

Becoming Contributing Professionals

Edited by Joy Egbert



**Professional Development in Language Education Series
Volume 1**

Tim Murphey, Series Editor

Becoming Contributing Professionals

Edited by Joy Egbert

Professional Development in
Language Education Series,
Volume 1

Tim Murphey, Series Editor



Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, Inc.

Series Editor's Preface

TESOL's Professional Development in Language Education series was conceived by the TESOL Publications Committee as a way to provide a wide array of choices to teachers for continuing their development throughout their careers. The series is based on the recognition that those who contribute most to the profession and to their students' learning see their own continual learning and development as crucial to their work. Such professionals regularly challenge their beliefs, their methods, and the status quo; they seek out and explore a variety of ways to teach and learn. In doing so they not only contribute to their own professional development, but also create a contagious wave of excitement that entrains colleagues and communities of learners.

Professional development is the *raison d'être* of professional associations like TESOL, and thus we need to think more consciously about how we do it and challenge ourselves to seek better and more effective ways to develop ourselves. Besides making efforts to improve themselves and their students, TESOL professionals also seek to stimulate the profession and give back to the field. All the contributors to this series are sharing in this effort by offering insightful and innovative ways of professional development.

Volume 1 in the series, *Becoming Contributing Professionals*, is focused on what new teachers can do to continue their development. It seeks to inspire them to build on the excitement of initial education and incorporate continual development into their lives. A common thread in all three volumes, started here, is that technology can play a significant role in TESOL professionals' continual development.

Volume 2, *Extending Professional Contributions*, highlights midcareer professionals and looks at ways they have sought to continue developing. Most apparent in this volume is the amount of development that comes from collaboration with other teachers and researchers. Professional development is immensely richer when done with others in a community in which excitement and ideas grow exponentially with colleagues.

Volume 3, *Sustaining Professionalism*, looks at ways that more seasoned professionals have continued to develop professionally. Many of these chapters reveal how personal lives are intertwined with professional lives and how many professional decisions have major consequences for life histories, taking us to new places and giving us profound experiences. It is gratifying to see how we as TESOL professionals can continue to innovate and rise to challenges throughout our careers.

These three volumes are testimony to the diversity and courage in the TESOL profession. Although the contents of the three volumes flow across the different stages of a career in TESOL, all TESOL professionals can learn from many of the chapters in each volume and can learn how to stimulate the professional development of their colleagues. I am excited to think of the impact this series will have on many teachers and the continual quality of TESOL as it offers professional development globally.

Tim Murphy

Acknowledgments

Thanks to Gina Mikel Petrie and Stephaine Hogan for their help getting this book together and to Tim Murphey (the series editor), Marilyn Kupetz (TESOL managing editor), and the TESOL publications committee for constant fun and support. Thanks also to the authors for their hard work and incredible patience. Not least, thanks to my wonderful family, which during the editing process grew by one awesome baby boy. Finally, thanks to Norlynn and George Egbert and Virginia Jessup for long babysitting stints.

Introduction

Joy Egbert

I remember sitting in my teacher education classes wondering how I would ever learn to really teach ESL. I understood the basics—the grammar rules, the history of the language, the anthropological field methods—but I had no idea what to do on any given day in class. My first semester in the master's program I had volunteered at an adult education center, and I was fully aware of how much I did not know about teaching techniques, methods, and a host of other things that effective teachers know. When other students in my program asked me to attend the international TESOL conference with them, I, like Jodi Eisterhold in chapter 1 of this volume, felt both excitement and trepidation. I hoped that this professional development opportunity would help me feel like and become a better teacher. The convention turned out to be even more useful than I had thought—it was a treasure trove of practical ideas, theories, people, and materials. I did not learn everything I needed to know at my first TESOL conference, but I certainly discovered an abundance of resources that would help me in my teaching.

