

# WATESOL NEWS

WINTER 2017 Edition

Dearest WATESOL Community,

We have an outstanding board to serve you this year. Each and every board member has already rolled up her sleeves and dug into important work including: organizing advocacy events, planning PD workshops, creating this newsletter, and updating membership, communications, and financial systems. Our first order of business was to look inward and reflect on WATESOL's Vision and Mission. In order for us to achieve balanced, intentional growth, it's important for us to re-examine who we want to be (vision), and what we want to do (mission). With that in mind, the board spent time on this strategic planning work. I am proud to say that we arrived at the following:

**WATESOL's Vision** (what we want to **be**):

We aim to be a trusted organization that serves our local TESOL community by fostering knowledge, expertise, and advocacy.

**WATESOL's Mission** (what we want to **do**):

Our mission is to support professionalism and excellence in English language education through

- enriching multicultural teaching and learning communities
- promoting scholarship and research-to-practice connections
- supporting high-impact professional development
- advocating for the profession and our learners

As a member, you can help us with your input. A Referendum has been emailed asking members to vote on the revised vision and mission. You can participate by going to: <http://bit.ly/watesolvision>

With our Mission in mind, we created three new PD events this winter. All three were designed to foster collaboration, community, and research-to-practice connections.

- [Action Research Workshop](#) - Thanks to Dr. Polina Vinogradova for delivering a highly-rated, quality program! We look forward to seeing what research outcomes participants bring to our fall WATESOL conference or share in other meaningful ways.
- [Proposal Writing Workshop](#) - Review models of successful proposals and examine the rating process used for proposal acceptance.
- [Mini Conference](#) - Come see national conference presentations without having to travel!

I want to highlight the Advocacy Chairs, Joanna Duggan and Colleen Shaughnessy. As soon as the election results were in, