Space" - Mobile Apps for Education Showcase" on Friday, March 22 (Dallas, TX; March 2013).

Professor Heather Linville will be on an invited panel "Advocating for ELLs in and Beyond the Classroom" at the TESOL International Convention (Dallas, TX; March, 2013).

Other Presentations and Workshops

Dr. Robin Barr led the workshop "Using Psycholinguistics to Teach Pronunciation" at the Fulbright Foreign Language Teaching Assistants Conference in December 2012.

Dr. Polina Vinogradova led the workshop “Engaging and Empowering English Language Learners through Digital Stories” at the Fulbright Foreign Language Teaching Assistants Conference in December 2012.

Updates

Ingrid Rodrick Beiler (MA TESOL 2010) welcomed her first son Lukas Leander on August 1, 2012. Congratulations, Ingrid! Ingrid also reports that she has transitioned to teaching college students and adults and coordinating the English program at Bethlehem Bible College in Bethlehem, Palestine, since finishing her maternity leave.

Donna Bain Butler (MA TESOL 1997) has authored three forthcoming articles focused on academic English writing.


Bain Butler, D., Wei, M. & Zhou, Y. (2013). When the culture of learning plays a role in academic English writing. In M. Bondi & C. Williams (Eds.), Academic English Across Cultures vol. 10.


Jill Chiasson (Bodley) (MA TESOL Program) welcomed her son Samuel Richard Chiasson, on January 21, 2013. Congratulations, Jill!

Molly Exten (MA TESOL 2012) recently moved to Boston and started teaching ESL at ASC English—a private language school.

Michelle Joubert (MA TESOL 2012) is back in South Africa teaching Literature and ESL at the University of Pretoria. In the following semester, she will also start teaching TESOL courses. Congratulations, Michelle!

Bill Lalli (MA TESOL 2005) has accepted an invitation to serve in the Peace Corps in the Philippines as an English teacher beginning in July.

Please keep us updated on what you are doing!
We love hearing from Program alumni and current students.
# TESOL Program Calendar

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Date, Time, and Location</th>
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| Opening Reception                          | Tuesday January 15
|                                            | 4:00pm-5:15pm
|                                            | MGC 245                                                      |
| Portfolio Session                          | Thursday January 24
|                                            | 8:10pm-9:30pm
|                                            | MGC 247                                                      |
| Spring Workshop (p.5)                      | Saturday January 26
|                                            | 9:00am-2:00pm
|                                            | Butler Boardroom                                             |
| Program Social                             | Thursday February 14
|                                            | 4:00pm-5:15pm
|                                            | TESOL Program Office                                         |
| Spring Open House                          | Monday March 25                                               |
|                                            | 6:30pm-8:00pm                                                |
|                                            | MGC 203/205                                                  |
| Categorical Pizza (p.7)                    | Tuesday April 2                                               |
|                                            | 8:10pm-9:30pm                                                |
|                                            | MGC 247                                                      |
| Program Social                             | Thursday April 4                                              |
|                                            | 4:00pm-5:15pm                                                |
|                                            | TESOL Program Office                                         |
| Lecture and Book Signing (p.7)             | Thursday April 11                                             |
|                                            | 4:00pm-5:30pm                                                |
|                                            | SIS Founders Room                                             |
| End of Semester Potluck                    | Thursday April 25                                             |
|                                            | 4:00pm-5:15pm                                                |
|                                            | Letts Lower Level Conference Room                             |
| AU TESOL—WA TESOL Conference (p.17)        | Saturday April 27                                             |
|                                            | 8:00am-1:00pm                                                |
|                                            | MGC                                                           |

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*AU TESOL SPRING 2013*
Spring 2013 Workshop

Meeting Educational Challenges of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students through Professional Development, Student Community Engagement, and Research

Led by Dr. Anne H. Charity Hudley and Dr. Christine L. Mallinson

This workshop takes an interactive approach to sharing sociolinguistic research and professional development that helps K-16 educators meet the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse students.

Saturday, January 26, 2013
10am—3pm
6th Floor Boardroom, Butler Pavilion

For more information, go to: www.american.edu/cas/tesol/news/workshop.cfm

Co-Sponsored by the Center for Applied Linguistics

Jill Bodley
Earl Grey Tea [ərl gre tɪ]
“Comfort in a cup”

“This black tea flavored with bergamot oil was named after British Prime Minister Earl Grey in the 1830’s, and is considered a classic English afternoon tea. My favorite kind of earl grey tea is from Fortnum and Mason in London. I think it’s best served with a splash of milk and a spoonful of honey.”
Presently I am working on a thesis project designing a curriculum for ESL programs in the federal prison system, while pursuing my M.A. in TESOL. The project was developed by my initial interest in responding to a BOP education specialist seeking a research assistant to help update the current Federal Bureau of Prisons Policy 5350.24. After speaking with her, I realized there was a much larger project possibility and decided to pursue a thesis. I began writing a proposal, conducting background research, and contacting lawyers, librarians, and teachers with insight into the area. With Professor Vinogradova and Professor Linville’s assistance, I created an electronic survey for ESL teachers who work in prison and jail contexts in order to gain insight into their experiences to help shape the curriculum I design.

Taking what I have learned in my TESOL classes at American University and applying it to a very practical, real world environment has been a good exercise for me. Professor Linville’s “Curriculum and Materials Design” class provided direction and helped me to narrow my focus, clarify my questions, and re-think my research question. Learning to pitch a curriculum to a specific audience forced me to consider how a course is actually implemented, including budget limitations, material and topic development, and teacher training. My completed course designed from this class is a wonderful platform to refer back to in my research and expand upon ideas.

This project has been so exciting due to the variety of people with whom I have been able to speak. When I began researching, I thought information would be difficult to locate and that people would hesitate to speak with me. Locating similar research has been challenging, but I have encountered many people who are supportive, interested, and have asked for follow up information once my project is complete. Facing the barriers of security and red tape do slow me down. I have learned that research is a messy process and that I should not allow difficulties or limitations to deter me. I have also realized how far and how many different avenues an M.A. TESOL degree can take me. I am excited to see how my project develops and ultimately hope that ESL teachers working in prisons will find my materials beneficial.
More Upcoming Events!

Categorical Pizza

Led by Dr. Robin Barr
Tuesday, April 2, 2013
MGC 247

Enjoy pizza and other refreshments as Robin Barr, AU’s Linguist in Residence, explains the fundamentals of Categorical Perception and how it relates to pronunciation instruction. Categorical perception is the way that the language areas of our brains assign sounds to one distinct phonological category or another (e.g., /ba/ or /da/ or /ga/; /r/ or /l/) even though the actual sounds represent a continuum across those categories when perceived acoustically (by other parts of the brain).

Bilingualism in Schools and Society: Language, Identity, and Policy

Lecture and Book Signing by
Sarah J. Shin
Thursday, April 11, 2013 4:00pm-5:30pm
SIS Founder’s Room

Sarah J. Shin, Professor of Education at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County, talks about her recent book *Bilingualism in Schools and Society* and discusses the roles of identity and code-switching in multilingual family and educational settings. The lecture is followed by a discussion and book signing.

This event is free and open to the public.

Ashjan Allhedan
Arabic Coffee (Gahwah) [gahwah]

“It keeps me alert!”

“It is made from roasted coffee beans, and is mixed sometimes with other spices like cloves and mastic. To make Gahwa, ground it first, add 2-3 table spoons to one liter of boiled water, let it boil for 10 minutes, and then add a tea spoon of ground cardamom. I like to drink it before I start doing my assignments because it helps me focus on them. If you want to drink it, remember that you shouldn’t do so at night! I guarantee you will have a sleepless night if you drink just half a cup after 5 pm.”
John Mark King, MIP TESOL 2003
Director of the English Language Institute at the American University of Mongolia

John Mark has been busy traveling the world and most recently starting the English Language Institute at the American University of Mongolia. Read about his life as an English language teacher and teacher trainer.