Since then I have participated in many of the activities and opportunities described in this and the other volumes in the Professional Development series. My development

has in numerous ways followed the same sequence as the activities described in this book—from attending local and national conferences to volunteering my time as an affiliate board member and newsletter editor (Eisterhold, chapter 1), to making conference presentations (Andrade, chapter 3), to publishing in a variety of forums (Kupetz, chapter 4; Mattix, chapter 5; Tjandrawidjaja, chapter 6), to being a liaison for a student bilingual education/ESL group (La Luzerne-Oi & Kirschenmann, chapter 7). I have also developed a language curriculum by using my students as the source for materials (Gordon, chapter 8); taken language classes, as Sauro recommends in chapter 9; and videotaped my teaching, as Yang suggests in chapter 10. All of these activities contributed to my development, and all brought surprises and unexpected outcomes. Although I have not yet tried Deacon's strategy of peer mentoring (chapter 11) or volunteered overseas (as Boucher-Yip suggests in chapter 2), I have worked closely with other teachers to develop curricula and lessons both in the United States and abroad and hope that I will have the opportunity to follow the steps they recommend in the future.

During my many years in the field, the face of professional development has changed. Technology now plays a large and growing role in providing professional development opportunities. As Algren (chapter 12) and Paulus (chapter 13) note, finding opportunities to learn and contribute online can be as simple as joining an electronic discussion or searching the Web. Professional development on the Internet can also be as rewarding as Chao's (chapter 14) more difficult but very useful online conferencing. As I continue to develop and contribute to the field, I find additional opportunities, such as editing this volume, meeting great colleagues, and learning more about what it means to teach and learn English as an additional language. Through these activities, my enjoyment of my career continues to increase. I hope that this volume will lead you, not necessarily on the same professional journey that I have taken, but to the same end.

Contributor

Joy Egbert (jegbert@wsu.edu) is assistant professor of ESL and technology and the director of the Training for All Teachers grant at Washington State University, Pullman, in the United States. Her research and teaching interests include computer-assisted language learning, teacher development, and language learning environments. She has been an active member of TESOL for more than 15 years.

Contents

Series Editor's Preface	v
Acknowledgments	vii
Introduction	ix
CHAPTER 1	
Making New Friends: Becoming Involved in a TESOL Organization	1
<i>Jodi Eisterhold</i>	
CHAPTER 2	
Crossing Borders: Volunteering Overseas	9
<i>Esther F. Boucher-Yip</i>	
CHAPTER 3	
In the Limelight: Presenting to Your Peers	15
<i>Maureen Snow Andrade</i>	
CHAPTER 4	
Having Dessert First: Writing Book Reviews	25
<i>Marilyn Kupetz</i>	
CHAPTER 5	
Sounding Your Singing Voice: Publishing in Forum Sections	33
<i>Micah Mattix</i>	

CHAPTER 6	
Turning Survival Notes Into Textbook Manuals: Saving and Sharing Our Work	41
<i>Jacqueline R. Tjandrawidjaja</i>	
CHAPTER 7	
Student Organizations for Teacher Learners	49
<i>Sally La Luzerne-Oi and Jean Kirschenmann</i>	
CHAPTER 8	
Learning From Our Students: Using Students to Develop Curricula	59
<i>Tatiana Gordon</i>	
CHAPTER 9	
In Your Students' Shoes: Learning a Foreign Language as Professional Development	67
<i>Shannon Sauro</i>	
CHAPTER 10	
"Oh! That's Why My Students Didn't Get It!": Videotaping as a Reflective Teaching Tool	73
<i>Yu-Feng (Diana) Yang</i>	
CHAPTER 11	
Priceless Peer-Mentor Observation	81
<i>Brad Deacon</i>	
CHAPTER 12	
Developing Through E-Mail Discussion Lists	89
<i>Mark Algren</i>	
CHAPTER 13	
The Web of Professional Development	97
<i>Trena M. Paulus</i>	
CHAPTER 14	
Professional Development on Cloud Nine: Online Conferencing	107
<i>Chin-chi Chao</i>	
Users' Guide to Strands in the Professional Development in Language Education Series	117

1 Making New Friends= Becoming Involved in a TESOL organization

Jodi Eisterhold

Narrative

As is the case with many first-time activities, I was hesitant about going to my first local TESOL meeting. I was quite confident that attending the meeting would be a good idea professionally; however, I found myself both excited and apprehensive during the 30-minute car ride to the meeting site. What I soon discovered was that engaging in professional conversations with people of like minds and interests encouraged me to volunteer and become an even more active member in my local TESOL organizations. I would never have dreamed that my love of interacting with people would have such great payoffs professionally, but this is exactly what I noticed immediately after I joined my local TESOL chapter and later the state TESOL affiliate.

