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ENGLISHUSA JOURNAL

In This Issue:

About the Journal

The EnglishUSA Journal focuses on theory and practice in the field of teaching English as a second/foreign language and serves as a medium for sharing best practices, addressing current issues and presenting research. Submissions will be received by the EnglishUSA Professional Development Activities Committee (PDAC), evaluated by peer-reviewers and published in an online journal to be shared with the EnglishUSA members and the wider ESL/EFL community. The EnglishUSA Journal is created for readers interested in English Language teaching, administration and leadership at the post-secondary level. The journal is published twice/annually and features practical and theoretical content primarily focused on programs that serve language learners in proprietary programs or university-governed institutions. Featured articles support EnglishUSA's interest to represent, support and be the recognized voice of English language programs, emphasizing engagement, integrity, excellence and collaboration.

Call for Journal Submissions for the 2021 Spring Issue

EnglishUSA is accepting submissions for the 2021 Spring Issue of the EnglishUSA Journal in the following categories:

- *In the Classroom* articles provide a space for instructors, trainers, administrators and managers to share practical ideas, resources and tools to use in the classroom. The objective of this section is to share best practices, encourage peer collaboration and inspire creativity.
- *Reports and Reviews* offer summaries of relevant events, conferences or resources in the English language teaching field. The objective is to update the EnglishUSA community with reports on useful topics recently presented at events and conferences in the USA and overseas. This section also offers professional reviews on English language related publications to help inform readers, which would be useful for their own programs.
- *Journal Articles* feature research, analysis and studies on teaching, learning and administration in the field of ESL/EFL. Content is relevant for instructors and administrators of the English language and focuses on language acquisition and learning, aspects of the English language, applied linguistics in addition to issues related to program administration.

For more info about the journal and submission guidelines: https://www.englishusa.org/page/Journal

Editorial
by Engin Ayvaz

As the journal editor, I am delighted to present to you the third issue of the EnglishUSA Journal. The 2020 Fall Issue features seven thought-provoking articles written by faculty, administrators and consultants from various programs and institutions across the nation and selected after a rigorous review process that involves members of the EnglishUSA Executive Board, external peer-reviewers and the EnglishUSA Central Office. I would like to take this opportunity to extend my appreciation to all those who were involved in the making of this publication.

As we all abruptly, forcibly (and somewhat reluctantly) transitioned to virtual teaching and working, most of us are still trying to figure out how to fully function in the two-dimensional workspace. Even more importantly, we are anxious to see how much of this temporary situation will prevail and become permanent or 'the new normal' as people like to call it nowadays. Thus, the third issue of the EnglishUSA journal is a collection of articles focusing on the ESL/EFL Industry response to the global COVID-19 crisis on multiple levels through innovative, effective and replicable ways to adapt instruction, assessment as well as other academic and administrative matters. Each article in the journal addresses a particular aspect of the issue. Nadine Baladi and Jennifer Wingate's article offers tactical aspects of creating an online brand for language programs in the absence of a conventional campus-based setting. Rachel DeDeyn highlights teachers as leaders in the classroom and makes recommendations for successful leadership strategies in the virtual context. Further, Jessica Cinco's article offers strategies for teachers to cope with the emotional toll brought by the pandemic. Building a community in the synchronous setting, yet another important aspect generally overlooked due to competing priorities, is examined by María Paredes Fernández in her article. In addition,

Amanda Brunson discusses accessibility issues in her article and offers recommendations for teaching students with disabilities online. In Jordan Gusich and Laura Colantonio's article, we learn about general principles and practical ways to adapt student evaluation to virtual contexts in order to assess student achievement reliably relative to curricular goals and objectives. Finally, Jennifer Gianico and Jacqueline Gianico's lesson plan provide a step-by-step guide to deliver an online class on recognizing and producing transition signals with synchronous gestural cues in writing samples. Overall, the quality, relevance and range of the articles are good indicators of the responsiveness, adaptability and resilience of our profession, which has always risen to the occasion and has endured many challenges throughout its history.

As you read this journal, the Professional Development Activities Committee (PDAC) has already started to plan for the 2021 Spring Issue. If you are interested in publishing in this journal, the call for proposals and the theme of the next issue will be released by the end of October. You may also apply to become a journal reviewer if you would like to be instrumental in determining the contents and sustaining the quality of the journal by evaluating submissions. The PDAC is planning several events to provide guidance to those who would like to be involved either as an author or peer-reviewer with the journal.

On behalf of the PDAC, I would like to thank you for being part of the EnglishUSA community by contributing to, reading, sharing and posting this journal.

Happy reading!

Engin Ayvaz is the Director of the Intensive English Center at Tennessee State University. He serves on the Executive Board of EnglishUSA and is the Chair of the Professional Development Activities Committee. His work focuses on quality and excellence in language teaching and international higher education.

Advocacy Corner
by Mackenzie Kerby

It was just a few short days ago when the Department of Homeland Security released an update on the new proposed rule that impacts both F1 and J1 visas. Among other items, this rule, if approved, would eliminate the decade long "duration of status" (D/S) policy for all international students. While there is still a 30-day comment period to respond, this proposed rule has thrown yet another wrench into the already struggling intensive English program industry.

