



Three Rivers 2015-2016 Executive Board Members with Dr. Yilin Sun (L-R): Webmaster Rob Mucklo, University of Pittsburgh; President Ece Ulus, University of Pittsburgh; Dr. Yilin Sun; Past President Linh Phung, Chatham University; Vice President Seungku "Steve" Park, Slippery Rock University; Secretary Brianne Harrison, University of Pittsburgh.



**3RT Spring Seminar & Meeting 2016**  
**"Examining Feedback and Assessment"**  
**Saturday, April 23, 2016 • 9:00am - 12:00pm**  
**Chatham University**



Join us on Saturday morning, April 23, at Chatham University for an invigorating seminar on feedback and assessment! We will have knowledgeable presenters who will share their expertise on these two hot topics. We will also have the

opportunity to relate their ideas to our own working contexts. This meeting is likely to generate a considerable amount of compelling discussion. You don't want to miss it! After the seminar, we will learn the results of the elections for three

positions on the Three Rivers TESOL Executive Board: President, Vice President, and Webmaster. If you would like to run for one of these positions, you can find more information on page 6 of this newsletter.

Please let us know if you plan to attend this beneficial seminar by visiting <http://tinyurl.com/3RTSpringSeminar2016>.

For more information, please contact us at [president@3riverstesol.org](mailto:president@3riverstesol.org).

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By Ece Ullus, 3RT President

On September 12, 1963, a group of representatives from a variety of ESOL programs met in Pasadena, California. Led by Charles A. Ferguson of the Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL), this group proposed the idea of having an inclusive organization for teachers of English to speakers of other languages.

Three years later, the First National Conference on the Teaching of English to Speakers of Other Languages was held in Tucson, Arizona, with more than 700 attendees. TESOL International has grown considerably since that first conference. Last year, more than 5,600 professionals from 91 different countries attended the TESOL Annual Convention & Exhibit in Toronto, Ontario, Canada. How many will attend the convention in Baltimore, Maryland this year? Will you be one of them?

The vision statement of TESOL is "to become the trusted global authority for knowledge and expertise in English language teaching." This vision is clear with all the opportunities that TESOL offers its members. Aside from the annual convention, TESOL International offers online courses and seminars, regional conferences and symposia, certificate programs and leadership training. For more information about these programs, please visit <http://www.tesol.org/attend-and-learn>.

Three Rivers TESOL is an official affiliate of TESOL International Association, which is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year!



## A Personal Reflection on the Three Rivers TESOL Fall Conference 2015

By Linh Phung, Chatham University

On November 5, 2015, Three Rivers TESOL held its annual Fall Conference at the University of Pittsburgh's English Language Institute. To celebrate our silver anniversary, we had the pleasure of welcoming Dr. Yilin Sun, Past President of TESOL International, as the plenary speaker. As well as outlining current trends in the field, Dr. Sun summarized the achievements in research, teaching, and advocacy that the field of TESOL has experienced in the past few decades. Being that I had the opportunity to spend some one-on-one time with Dr. Sun, I was able to learn more about her various experiences in TESOL and her travels to so many parts of the world in representing TESOL International. I marveled at her energy and openness to new experiences as Rob Mucklo and I accompanied her to various points of interest in the city of Pittsburgh.

Apart from the inspiring plenary speech, I enjoyed all the sessions that I attended, including a

presentation on VoiceThread projects and a presentation on using themes to unify a course and motivate students. I appreciated the thoughtful consideration that all the presenters took in developing their courses, student projects, materials, and activities so as to facilitate students' collaboration, engagement, and learning. Only teachers can bring technology, textbooks, and curricular objectives to life and turn them into something meaningful for their students. Lastly, it was a nice surprise to have a room full of attendees at the final session of the day as I gave a presentation on developing communicative tasks and promoting students' engagement during task performances.

Finally, I'd like to acknowledge the fantastic job that President Ece Ullus and Board Members Rob Mucklo, Brianne Harrison, Brian Deutsch, and Steve Park did in organizing the Conference and making it a big success.