I have found that there are numerous ways to become a contributing professional. As other chapters in this volume show, you can attend and present at conferences, make a reflective videotape, find a great mentor (within or outside of your program), and contribute to a professional journal, just to name a few possibilities. One of the most exciting

ways of becoming a contributing professional for me was to become active in my TESOL chapter and TESOL affiliate. Not only did my career receive a boost, but I developed friendships that I know will last a lifetime.

Description

Forty-two U.S. states and 51 countries have TESOL affiliates, and these boast more than 40,000 members. Local TESOL chapters are smaller organizations that serve under the state affiliates; in Florida alone there are now nine local chapters spread throughout the state. These chapters reflect the growing numbers of educators in the profession as well as the multiple benefits of membership at the local level.

TESOL organizations offer many types of opportunities and have ways for every professional to get involved. It is nice to know that there are others out there in your own area who share the same concerns, goals, and dreams that you do. Your chapter or affiliate can address local teaching or advocacy concerns, leading to a strong sense of professional community. The TESOL local chapters and state affiliates offer supportive environments for educators by way of annual conferences, monthly or quarterly meetings, and social gatherings. Many affiliates also have sister affiliates or are linked in some way to other TESOL organizations around the world. If you are interested in traveling and establishing networks with colleagues from other parts of the world, joining a local affiliate is a terrific way to start. In addition, most chapters and affiliates publish newsletters that include tips on teaching, a calendar of upcoming events (local, national, and international), book and material reviews, and work done by ESL students.

Steps

Getting Started

1. Find an affiliate near you. First check TESOL's affiliate Web page (TESOL, 2002). The TESOL member relations coordinator can also assist you and can be reached by e-mail at affiliates@tesol.org, by phone in the United States at

703-836-0774, or by fax at 703-836-6447. The affiliate board members can give you information about local chapters. This information is typically on the affiliate's Web page and in its newsletter as well.

2. Join the affiliate by paying your yearly dues. These are usually very affordable, ranging from \$5 to \$45 per year.
3. Take the initiative and call or e-mail one of the affiliate or chapter board members to find out when the next meeting is or how you can get involved (even before that first meeting). In trying to make your first contacts, however, there is one thing to bear in mind: Each member is a volunteer juggling chapter and affiliate activities with the demands of a professional and personal life. This is significant because you might have to be persistent in your calling and e-mailing before you reach the right person or before that person responds to you. But do not get discouraged; your calls and e-mails can actually demonstrate that you are self-motivated and enthusiastic.
4. As a member of the chapter or organization, attend meetings, share ideas and concerns with colleagues, read or write for the newsletters, and enjoy the many social and professional development events that are scheduled. These opportunities will give you an idea about what is happening in classrooms other than your own and allow you to interact with other teachers in settings that are less formal than the workplace.

Volunteering for the Chapter or Affiliate

TESOL chapters and affiliates are always looking for lively, friendly individuals who are willing to work hard. But do not let that frighten you: We work hard, but I can honestly say that it never felt anything like drudgery for a single minute. Remember that there are various levels of commitment, starting with your involvement on a small committee and leading up to serving as president of the organization.

5. Try to start at a level of commitment that you are comfortable with in terms of the amount of time you have (or the amount of time you can create) to give to the organization. You may want to start out on a committee and work your way up, or you may prefer to continue serving on committees. These

organizations need strong leaders as well as dependable individuals who can offer their time and experience on a smaller scale. Every little bit of volunteer work makes a big difference to the organization, to the profession as a whole, and ultimately to you by way of personal benefits.

6. Explore different opportunities. Avenues to investigate include affiliate-sponsored awards and the affiliate's peer-reviewed journal (both usually falling under the aegis of the professional development committee), organizational development, and advocacy.
 - awards: The members of the professional development committee develop and sustain awards (e.g., travel grants, graduate student grants, outstanding teacher of the year, and minigrants for classroom projects), and generally find ways to support our TESOL colleagues in their many endeavors. It is a real joy helping to support those who do not receive financial support from their own institutions. If you choose this volunteer opportunity, you also have the chance to meet people from around your area or state and to find out what kinds of new and innovative projects are being developed that might be useful in your own classroom.
 - publications: Working on publications can be beneficial to your career because, among the multiple positive aspects of this type of position, you will learn editing skills—or enhance your existing editing skills. You learn not only how to edit but also how to work with colleagues (e.g., giving them feedback on their submissions) in a professional and constructive way. Talking and brainstorming with your colleagues can serve as a springboard for your own classroom or research projects. Serving as an editor for your TESOL chapter or affiliate also teaches you how to make quick decisions, how to set priorities, and how to meet deadlines with fast turnaround times—that is, how to work well under pressure. The lessons that I learned as an editor have been invaluable to me as I have been able to apply these new skills to developing lesson plans, planning and implementing research projects, and writing for publication

within the field of TESOL myself. I also enjoyed the advantage of reading what my colleagues submitted—before it hit the press!