The decline of intensive English program student enrollments from 2018 to 2019 has only paved the way for a sharper decline due to this year's pandemic. Removing the D/S policy would continue to negatively impact our industry by making the immigration process much more difficult for students. With everything going on this year both inside of the industry and out, it's hard to keep track of new developments. Here's what you need to know on this new proposed rule. This rule proposes:

- A student's length of stay would be determined by the program end date on the I-20. Many IEPs issue I-20s for one year. Current policy allows students to request a program extension from their DSO if needed. The new rule would require students to take an additional step and request an extension of stay with USCIS or at a port of entry.
- A 2 year limit on aggregate ESL study. F1 students would have a cap of 24 months in language training programs. DHS claims that two years is the appropriate amount of time for students to complete their language training without exploiting the system. The proposed change would not allow students who need over 24 months to complete a program of study to file for extension.
- A lifetime two-year rule. F1 students would be bound

by this two-year time frame indefinitely. While students may not study more than two years in their original IEP programs, they do often return to the US as business professionals to brush up on their English skills at a later time in life. This portion of the rule directly impacts each language program's goal to have students return and be "lifers" within their programs.

- A limit to pursue new F1 programs at the same educational level. Students would be able to pursue no more than 3 programs within the same level. As transfers are very common in the IEP industry, this would directly impact transfer-in procedures and could impact which students IEPs can and cannot accept.
- A limit on reverse matriculation. Students who complete one level of the educational studies (i.e. university) would only be allowed to return to a lower level of studies (i.e. English language training) once. This will impact students who return to language study after completing their degree program to strengthen their English to gain test scores for higher degree seeking programs.

Between the pandemic, layoffs, political landscape, changes to immigration policy, and so much more, I know the fatigue is real. I encourage you to press through the fatigue and make at least one step to advocate on behalf of your job, your program, and your students. Check out the quick ways you can get involved below:

1. Share your thoughts and questions about how this proposed rule will impact your program on EnglishUSA's Engage. EnglishUSA is working to collect your responses to better inform our official response as an organization.

2. Attend the 'Advocacy is NOT a Choice' session at the EnglishUSA Stakeholder's conference. This 45-minute session will take you through the basics of getting started with advocacy and how you can make your voice heard.

3. Engage with your Congress people via the Connecting Our World "Fight Back Against Duration of Status Change" page. In just two short minutes, you can send emails to your senators and representatives.

4. Tweet your Congress people with a short and simple tweet like: "#Internationalstudents contribute $41b to the US economy & support 450k jobs. Protect our students & our jobs against changes to the #durationofstatus policy."

Mackenzie Kerby is the Acting Regional Director for ELS Language Centers. Prior to this, she taught English at all levels: IEPs, high school, and university. She has presented at EnglishUSA PDC, TESOL, and is published in The Year's Work in English. Ms. Kerby's interest lies in advocacy for international education.

Leadership in the Time of Emergency Remote Instruction

by Rachel DeDeyn

What makes a teacher a leader? Simply stated, it is an ethos of care and the skills one needs to be an inspiration. It is the qualities found in teachers who recognize their innate power to make a difference in their students' lives, to be caring and compassionate, and to be the role model who "walks the talk," who believes all students have exceptional gifts, and who takes the time to help students find and give voice to themselves (Papalewis, 2007, p. xi).

We all recognize that teachers need leadership skills to be effective in the classroom. Teachers who have strong leadership skills set a positive tone for class, connect with, and empower students. As teachers have navigated the global COVID–19 crisis, strong, positive classroom leadership is even more crucial to keep students engaged with online learning. So, what does teacher leadership in the online English language classroom look like? The research in our field does not provide a clear answer to this question. While recent research has begun to explore teacher classroom leadership, the majority of research in the field of English language teaching focuses on teacher leadership that occurs outside of the classroom through involvement in administrative processes. However, a teacher's classroom leadership is arguably one of the most important factors in determining their effectiveness. To find out what effective teacher leadership looks like according to English language learners studying in an IEP at a US university, I surveyed 59 students on their perceptions of their instructor's leadership style, their course satisfaction, and their grade. Through correlation and regression analyses, two types of teacher leadership were identified that positively related to students' course satisfaction, one of which also positively related to course grade. These findings led me to develop the following list of suggestions for effective teacher leadership in IEP classrooms.

1. Establish a vision. Simply put, the vision of a class is what you hope to accomplish. The vision includes course goals and student learning outcomes, and during this time of emergency remote instruction, it also should include skills related to navigating a learning management system or time-management and self-motivation. To be effective, the vision will be relevant to students' personal goals and motivate them to succeed. While it may seem obvious how the learning outcomes in an English language class contribute to the goals of students hoping to attend university in the US, students benefit from considering these connections. Taking the time to discuss the skills that students will learn through studying online and how these skills will be relevant to their university classes can increase students' buy-in to this model of instruction.

2. Build buy-in. Hopefully, students will buy in to the vision of the class. However, this does not ensure buy-in to the day-to-day activities and homework. Explaining the purpose of activities and assignments and their connection to the learning outcomes for the class can increase student buy-in. For instance, the classes in the IEP where I work are all integrated skills classes, so students do not have separate classes for the various language skills. Teachers often hear complaints from students that they are not learning grammar, or writing, or another skill. This is not because the instructors are not teaching these skills, but because students do not recognize the activities and homework as addressing these skills. Explicitly helping students make connections between activities and their purpose in supporting course goals builds students' buy-in.

3. Challenge students. Challenging students can be a challenge for teachers! The IEP where I work, like many programs dealing with low student numbers, has reduced its number of levels, meaning that teachers now have a wider range of proficiencies within one classroom. To challenge all students in a class, teachers have to provide differentiated instruction. While differentiating instruction has always been challenging, it has become even more difficult in the online setting, where it is easier for students to "hide"

and more difficult for teachers to give on-the-spot error correction. One way that instructors have successfully differentiated instruction is by creating tracks for major class projects. Students who have a lower proficiency level and want to repeat the level can choose track one, which provides substantial scaffolding to help students complete the project. Students who have a higher proficiency level and are ready to pass the level can choose track three, which provides little scaffolding and shows mastery of the learning outcomes for the class. These tracked projects allow all students in the class to feel challenged, receive targeted feedback, and experience success at their level of English proficiency.