I never planned to be an English teacher. To be perfectly honest, not only did I fall into the profession backwards, I also had my eyes closed and my hands in my pockets as I fell. But as remarkably unlikely as my “choice” of TESOL as a profession ultimately was, the turns my career has taken tend to have the following “holy cow” effect on me: I am walking down the street (often on my way to or from work) and I suddenly stop short; a flash of memory from my recent past via a blurred montage of images and sounds occupies my thoughts for a brief moment. Places I have been. People I have known. Challenges I have faced (or attempted to face). I think to myself, “Wow, did that happen to me?” or “How in the world did I get from there to here?”

To start, I remember sitting in Brock Brady’s office in the fall of 2002, discussing my reasons for wanting to become an English teacher, wondering if I had made the right choice. This was the beginning, sort of.

The year before, I had been evacuated from my home as a Peace Corps volunteer in Uzbekistan in the wake of the September 11 terrorist attacks. Despite having served less than 10 months upon evacuation, my Peace Corps service had changed my life. I know, silly, but it’s true. When I describe my life, or at least when I am fortunate to experience moments of true clarity, I see myself divided in two: before Peace Corps and after Peace Corps. I had never traveled before. Little of my life experience up to that point had taken place outside of West Alabama. As a Peace Corps volunteer I had suddenly been thrust into a new culture, complete with its own set of traditions, history, assumptions and even smells, all of which were alien to me. I had been selected to be an English teacher, but I wasn’t a very good one. In fact, I had found the love of my professional life in the world of language learning in general. I was an excellent student of Uzbek language and culture and found, quite remarkably at the time, that I was better able to examine and understand myself by learning how others did the same...differently.

Thus, as I began my studies in the TESOL Program at American University, I still knew little of what the future held. I even doubted whether language “teaching” could satisfy me as much as language “learning” had done before. Still, I wanted to travel. This was one way to do it. So I dove in.

I dipped my toe into the ocean of structural linguistics with Robin Barr. I learned the vagaries of English from Naomi Baron. Sigrun Lucas helped me to write a good lesson plan. In other classes I learned about culture’s entanglement with language, the intricacies of teaching reading and writing and the
differences between learning a second language and learning our first.

Upon graduation, I found myself thrust in front of a group of my own students for the first time since I had been the token foreigner at that small school in western Uzbekistan almost two years earlier. This was the College ESL program at Northern Virginia Community College. Little did I know at the time that this was where I would develop my love of teaching, finally. It happened slowly. But with the support of my colleagues and the tools I had collected in my time at AU, I discovered my passion, one lesson, one activity, one student at a time.

I discovered that I was, in fact, a writing teacher. Class discussion was vibrant and lively. ESL students, I learned, had the most remarkable and unique perspectives on life in America. In many ways, they seemed to know us better than we know ourselves. They also worked extremely hard on their studies and gave me the energy to respond in kind.

Yet, there was one piece still missing. I wanted to travel. I also wanted to be a language learner again myself.

In 2005, my wife and I moved to Dhaka, the capital of Bangladesh and a city of over 10 million. I taught writing at a small private university and witnessed for the first time the great difficulty with which hard-working English teachers struggle in the developing world for recognition and support. Upon reflection, this was an extremely important moment in my career. I was considered special simply because I was the native speaker, never mind that I had the least amount of experience of all my colleagues. Everyone wanted to be in my class. Although I didn’t notice it at the time, looking back, I can only imagine how difficult this was for the other teachers. Stupidly, I only reveled in my ill-earned celebrity.

I have two lingering memories of my time in Dhaka: One is how my students cried when I left. I mean big tears. From men. For an American, shocking. I didn’t know what to say. The other is riding pell-mell on the back of my friend Anwar’s bicycle at night through a bustling smoke-filled bazaar, looking for a repair shop to fix the chain. A truly dream-like experience that this country boy from Alabama had never before experienced and will likely never again.

After an abrupt and terrorism-related departure from Bangladesh, I became an English Language Fellow in Turkmenistan, a forgotten former Soviet republic bordered by Iran, Afghanistan, Uzbekistan and the Caspian Sea. This is where my career made its first turn. Here, in a marble-tiled desert city enhanced by the imagination of one unique individual with its thousands of fountains and presidential statues and even an ice palace, a city where (so the story goes), an immortal Turkmen rose from the ashes of a devastating earthquake to lead a nation into a blindingly prosperous future for which the days of the week and the months of the year were...
John Mark King, Continued

named after members of his family, I worked directly with teachers for the first time. I conducted trainings and workshops, co-presented with colleagues, designed training courses, and gave my first conference presentation (I failed miserably at my first try, by the way, but I didn’t give up). This new foundation of respect and admiration for the English teacher in the developing world that I discovered in Dhaka blossomed in Ashgabat, quite unexpectedly. My perspective on this phenomenon altered from one of curiosity into a full-blown mission to support my colleagues. I wanted to encourage teachers to collaborate, to participate in their association, to depend on each other more and to build and foster a community of professionals.

Later, I had two more years in the US at NOVA, but this time as full-time faculty. I worked to enhance my training credentials. I set my sights on another fellowship, but this time as a Senior, whose primary task was teacher development. So, I mentored graduate students and attempted (poorly) a teacher discussion group. I also coordinated a reading course and supervised new adjuncts. It was a fantastic experience for me. In many ways, my vision of how an English language program should be run is a product of my time at NOVA’s College ESL program.

Then, in 2009, I finally got my chance: a Senior Fellowship in St. Petersburg, Russia. I jumped at it. That September, I moved to the “Venice of the North” with my wife and 18-month-old son. My host institution was a pedagogical university in the heart of the city that spawned the Russian Revolution. On my way to work, I passed by the Church on Spilled Blood, a monument erected on the spot where Tsar Alexander II was assassinated in 1881 by an anarchist with the world’s first fuseless grenade.

At the university, I taught American Studies once a week to two or three small groups of students. The rest of my time I traveled and presented at conferences and worked with colleagues who had volunteered to write and develop teacher training co-presentations. I visited more than 30 cities, mostly in Northwestern Russia, and worked with hundreds of English teachers. In Murmansk, I gave workshops on Critical Thinking activities in the dead of winter where the sun is not seen for months. In Cherepovets, a group of teachers took me to a banya and beat me with birch branches. They also spoke exclusively in Russian with me the whole day. In Kaliningrad, I gazed across the Baltic Sea and stared at the death mask of Immanuel Kant (not at the same time). In Smolensk, a teacher and I visited the Napoleonic War memorial just after having finished reading War and Peace. In Pskov, I put my fingers into bullet holes made by Nazi machine guns on a chain bridge and listened to my colleagues’ tales of the German occupation.

The true joy of my time in Russia, however, was found with my colleagues, English teachers who trusted me to help them become better teachers.
and presenters, who volunteered to conduct workshops in front of people with twice their experience, who gave me big hugs when I stumbled off an overnight train, having spent the last 12 hours evading invitations to drink, ready to give workshops for eight hours straight. It was the place where I found the real reason I became an English teacher: To support other English teachers in places where they are not supported like I was at NOVA.

My time in St. Petersburg ended, also. And in 2011 I found myself, again, on the road. This time I (and my family) landed in Mongolia, source of the Golden Horde which, incidentally, had ruled Russia for hundreds of years after the death of Genghis Khan. As an aside, this new experience continues a trend in my life of living and teaching within the former Soviet sphere of political and economic influence. Bangladesh, the only outsider in this circle does happen to owe its independence (in part) to a USSR United Nations Security Council veto in 1971, however. I think of this often, but it seems fairly obvious that it is an attempt on my subconscious to make sense of a truly random set of events in my life.