## And the Winner is...

Every year, TESOL International Association offers a number of complimentary memberships to its TESOL affiliates, like Three Rivers TESOL. At the 3RT 2015 Fall Conference, there was a drawing held in order to award these memberships to a few lucky 3RT Members. Our winners will have the chance to take advantage of the many opportunities that TESOL International affords for the period of one year. Congratulations to our winners:

- Patrick Fogarty
- Sandy Gianella
- Katie Homar
- LuAnn Pengidore
- Shaniekq'a Robinson



### My First Trip to South America

By Seungku “Steve” Park, Slippery Rock University

Last fall, I made a trip to South America for the purpose of international student recruitment from late September to early October. As a South Korean native, South America is a place with which I don't have much experience. It was interesting to see so many people in different countries showing an interest in several common areas of study in the U.S. In addition, most of them had heard of Pennsylvania but didn't know where in the U.S. it is located.

I visited 3 countries (Brazil, Ecuador, and Colombia) and 8 cities (Salvador, Rio de Janeiro, Brasilia, Sao Paulo, Quito, Guayaquil, Medellin, and Bogota). It was a tight and tough schedule, and the places I visited were all famous for their sightseeing attractions. Honestly, though, there was no time for relaxation. It was probably a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to visit all of those famous places in one trip. Unfortunately, I had been diagnosed with anemia just before I left for the trip. I got tired so easily that I often had to return to my room early in the evening in order to rest up for the next leg of my journey. Luckily, I can say that I am feeling better now.

Although it was very demanding physically, it was a priceless experience for me as an English language educator and an IEP administrator. It opened my eyes and expanded my life experience. I do hope to visit these places again, with a little time for relaxation. It was a great trip during which I learned a lot about South American culture, and the things I experienced there are a precious part of my life-long journey to explore the world.

## Vocabulary Strategy: “Listen and Catch”

By Ying Zhang, Robert Morris University

Direct teaching of vocabulary is important and necessary for English Language Learners (ELLs). One primary issue in vocabulary instruction is that it is often conducted in a decontextualized way, which provides inadequate support for ELLs.

One easy vocabulary strategy that can be incorporated in all content areas is “listen and catch.” To use this strategy, the teacher previews a reading and selects 8-10 vocabulary from the passage. These words can be disciplinary- specific words or everyday words. The teacher also adds 2-3 “distraction words” to the vocabulary list that do not appear in the reading. The teacher then hands the vocabulary list to the students. He/she may choose to read the passage him/herself or ask the students to read in pairs or groups. As students follow the reading, they circle the words they hear, leaving out the words that they do not hear. In order to do so, students must be highly attentive to the vocabulary, their pronunciation, and the context in which the words are used. After one or two turns, the teacher can ask students to compare and contrast vocabulary lists in pairs or groups before announcing the distraction words. The teacher may then talk about the meanings of some words and how they are used in the text.

This strategy is highly- engaging. Try it, and I hope your students have some fun doing the catch.

## An Experience in Fostering a Cross-Cultural Connection

By Debra Reich, Chatham University

I am a “newbie” to the ELS community. In the last few years, I have engaged with ELS students in the context of academic research, teaching, and mentoring programs. During this time, I have come to appreciate the importance and benefits to nurturing a cross-cultural connection with foreign students.

During my first year of doctoral studies in counseling psychology, my cohort was charged with taking on a cultural issue of local impact and applying theory to develop programming. At that time, several of us were curious about foreign students on the Chatham campus. We experienced them as disconnected from the larger student body. For example, at Café Rachel, ELS students usually sat together, speaking in their native language and not mixing with Americans. As psychologists, this concerned us. Segregation can lead to stereotyping, isolation, changes in mood, difficulty concentrating, and poor academic performance. Our research goal was to better understand the lack of engagement in a cross-cultural connection. We embarked upon a semester-long research journey, interviewing ELS students, faculty, and program directors. In our findings, we discovered that programming to foster a connection does exist. What is lacking is enthusiastic receptivity by American students. In an attempt to understand this phenomenon, I purposefully engaged with the ELS community. To my delight, I found students open and desirous of a connection. They are curious about culture, customs, food, and local commerce. This experience offers me an ongoing connection to a global community and also helps to break down stereotypical walls of ignorance.