4. Be enthusiastic. This tip is of particular importance during this time of emergency remote learning. The spring and summer months of 2020 have been full of uncertainties and anxieties for teachers and students alike. Teachers had not planned to teach online, and international students studying at US IEPs had not planned study online, unable to meet their classmates face-to-face or explore the city in which they are living. A teacher's positive and enthusiastic attitude can spread to students who may not be excited about studying English online.

5. Reward students. Rewards are a positive motivator for students. However, they must be used strategically to recognize students who have made significant improvement or progress towards goals to be effective. Within the context of emergency remote learning, teachers can use rewards to keep students engaged and to build a sense of community. One of the teachers in the program where I work created weekly challenges in which students post a picture and a short paragraph or audio recording describing something they did during the week. The winners of these challenges receive a reward. Rewards can be as simple as positive feedback or praise, or can be material, like gift cards or extra credit points. Whatever form rewards take, they should be meaningful and valuable to students.

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Creating Community in the Classroom
by María Paredes Fernández

Relationships take work to cultivate and in the online environment it is no different. With the very nature of a language class, students need to feel comfortable in the classroom space in order to make the most out of their experience. This involves managing the discomfort of feeling vulnerable and expressing themselves in a language that they are actively trying to learn. Because of the risks that they are encouraged to take, classrooms need to cultivate a feeling of a safe space, and in order to do so, trust needs to be built. This doesn't just mean trust between teacher and student, but trust between individual students as well. Pre-COVID, we took for granted the opportunities students had to build upon this trust. This coming fall, most students will not have the chance to get to know each other and bond in the way that they typically do: on their way to class, before class begins, between and during activities, or once the class is finished. Some would take advantage of visiting instructors during office hours. Now that most of us are encouraged to teach remotely, in order to build community in the synchronous virtual environment, it is important to create affordances for students to get to know one another.

After having taught in two seven-week sessions and also getting the advice of a colleague who observed my class, I have listed below some of the strategies that I use to cultivate a sense of community in my synchronous classes. Something that I have learned is that unlike my in-person classes which were more spontaneous, interactions on web-conferencing tools like Zoom involve more curation. In other words, activities should be planned and intentional.

- Set a clear goal that the classroom space is designed as a safe space for students to take risks, to learn from one another, and to make connections. I have this written on their class page in their course management system for students to read even before our first meeting takes place. I also explicitly say this and will remind students of this from time to time, especially towards the beginning of the seven-week session.
- Schedule a 15 minutes buffer before class officially begins. If your class begins at 10am, allow students to enter the meeting at 9:45. This can give some students the opportunity to socialize before class officially begins.
- Icebreakers are not just for the first day of class. With the beginning of class, be purposeful with setting the tone. Devote the first ten-fifteen minutes getting to know your students. During the first few weeks, I model what it is like to facilitate a conversation and provide sentence stems for the students. In addition, it was also encouraged that the students elaborate on their answers and to probe one another for depth. I eventually asked them to facilitate the beginning-of-class conversations and would only chime in if I had a question or comment to add.
  - On the first day, ask them about their goals. Constantly remind them to reexamine their goals once a week. Remind them of their purpose especially when things get inevitably more difficult as time continues in the remote classroom.
  - Ask them on a weekly basis to change their avatar picture on Zoom and talk about why they chose it (Thank you to my colleague Kristina Lewis for this suggestion).
  - Ask them about their plans, or something that made them smile that day/week (another great suggestion by Kristina Lewis), what their hobbies are, a television series or book they're reading, etc.
- Plan for more time in the breakrooms: A general rule of thumb is that I add 3-5 extra minutes per activity students do in their breakrooms so they can socialize. Before putting them in these rooms, I deliberately tell them that they have some time to "chit-chat" and say hi to one another before beginning an activity.

- Encourage active listening: Have students do something as they listen to their classmates share their responses from a breakout room activity. Zoom offers a poll feature, but other low-tech options could be to use the chat or the whiteboard feature on Zoom. I especially like this latter option as this gives me some of the spontaneity of face to face instruction. Students can annotate as well by using highlight if they would like their name attached to their response or can anonymously use the stamps, text, or draw feature. Additionally, much like the beginning of class, I encourage students to facilitate the discussion.

- Take one class day (say every two weeks) to have individual or partner (if the number is too big) conferences. This is my time to get to know the students and for them to get to know me. These conferences could be informal check-ins or to review an assignment with them. If the purpose is for the latter, then in the time that I meet with them, I try to budget a few extra minutes to allow for small talk to happen.

There will be groups of students where this may click and then there will be groups that may take more time to warm-up to one another. Besides providing opportunities for them to flourish, relationships also take time to build. Enjoy this process with them. Although the modality of instruction is different, it can be possible for students to make meaningful connections to one another and with their instructors in the classroom if this is made intentional. In turn, this will make the remote teaching experience much more enjoyable for all.

María Paredes Fernández is a Language Specialist at Penn English Language Programs at the University of Pennsylvania. A multiple award-winning instructor, she has taught, designed curriculum, and coordinated programs for English Language Learners. Additionally, she is pursuing her Ed.D in Educational Linguistics at Penn's Graduate School of Education.