In my first year in Ulaanbaatar, I wandered about (professionally speaking). I taught Language Assessment online in the US State Department’s E-Teacher program. I conducted an online Teaching Writing course for English teachers in the Andes region of South America. I got really lucky and landed an English Language Specialist gig in Peru and Ecuador (a follow-on for my Writing course).

In 2012, I learned of a new initiative to build an American University in Mongolia, the first of its kind in a country on the verge of enormous economic growth (it has the world’s largest mine) but which also has a Soviet-style tertiary education system that has largely failed its people. The (very) new university’s academic director happened to be a friend of mine and suggested that I start their English program. Before I knew it, I was designing an entire course of study for an EFL program at American-style university. The breadth of my decisions and responsibilities included placement procedures, course design, materials, schedules, learning outcomes, achievement standards and student recruitment, to name a few. But if my experience had taught me anything, I knew that, in order to be successful, my focus would have to be on the teachers.

As in many places I had worked before, English teachers in Mongolia are underpaid, overworked and poorly trained. They receive little to no support either from each other or their administration. Their English is often very poor, the result of many having been forcibly converted from teachers of Russian. English teaching in Mongolia is a profession only for those who can’t do anything else with the language (or so goes the persistent narrative). In the classroom, this convergence of inter-related challenges translates into a simple teacher-
centered grammar/translation approach in which, not surprisingly, little learning actually happens. And while there may be a small minority of English teachers in Mongolia who do not care as much about their students’ learning as they should (as is the case everywhere), it would be wrong to blame the individual teacher for even a small piece of this largely systemic failure. Very often teachers in Mongolia either don’t know or lack the time to employ more communicative approaches in their lessons. They use poorly chosen or out-dated textbooks. They have limited access to materials. Class size is often unmanageably large. In order to supplement their very low income, they teach private lessons when they could otherwise be planning lessons or grading the work of their other students. They do not participate in enough effective professional development activities. They often do not feel, as they should, that they are members of an international community of language professionals.

Where would I find teachers for this program? My preference was (and is) for qualified teachers who have chosen TESOL as their career. I also knew that I did not have the money to recruit teachers from abroad. I had to find my faculty here. But how?

Compounding this set of problems was the current state of English teaching at private language schools in Ulaanbaatar. Schools tended to hire native speakers, no matter their background and education. There was little emphasis on reading and writing and virtually none on critical and creative thinking in the classroom. Students relied heavily on the teacher. There was little development of autonomous learning skills. Individual learning styles, goals and preferences were rarely taken into account. These courses were immensely popular (and expensive), yet they had little effect other than to perpetuate the Native Speaker Fallacy.

Thus, my challenges came from two directions: First, because of the state of teacher education, it was going to be very hard to find good teachers. And second, I was going to have to undo the damage done by my competitors with regard to “how” English is best taught and learned.

I had read (and believed) that students who are opposed to non-native English speaking teachers have a tendency to change their minds when they see a good one in action. I bet everything on this and hired three Mongolian teachers and one American to start my program. The Mongolians were young and had recently graduated from college (all had studied TESOL at local universities). All of them had very good English. None had worked in the public schools or universities of Mongolia. Most importantly, however, they were eager to learn.

I designed a six-week intensive TESOL training program for them and then put them through a 12-week assistanceship in which they observed lessons taught by my American teacher (previously TESOL trained). Eventually, they planned and implemented their own activities and also took part in twice-weekly teacher support groups. In these meetings
we discussed articles and demonstrated new activities. Our second term began January 21. Each of these Mongolian teachers were given a group of their own students.