## A New Benefit for Our Institutional Members

By Brian Deutsch, 3RT Treasurer

There are several benefits associated with Institutional Membership already listed on the Three Rivers TESOL website: the opportunity to set up a display table at the Fall Conference; group registration for institutions ahead of the Fall Conference; and a link to the member institution's page on the 3RT homepage. Three Rivers TESOL plans to launch a new benefit of Institutional Membership soon—providing financial support for guest speakers.

This organization wants to broaden its reach throughout the region and expand the available programming throughout the year by encouraging and supporting its member institutions when they host lectures relevant to the TESOL community. Institutional Members have long been welcome to host speakers on their campuses, but beginning this year 3RT will begin offering financial support to help alleviate the costs associated with organizing such an event. Be sure to watch for more details in upcoming email announcements and our next newsletter.

We would like to take this opportunity to recognize and thank our current Institutional Members:

- Chatham University English as a Second Language Program
- Duquesne University English as a Second Language Program
- Indiana University of Pennsylvania Composition and TESOL Graduate Program
- LaRoche College English as a Second Language Program
- Mercyhurst University Intensive English Program
- University of Pittsburgh English Language Institute
- Washington and Jefferson College English Language Institute

## Guidelines for Publishing in the Three Rivers TESOL Newsletter

*Did an activity in your class go particularly well? Have you found a useful textbook? Why don't you share it with 3RT members? Submit an article for the next newsletter in March! Here are some guidelines to get you started:*

1. Title: 10 words or less
2. By line: includes your name, email address and work affiliation, if applicable
3. Length: 150-250 words
4. Style: Times New Roman 12 point font, double spaced
5. Format: Send as a word document
6. Pictures: Jpegs of pictures that are appropriate for the article may be sent but might not be included, depending upon space in the newsletter.
7. Send articles to [secretary@3riverstesol.org](mailto:secretary@3riverstesol.org).

## 3RT Executive Board Member Nominations

By Ece Ulus, 3RT President

Serving on the Three Rivers TESOL Executive Board is a great opportunity to develop yourself both personally and professionally! You will get to work with amazing people who have the motivation to make contributions to the field of TESOL. Don't miss out on this valuable chance! We are pleased to invite all Three Rivers TESOL Members to submit nominations for candidates to serve on the 2016-2017 Three Rivers TESOL Executive Board for the following positions:

- President (2-year commitment: 1-year term followed by 1-year term as Past President)
  - The President shall preside at all meetings, appoint such committees as the Executive Board authorizes, and assume general responsibility for conducting the business of the Association. The President shall be principally responsible for making all arrangements in connection with the programs to be held by the Association and shall serve as a liaison officer to keep the Association and TESOL mutually informed.
- Vice President (3-year commitment: 1-year term, 1-year term as President, 1-year term as Past President)
  - The Vice-President shall preside in the absence of the President and generally assist the President in the execution of business, especially program arrangements.
- Webmaster (2-year commitment)
  - The Webmaster is responsible for maintaining the Association's website in consultation with the other members of the Executive Board.

Three Rivers TESOL Members can nominate themselves or someone else. Once an individual has accepted the nomination, he/she should submit a brief (≈150-word) summary, including his/her background and qualifications for the position. The nominee's information and summary should be submitted at <http://tinyurl.com/3RTCallForNominations2016> no later than 11:59pm on Monday, March 28.

After receiving the nominations, the Three Rivers TESOL Board will review the submissions and select 2-3 candidates for each position. The summaries for these candidates will be sent to all Three Rivers TESOL Members for consideration.

The election of the Board will be conducted electronically. More information about the voting process will be sent at a later date.