Increasing Accessibility in Online Courses

by Amanda Brunson

During the current pandemic, more students are taking online courses than ever before as many universities and intensive English programs are choosing to continue with remote learning for the time begin. But what is online learning like for ESL students with disabilities? This article explores some of the problems that students with disabilities may encounter in their online courses and offers suggestions for instructors on how to make their courses more accessible.

A disability is defined as "any condition of the body or mind (impairment) that makes it more difficult for the person with the condition to do certain activities (activity limitation) and interact with the world around them (participation restrictions)" (Center for Disease Control and Prevention, n.d., What is Disability?). Disability can include mobility impairments, learning disabilities, Autism Spectrum Disorder, emotional disturbance, intellectual disabilities, and speech impairments, among others. In order for any service or good, including education, to be accessible, a person with a disability must be "afforded the opportunity to acquire the same information, engage in the same interactions, and enjoy the same services as a person without a disability in an equally effective and equally integrated manner" (Burgstahler, 2017, The Meaning of "Accessible").

It is estimated that 19.4% of undergraduate students in the U.S. have a disability (U.S. Department of Education, 2019); however, the actual number is probably higher because some students choose not to disclose, and others may not have documentation or access to testing to "officially" be considered disabled by their institution. In higher education, as opposed to K-12, it is the student's responsibility to disclose their disability and request accommodations. Nevertheless, there are a number of

things faculty can do to make their online courses more accessible to students, whether or not the students have a documented disability and whether or not they have accommodations.

Online courses, particularly asynchronous ones, require students to self-regulate, to manage their time, and to prioritize tasks if they want to be successful. Unfortunately, students with disabilities, particularly ADHD, learning disabilities, and autism, often have trouble with executive function skills such as these (Dahlstrom-Hakki, Alstad, & Banerjee, 2020). Instructors can help with this by breaking down large projects into smaller assignments, giving clear step-by-step instructions, and by establishing a regular routine for the class.

Synchronous courses, such as those that meet frequently via video conferencing, sometimes include lectures and class discussion. Students with learning disabilities and processing disorders may have difficulty keeping up with the pace of the conversation (Dahlstrom-Hakki, et al., 2020), and students with autism, who already struggle with social skills such as understanding nonverbal communication (Cullen, 2015), may have even more difficulty in an online, synchronous discussion because of the "greater demand on social dynamics" (Dahlstrom-Hakki, et al., 2020, p. 9). Faculty can help in this area by not considering the amount that students talk as good participation, and by facilitating discussions in a way that gives students time to reflect and respond one-by-one.

As far as lecturing goes, instructors should record each lecture, make the video available to students, and be sure to include closed captioning or a transcript (Major, 2015). This will allow students with hearing impairments, sensory processing disorders, and a number of learning disabilities to re-watch the lecture or parts of the lecture as many times as they need to and read the content rather than listen to it.

Students who are blind or visually impaired and students with certain learning disabilities, such as dyslexia, may be using assistive technology such as screen readers.

Instructors should keep this in mind when designing their courses and posting text-based material and images. Some basic guidelines for creating accessible content include the use of headings and meaningful hyperlinks (i.e. a brief description rather than the words "click here"), as well as adding alternate text descriptions to images (Burgstahler, 2017; Major, 2015).

Other general advice for making classes more accessible includes providing multiple means of engagement, representation, and action and expression (CAST, 2018). For engagement, instructors should try to make the content relevant to the students, while keeping in mind that students may have different amounts of background knowledge or various motivations for taking the course. For representation, instructors should provide content in multiple modes, such as readings, videos, audio, and visual aids. And, for action and expression, whenever possible instructors can allow students to choose how they will demonstrate they have learned something. For example, students might be given the option to write a paper or give a speech.
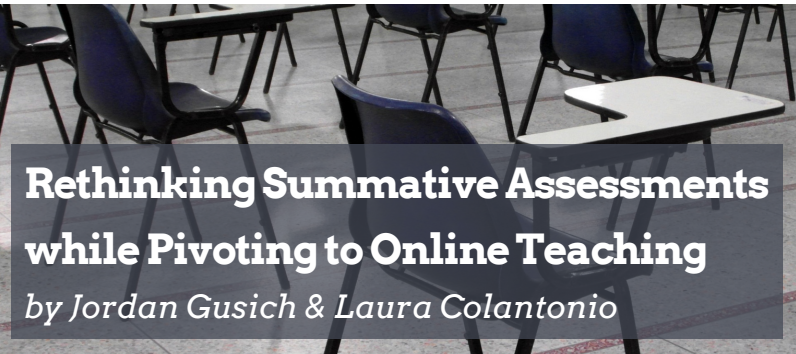
It is always important to make online education accessible, but perhaps it is even more pertinent now that many students are forced to be in online classes due to the pandemic. Even as more campuses open up, and students return to face-to-face learning, online education will likely continue to grow. It is essential that it be accessible so that everyone has the opportunity to learn.

Following the recommendations presented in this article will not only assist students with disabilities but will also likely benefit students without disabilities. For example, if a lecture introduces students to technical terms and new vocabulary, all students would benefit from closed captioning or a transcript. Moreover, providing content in multiple modes caters to students' various learning preferences as well as improves learning as they receive information in multiple forms.

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Rethinking Summative Assessments while Pivoting to Online Teaching
by Jordan Gusich & Laura Colantonio

Introduction
The COVID-19 crisis has necessitated adaptation from the IEP field. An essential facet of any instruction is assessment, which allows instructors and curriculum designers to track students' development and to ensure curricular goals and objectives are being met. With a sudden shift to online instruction, it becomes readily apparent that much of the in-person, observable assessments that IEPs are accustomed to become problematic. It is our goal here to offer general guidance to IEP instructors, curriculum designers, and administrators in principled practices of online language assessment.