Things went mostly well. One group of students, however, openly criticized their teacher. They said, “Because this is an American university, we expect to have an American teacher.” They complained about her non-native accent, her poor spelling (when they saw her write on the blackboard traveler instead of traveler!), even her “way of thinking,” all within the first 20 minutes of the first lesson. While she did ask for my assistance, she did not leave the classroom, nor did she reveal any lack of confidence. Like the good teacher, she listened to them, nodded, smiled and considered their complaints.

In defending her to the students, I felt for the first time how much I was invested in her success, not just as a teacher in our program, but as a member of our global TESOL community. I looked over at her, and marveled at her bravery. I could not have endured such an attack. Indeed, as a native speaker, I have gotten far too much in the way of benefit of the doubt from the thousands of students who have passed through my classrooms. Non-native English speaking teachers must prove themselves in ways that native speakers do not.

Suddenly, I was again in Brock Brady’s office, discussing my reasons for wanting to study at AU TESOL, perhaps in no small part because I had just been asked to write this narrative the week before the student revolt took place. But back in 2002, I had no idea where that new decision would take me. To be honest, I still don’t know. I guess that’s why I still have so many of those “holy cow” moments. But that’s what is so great about the big decisions we make (even when we don’t know we are making them). If we nurture them, they will grow.
TESOL Summer Institute

Session 1: May 13 - June 27  All classes meet 5:30pm-8:00pm
• TESL-500: Principles of Linguistics, Professor Robin Barr  
  (Tuesday and Thursday)  
• TESL-501: English Language Teaching I, Professor Sarah Young  
  (Monday and Wednesday)  
• TESL-527: Cultural Issues in the ESL/EFL Classroom, Professor Sarah Young  
  (Tuesday and Thursday)

Session 2: July 1 - August 15  All classes meet 5:30pm-8:15pm
• TESL-502: English Language Teaching II, Professor Heather Linville  
  (Tuesday and Thursday)  
• TESL-523: Second Language Acquisition, Professor Ana-Maria Nuevo  
  (Monday and Wednesday)

Three-Day Intensive Workshop  
July 12-14  
Multiliteracies and Multimodal Communication in ESL/EFL Instruction

TESL-096.N01 (0 credit); TESL-560.N01 (1 credit); TESL-560.N02HB/N03HB (3 credits)  
0 credit - $702 (special tuition rate), 1 and 3 credits - regular AU graduate tuition rate

This three-day intensive workshop covers theoretical aspects of multiliteracies, TESOL teaching methods that include multiliteracies and multimodal communication, and discusses the benefits and challenges of this approach in ESL/EFL instruction. After the workshop concludes, workshop participants taking a 3-credit option have additional meetings with the instructor of record in class, individually, and online and complete a final multimodal project.

• Instructional component: (all credit options):  
  Friday-Sunday, July 12-14, 9:00am-5:00pm

• Follow-up component (3-credit option only):  
  In-class meetings: Friday, July 19 and August 16, 5:30pm-8:15pm
  Independent work and individual meetings with instructor of record: July 20 – August 15

Instructor of Record: Polina Vinogradova

Mark Evan Nelson  
Associate Professor and Director of Research in the English Language Institute, Kanda University of International Studies (Chiba, Japan).
Mark Nelson’s work is concerned with understanding the semiotic, sociocultural, and pedagogical implications of multimodal communication across geographic and cultural boundaries and via digital media technologies.

Neil Johnson  
Associate Professor in the English Language Institute, Kanda University of International Studies (Chiba, Japan) and Director of Curriculum & Deputy Director of the Research Institute of Language Studies and Language Education.
Neil Johnson’s work focuses on curriculum development, sociocultural theory, multiliteracies, and creativity in second language education.

Registration
For current AU students, register using the online portal at myau.american.edu. For non-degree seeking students, visit http://www.american.edu/cas/advising/nondegree.cfm for the non-degree information form. Registration begins on March 25, 2013.