- **organizational development:** The organizational development committee reviews and updates board procedures and policies and clarifies the responsibilities of the liaison. The individual serving in the liaison position—typically the past president—maintains routine communication between the state affiliate and national TESOL organization and may also act as a liaison between the local and state organizations.
- **advocacy:** This area deals with local, state, and national political concerns, and one of the many important tasks is drafting position papers so that TESOL voices may be heard. These papers are shared among TESOL affiliates sent to local, state, and national policy makers.

Another opportunity for you to get involved, without committing yourself fully to the organization at first, is volunteering at the local conference or annual events. Much needs to be done behind the scenes, and volunteers can reap satisfaction from contributing to the overall success of an affiliate-sponsored event.

Timing Your Involvement

7. Get involved as soon as possible. I became involved in my local chapter the moment I began working in the field. This made for a much easier transition to my current life as an academic because I had been gradually socialized into the profession. However, even if you have been in the TESOL profession for years and have never been a part of a local chapter or an affiliate, now is your chance. These organizations would benefit from your experiences in the field, and you would benefit by keeping current with all things TESOL, by interacting with longtime colleagues, and by meeting new colleagues. The bottom line is that it is never too early or too late to become a part of your local or state affiliate.
8. Many TESOL professionals become involved with professional groups during their initial education (in certificate programs

and undergraduate and graduate schools). There are often travel awards available for such students to go to conferences, and sometimes there are lower membership fees for students. Some teacher educators encourage students to participate in activities while they take courses, to write for access publications (often using the good material that they produce in their classes), and to present in local miniconferences (Murphey, 2000). Many students find that participation in TESOL activities allows them to ground their studies more firmly in practice, and their participation becomes an exciting way of life in the profession. (See chapter 7 for a discussion of student organizations for teacher learners.)

Reaping the Benefits of Joining Chapters and Affiliates

Another benefit of joining a local chapter or state affiliate is that the meetings, conferences, and social activities are near your home and so do not require huge time commitments for travel. Likewise, getting involved at the local level is a much more affordable way to become involved professionally for TESOL members who are unable to get funding to attend the international convention (but do check with your local chapter or affiliate to see if they have special travel grants for you to attend the international convention). Often other affiliate members will attend the international convention and bring home ideas to share with their own local TESOL organization.

Being involved at the local level also gives you a nice lead into involvement at the international TESOL level. Many of the board members of my state affiliate serve in various capacities at the international level—as a board member; as convention chair; on awards committees, reading applications for awards; or as interest section leaders, to give a few examples.

Conclusion

I hope that each of you will consider joining a local chapter or state affiliate. As you can see, the benefits to your career are infinite, and at the same time, you are creating lifelong bonds with fellow TESOLers. The best way to visualize the TESOL chapters and affiliates is as family units that care for their members professionally and personally and

whose members truly look forward to their meetings and retreats together. I am positive that you will experience the same professional rewards that I have: an easier transition into the profession along with friends in the field who help make my job seem more like a hobby or pastime than actual work.

Resources _____

- Murphey, T. (2000). Becoming contributing professionals: Nonnative-English-speaking teachers in an EFL environment. In K. E. Johnson (Ed.), *Teacher education* (pp. 105–118). Alexandria, VA: TESOL.
- TESOL. (2002). *TESOL's worldwide affiliates*. Retrieved December 10, 2002, from <http://www.tesol.org/isaffil/affil/index.html>

Contributor _____

Jodi Eisterhold (jeisterhold@gsu.edu) is an assistant professor in the Applied Linguistics and ESL Department at Georgia State University, in the United States. She has served in various capacities for Treasure Coast TESOL, Sunshine State TESOL, and international TESOL.