Understanding Assessment
The two main forms of assessment that instructors deal with regularly are formative and summative. These two types of assessment differ in terms of goals and purposes (Formative and Summative Assessments, n.d.). Formative assessments involve the gathering of information in order to identify aspects of language that need further development. Once these weak points are identified, instructors can design activities that scaffold learners toward attainment of goals and objectives; the goal is efficient and effective development. Summative assessments, on the other hand, are more consistent with what are commonly known as tests and exams. Summative assessments judge and rate the extent to which learners have achieved goals and objectives; the goal is evaluation. The focus here is on summative assessments which, unfortunately, are more complex than formative ones in an online environment due their high stakes nature. Students feel pressure and often resort to tactics which undermine the validity summative assessments. Learning online can exacerbate academic dishonesty due to the lack of vigilance from instructors.

As such, we need to ensure our summative assessments remain effective while teaching online (Lathrop & Foss, 2000).

Ensuring Valid and Reliable Assessment Online
Technology has come a long way in replicating the proctored classroom environment. There are applications, exam platforms, and features of learning management systems (LMSs) that can track keystrokes, utilize webcams and microphones, and lockdown browsers of the end-user all with artificial intelligence noting and flagging suspicious activities. This technology deserves a further exploration, but we will focus on pedagogical options which can be implemented without the need of a third party. When adapting a course for online purposes, it is often more effective to rethink and redesign summative assessments rather than reapplying what has previously been done or planned in the classroom. First, we present a few of our favorite ideas to help mitigate academic dishonesty in an online teaching environment ("Best Practice Strategies to Promote Academic Integrity in Online Education.," 2009; Rowe, 2004). Then, we offer a few of our preferred types of summative assessments to consider while teaching online (Alternatives to Traditional Exams and Papers, n.d.; Kim & Yazdian, 2014).

Strategies to Lessen Academic Dishonesty
- Define, explain, and discuss academic dishonesty: In our field, there are different views and conceptualizations of what constitutes cheating. It is essential to ensure that everyone is clear about what academic honesty is and what its consequences are. Likewise, it is crucial to remind students that academic dishonesty hurts the student more than anyone – particularly for language learning. Suitable for just about any IEP class, academic integrity can be a topic for reading, listening, speaking, and writing. Students should be engaged with this topic early and often.
- Discuss, design, and create an academic honesty statement: As part of any IEP course, students and teachers can work together to develop a statement, or a contract, to abide by for the duration of the course.

- It is helpful to capture student voices in this statement. Keep this statement handy in the course LMS and have students sign it before any and every online assessment as a reminder.
- Develop specific rubrics: For each assessment, detailed rubrics should be provided for students highlighting what they will be evaluated upon. Rubrics help students' perceptions of the assignment align with the instructors. Therefore, students feel more capable of completing the task with their own abilities.
- Know those being assessed: Having an engaged presence in our students' online learning process offers teachers an understanding of where students are in their development. With this understanding, it becomes easier to spot work that does not reflect a student's stage of development. Likewise, having a strong teacher-learner relationship eases what are often difficult discussions.

Alternative Summative Assessments

- Portfolios or multi-stage projects: Instead of having one big assessment at the end of the term, consider a portfolio (a collection) of smaller tasks and assignments that lead up to a more substantial product. Documenting progress, providing feedback, and communicating throughout the creation of the portfolio allow teachers to track growth granularly, minimize pressure for students, and prevent a wholesale copy-and-paste submission. Reflections on students' work can be included where they present meta-analyses and describe processes they utilized. Instructors can evaluate these portfolios holistically and corroborate the multiple aspects of the portfolio for assessment. Portfolios and projects can be applied to any language skill. Moreover, they can be published within the class LMS only or beyond if desired.
- Briefings: Though they require a video-meeting platform, one-on-one interviews or small group discussions can be great ways to evaluate students in lieu of traditional paper and pencil tests. This is an obvious solution for speaking classes, but consider including them as part of reading, writing, listening, or grammar courses where students can reflect,

describe, and explain the work they have accomplished. These talks can then be analyzed and included in the assessment.
- Other types of performances: We are lucky at IEPs in that we focus more on the medium (language) than the content. We can be creative with our content and performances which can provide evidence for curricular objectives. Perhaps students can have the opportunity to present a grammar point and administer a test to their classmates. They might interview teachers for a blog-post, or maybe they collect information for a news show that they design and produce. Evaluating students doing something with language can often be much more insightful than scores on a test and much more difficult to be deceitful.

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In the (Virtual) Classroom: Transition Signals in Zoom with Gestural Cues
by Jennifer L. Gianico & Jacqueline M. Gianico

Lesson Plan

Teaching Background
Jacqueline Gianico is an instructor of high-intermediate to advanced reading/writing intensive English courses at Penn State. Her students are learners from China, Ecuador, Korea, Japan, Kuwait, and Saudi Arabia.

Lesson Title
Using Zoom to enhance comprehension and use of transition signals in writing with American Sign Language-inspired gestural cues.

Zoom
Zoom is a web conferencing software that is known for its video capabilities. Some of the notable features are the ability for students to share audio and video during meetings and sharing screens during breakout sessions. This allows for a highly interactive synchronous learning experience.

Lesson Objective
With instructor and peer support, students will recognize and orally produce appropriate transition signals with synchronous gestural cues in writing examples.

Time
45 minutes.

Materials
PPT slide with gesture cues for transition signals and punctuation.