Institute Tuition
Tuition is equivalent to graduate tuition costs. All costs are subject to change. Visit http://www.american.edu/provost/registrar/ or contact the TESOL Program at tesol@american.edu.
Join us for fellowship and snacks throughout the semester!

**PROGRAM SOCIALS**

**Thursday, February 14**
4:00pm-5:15pm  
TESOL Office, Letts Lower Level Suite 5

**Thursday, April 4**
4:00pm-5:15pm  
TESOL Office, Letts Lower Level Suite 5

**Thursday, April 25**
End of semester potluck and graduation ceremony  
4:00pm-5:15pm  
Letts Lower Level Conference Room

“LIKE” US ON FACEBOOK!“
Stay up to date on the latest AU TESOL happenings, catch links to current issues in the field, and browse the picture gallery of past events. Put your two cents in as well!

Search: American University TESOL Program
Professor Linville has participated in many exciting endeavors over the past several months. Read more about her recent travels abroad, professional presentations, and advocacy work.

It’s been an active academic year thus far! In the summer and fall I had the opportunity to once again travel internationally to Chile, El Salvador, and Guatemala. In Chile, I was an invited English Language Specialist for the U.S. Department of State (Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, Office of English Language Programs). As educational sectors continue struggling to implement appropriate assessments in language teaching and learning, the goal of the trip was to raise awareness of the importance of performance-based assessment for oral language skills. In addition to presentations at local conferences and universities, I was also able to sample some wonderful Chilean wine and see the beautiful cities of Arica, Copiapó, and Santiago. In El Salvador and Guatemala, I also addressed the role of assessment in language learning at their national conferences on teaching English as a foreign language and I demonstrated the Language Experience Approach (one of my favorites) in Guatemala. Highlights of these trips include exchanging ideas with pre-service and in-service teachers, eating wonderful food, celebrating the U.S. presidential election on foreign soil, and experiencing the earthquake in Guatemala. Memorable trips indeed!

Advocacy for English language learners (ELLs), which I define as increasing access to educational resources, improving academic outcomes, and seeking social justice within and beyond schools, is an important part of my work. I’ve recently had the opportunity to present the results of a preliminary pilot study on ESOL teacher advocacy at two conferences: as an invited panelist for the plenary presentation at the WATESOL fall conference in October and at the Maryland TESOL conference in November. This spring I also begin data collection for a mixed-methods analysis of ESOL teacher beliefs about and actions of social justice advocacy in their classrooms, schools, and communities. Also on the docket for this spring is an invited panel on advocacy at the International TESOL Convention in Dallas. As an example of advocacy from my own life, I have started volunteering at a local Baltimore elementary school, teaching Spanish literacy skills to mostly female immigrants from Central America. This is an important part of my own professional development and a way to give back to my community. Plus, I have the chance to practice my waning Spanish!

Finally, I am enjoying teaching for a third year in the MA TESOL program at AU. The opportunity to work with such well-prepared and motivated students is fulfilling in a number of ways, especially as I see the transition from students to ESL/EFL teacher colleagues. This spring I’m again teaching the course Technology in ESL/EFL Teaching, as well as the Cultural Issues and Reading and Writing courses. I look forward to seeing you there!
L&P is essentially a carbonated lemonade made and sold in New Zealand. Despite its simple nature and humble background, it tastes great and is popular all over New Zealand.

The joint AU TESOL-WATESOL spring conference gathers language educators from the Washington, DC metro area on AU’s campus for breakout sessions and panel presentations on contemporary issues in English as a Second/Foreign language pedagogy.

This year’s WATESOL-AU TESOL conference will feature:

- Special Interest Group (SIG) panels focused on issues relevant to teachers from all levels: primary, secondary, and adult and higher education
- Breakout sessions focused on teaching methods of various language skills
- American University TESOL graduate student research and teaching practice presentations

For more information visit www.watesol.org.