Preparation
Materials used in the lesson are posted on LMS prior to the lesson. Using giphy.com, the instructor makes gifs of the transition words and gestures for the PPT slide as review (see PPT slide in online submission form). One Writing Model is required; the number of Cloze Writing Samples depends on the number student groups. Students will read a brief explanation of the breakout session feature in Zoom.

Part 1 (10 minutes): The Zoom meeting begins (audio and visual enabled). Sharing the PPT slide, the instructor reviews the use of gestural cues. Students then take turns reading the Writing Model, sentence by sentence, synchronously using the transition and punctation gestures.

Part 2 (20 minutes): Students are given brief instructions and are reminded to access the materials on the LMS. The instructor emphasizes the need to read the Cloze Writing Sample in it entirely to ensure appropriate transition selection based on context and meaning. Then, the instructor initiates the Zoom breakout session. Students are randomly assigned to breakout room groups. Groups of 3 or 4 students work together identifying transitions and punctuation using ASL-inspired cues with the Cloze Writing Sample assigned to their group.

The instructor visits each breakout session group for 3-5 minutes to provide support. The instructor also broadcasts messages to the groups to alert them at the midpoint of the breakout session. Ending the breakout session, the instructor sends a 60-second warning to the groups before Zoom ends the session, redirecting everyone back to the main meeting.

Part 3 (15 minutes): After the breakout session, students return to the original Zoom meeting. Sharing their screen in turn to show the Cloze Writing Sample, a representative of each group provides each transition and gestural cue with any explanation prompted by instructor. Any observations about transition signal choice and frequency can be discussed.

Assignment

A follow-up homework assignment gives students a chance to practice asynchronously. Using FlipGrid or a similar video app within the LMS, learners post a video reciting a short, original writing piece with appropriate transitions and gestures. Students are required to comment on at least one classmate's video in the LMS. A simple rubric is used assessing accuracy of transition signals and punctuation.

Instructor's Reflection

My students in general are bored when learning transitions, and I have found that introducing a bit about ASL can make things more engaging, particularly in Zoom. I like the extra emphasis on intonation which can help with reading aloud and presentation skills.

Instructional Design Note

Teaching online presents challenges, even with the inclusion of synchronous audiovisual communication. Students may lose focus easily, distracted by their surroundings. It is good practice to instruct students on how a breakout session works, and what is expected of them during the sessions. This may mean including both written and oral instructions. Remind students to upload or open materials posted on the LMS prior to enabling the breakout session. Using the broadcast message option in Zoom can be helpful for sending out very short messages while a breakout session is in progress.

Writing Model (Complete writing sample, at least two paragraphs)

Example sentence #1: The others, however, did not appear to support the new policy.

Cloze Writing Samples (essay with transition signals blanked)

Example sentence #2: You can use several techniques. _____, you can do wet-on-wet oil painting.

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6 Tips on Creating a Unique Online Brand for Your ESL Program

by Jennifer Wingate & Nadine Baladi

In this brave new world of online teaching and learning, how do we differentiate ourselves? For decades, we've been recruiting ESL students to our programs by proudly sharing the highlights of our campus and the unique immersive experience students will get if they choose "us". As we already know, the most critical influences on the international student's choice for study abroad in the USA are:

- expected quality of education,
- reputation/ranking of the university and individual departments/programs,
- safety/security,
- cost/affordability.

We also know that the most critical influences on our ability to retain international student are quite different than what it took to attract them. Key retention success indicators include friendships forged in year 1, students' sense of immersion and integration, and their academic success. And all these years, we've shaped our branding to address these elements, when and where we could.

But now...

In this brave new world of online teaching and learning, how can we differentiate ourselves without a unique campus that sets us apart? Without promising potlucks, the homecoming game and intercultural friendships? In short, what happens to branding that relied on campus character, safety, friendships, location and immersive experience?

Here are some ideas we've tested, or will test in next few months:

1. Higher Ed programming first

Whether we are an IEP located on a university campus or a stand-alone IEP with pathway agreements into various universities, we must recognize that our target student population has practical and long-term English needs. Our future online ESL students are the ones who dream of coming to the USA to complete their undergraduate or graduate degrees, know which program they want to study in, and need to get started on their English as quickly as possible in order to stay on top of their timeline.

From a student-attraction perspective, it is crucial to focus on ESL programs as high-quality gateways to our university's unique academic programs. Our ESL documentation and marketing materials should also touch on co-curricular concerns such as safety, affordability, academic support and academic success. Remember: students interested in your online ESL program are probably more interested in eventually landing on your campus and matriculating into a degree option.

From a student-success and student retention perspective, the structure of the online ESL program requires additional student-centered support processes that ensure the eventual academic success, retention, and graduation of the student once on campus. These opportunities include the addition of academic etiquette/culture coursework, academic integrity modules, small group tutorials, and more. Students can get EAP anywhere, but can they truly understand the local academic cultural nuances that only a local can explain?

If your ESL program offers such unique connections to the campus, make sure you share this information with them through your student recruitment channels.

2. Online brand presence is a must

International students increasingly rely on search engines and social media to decide on their program and school of choice. According to www.educations.com, students are 8% less likely than before to learn about study abroad through fairs and events. In 2020, they are 15% more likely to rely on search engines and 72% more likely to use social media to learn about the process.

For students to think of you, they must be able to find you easily and to recognize your brand. How do you build a strong digital presence and a consistent online brand?

- For most small programs and institutions, this starts with your website (your home base). Your website (or web page if you are part of a larger organization) is your hub: a centralized place where future students can go to learn more about what you have to offer, contact you, and interact and engage with your content. Things like a clear message (what your program is all about), easy-to-use navigation, an opt in tool/assessment/giveaway (so you can start building your email list), a contact page, an about page, and some type of valuable content are required.
- Create an engaging, personalized community: Whether it's via your website, your Facebook page, your podcast, a YouTube channel, or via other social media channels, you should always be looking to provide consistent, valuable content first. Ask yourself: who is your audience and what do they care about? Don't forget that a community goes two ways: give your readers and listeners plenty of opportunities to dialogue with you.
- There are many resources on how to build an online presence. Here are a two straightforward ones:
  - https://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/online-presence
  - https://digitalmarketinginstitute.com/en-us/blog/8-ways-to-create-an-effective-digital-strategy-that-engages-students

And the good news: you don't have to travel to accomplish any of these. We're talking 100% arm-chair recruitment.

3. Highlight some of basic-but-key advantages of your program

In focusing intently on what makes our program unique, especially in an online context, don't forget some of the basic elements that will attract international students. These are oldies but goodies, and now more than ever, so if you do any of these particularly well, do not omit these basic facts from your branding:

- Flexible Start Dates and/or rolling enrollments (i.e. more than 3 starts/year)

- Competitive Pricing - Identify your competitors and make sure you are aligned with their pricing. To properly brand your program, you should not have to lower your tuition but rather increase the value of the program: be clear on your inclusions, your student support, some cool delivery platform feature you might offer, etc.
- Rapid admission turn-around – Create a sense of genuine relationship from the first contact. Ensure your communication plan acknowledges students every step of their process.
- 1-step ESL program registration - If students are taking your ESL program online, do you need students to go through your regular admission channels? Remember: no need for an F1 for now, no need for passport information, for bank account balances, etc. Students should be able to enter their credit card information and enroll. Boom!
- Highlight Ranking of high-demand or unique programs on international student-facing web pages and materials – This can be as simple as utilizing photos or videos of international students participating in those popular degrees.

4. Highlight the human

Naturally, administrators, faculty, students (and their parents) fear that the personal connection between our students and our faculty might be lost in an online environment, so we must make every effort to extend all elements of humanity, care, and compassion over the ether. Students could easily go to Babel or Duolingo to stay on top of their language needs but they will choose an IEP program if they value the human touch and guidance. A few ideas on this:

- Highlight your star instructors! If they can provide short videos about their upcoming course, or how they've adapted their style to online teach, this will provide an immediate connection with the potential student.
- Be clear on the type of instruction you are providing and the support around it: is it all live? When will the student have to attend live classes? Is part of it asynchronous? What if they need help while self-pacing? What kind of tutorials do you provide for technology to increase accessibility? Ask your students if they'd be willing to talk on camera about their favorite aspect of the online experience.

5. Optimize for a unique immersive experience – online style

While we may feel challenged to offer a fully immersive experience to our online students, there are a number of items that you may already integrate in your regular face-to-face ESL program and that transfer easily to an online context:

- Conversation partner assigned to each pathway student - For programs that already have well established conversation partner programs, you can bring these experiences online through synchronous meetings, or create meeting spaces where partners can connect outside of normally scheduled classes. If your campus is bringing events and activities online for students, find a way to have mentors participate with your students, acting as a bridge and cultural guide. These events can be school affiliated or online events sponsored by the community.
- Mentoring/Buddy system specifically woven into the fabric of the program. Utilize tutoring! This is a great opportunity to increase integration with other departments and develop mutually beneficial programming. One example of such programming will kick off Fall 2020 at SDSU. In collaboration with the Wintrode Student Success Center, the English Language and Culture Institute has implemented mandatory success coaching where Graduate Students who are seeking counseling degrees meet weekly with students enrolled in the language programs to promote a positive and meaningful learning experience. During success coaching meetings, students and coaches will practice conversational English, work to identify and utilize the student's strengths, values, and interests to meet his/her goals and the coach will encourage the student to implement success strategies and/or use campus resources.
- Access to faculty – Most faculty are happy to have students visit classes to observe future classes in students' majors. One idea for synchronous meeting time is to invite faculty or even advanced degree students to your classroom, utilizing breakout rooms to divide within fields to discuss questions. Faculty may be willing to share recorded content for listening practices as well.

6. Best practices in Online Delivery

Cutting edge instructional design can optimize the virtual learning experience. Here are a few guiding principles when thinking about your online delivery:

- 100% mobile accessible: The average person is spending 5 hrs/day on their mobile device. 92 per cent of that time is spent using an app instead of a web browser.
- 100% responsive learning activities: Even in an asynchronous online learning experience, it is important for students to experience an interactive learning structure.
- Having a set start date and end date with approximate progression timing: Self-paced learning is declining in demand and show poor success rates. Community and group progression is the key to success.
- Interactive student activities using tools such as VoiceThread, Portfolios and Forums: Aside from the discussion boards that are common in online learning, collaborative activities can be embedded into LMS by using shared documents such as Microsoft suites (PowerPoint, OneNote) or Google suites (google slides, docs)
- 24 hour or less feedback on all coursework, graded or not.

Why is it that we are now, finally, adopting this world of online teaching? It could it be that the uncertainty of these unprecedented times enables more flexibility and openness to change. This uncharted territory will require assessment, testing, and continuous improvement based on student, faculty and administrator feedback, ultimately resulting in a brand ready for a new age of teaching and learning.

Founding Partner of The Parliament Group, Nadine Baladi, and ESL 7 Pathway Program Coordinator, Jennifer Wingate, have created a unique bond over curriculum and the planning of SDSU's newly approved pathway program and online ESL program. Baladi has worked in IEPs and Pathway programs for over twenty years in Canada and the USA, served as President of EnglishUSA and is currently a commissioner at CEA. Wingate serves as Member at Large Elect for the PAIS interest section of TESOL. Her passion for teaching began in the 90's as an Assistant Language Teacher in the JET Program.

Healthy Practices for Greater Emotional Intelligence
by Jessica Cinco

With university English language programs in flux due to health, political, and economic factors, educators are more likely to feel anxious and depressed than ever. These emotions affect how we show up at work and in our personal lives. To address how to navigate our way through these difficult times with greater emotional intelligence, Dr. Marc Brackett, founder and director of the Yale Center of Emotional Intelligence and author of Permission to Feel, hosted the Emotional Intelligence 2020 virtual conference on August 11 and 12.

Many of the ideas Brackett and other presenters offered can be implemented into our daily lives as language professionals to best serve our students, colleagues, and, more importantly, ourselves. If we don't practice kindness, patience, respect, and compassion with ourselves, we cannot effectively extend graces to those we interact with. To show up as our best selves for others, we can implement the seven strategies offered by Dr. Marc Brackett and Dr. Robyn Stern in their presentation, "Emotional Regulation in the time of COVID." By incorporating these strategies into our daily practices, we can be better prepared to meet the needs of our English language students, our colleagues, our departments, and ourselves.

These are Brackett and Stern's seven strategies for promoting emotional intelligence from the perspective of an English language educator:

1. Permission to Feel
Give ourselves "permission to feel" and get curious about our emotions instead of judging them. Rather than having emotions about our emotions, for example, "I'm embarrassed that I'm always irritated with my students," try to simply feel and be open to each emotion as it emerges. View these emotions as information and ask ourselves why we're feeling them. Openness to our emotions leads to resilience and a growth mindset, rather than criticizing ourselves. When we judge our own feelings less, we also reduce our judgement of our students and colleagues.

2. Breathe
Practice mindful breathing by pausing for a few moments to slowly, deeply inhale and exhale. Mindful breathing lowers anxiety and helps improve focus and awareness. It slows down our bodies and brains allowing us to be fully present in the moment. For example, if a colleague makes a comment that doesn't sit well, we can excuse ourselves from that conversation, find a quiet place to breathe, calm ourselves, and center our thoughts and emotions before re-engaging with that colleague.

3. Biological Self Care
Be conscious of nutrition: hydrate, eat healthy, and avoid getting "hangry." Practicing each allows us to maintain focus, have lighter moods, and heightens critical thinking. Also, sleeping seven to eight hours each night helps our minds and bodies perform at their best. During stressful, uncertain situations, like a pandemic, flexibility, patience, and quick critical thinking skills are useful, like when Zoom malfunctions or a student can't comprehend an idea that seems basic to us. When we have inadequate sleep, we experience anxiety, fatigue, depression, and hostility, which are unhelpful in stressful situations with students. Finally, exercising regularly decreases anxiety, stress and depression, while increasing self-esteem. Endorphins are released which help us relax and experience more pleasant emotions. This, in turn, leads to better moods to engage with others and greater energy to perform our jobs.

4. Psychological Self Care
Be intentional about our actions. Remember to limit social media and news intake. Set healthy boundaries around consuming content that upsets us, leaving time to engage in activities that calm our minds and lift our spirits. We can also intentionally carve out

some downtime each day. Some suggestions: singing while making the bed, reflecting with gratitude on our life, journaling, cooking, or painting. By engaging our minds in enjoyable activities, we give our minds a much-needed break, which offers greater mental flexibility at work.

5. Maintain Healthy Relationships

Forge relationships with those who can listen to us, see the real us, and accept us, mess and all. Engage with empathy. Identify others' emotions and support those feelings instead of judging their feelings and behaviors and they will reciprocate. Find a colleague who we can talk and listen to and who can talk and listen to us.

6. Manage Our Thoughts

Become aware of how we think of ourselves. "I am a failure. I never get it right." are not healthy thoughts and they don't allow us to grow and thrive. Instead, engage in positive self-talk. Rather than saying, "I'm a failure," try "That didn't go how I expected. What happened? How can I do that differently next time?" Shifting thinking patterns like this leads to personal growth. Another technique is taking a step back and asking ourselves, "What would I say to my best friend in this situation?" We typically talk more kindly to our friends than to ourselves. When we identify how we'd support and encourage our friends in the same situation, and apply this advice to our own situations, our self-talk improves. These techniques result in higher motivation and resilience at work.

7. Manage Our Lives Smartly

Establish daily routines. Be consistent with the times we wake up, exercise, eat meals, start and finish work, enjoy free time, and go to bed. Adjusting our minds and bodies to a regular schedule reduces stress. Another strategy is to spend time with people who are calming. Identify a coworker or boss who seems collected and unflappable. Eat lunch with them or stop by their desk to talk though work situations. Emotions can be contagious: just as spending time with anxious people can heighten our own anxiety, spending time with

calming people, in turn, calms us. We lead, work, and make effective decisions when we are calm and focused.

Remember, we don't need to do all of these at once. Choose one or two strategies and set an intention to work on those areas. Practicing each heightens our emotional intelligence, which is helpful in these uncertain, constantly shifting times. By implementing these practices in our daily lives, we can show up to work ready to solve problems and be kinder to ourselves and others.

Reference

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Jessica is a Senior Global Educator at Arizona State University, with more than 17 years of instructing language learners and language educators, both in the U.S. and abroad. Her current areas of interest are instructional design and the role emotions and emotional awareness play in language education.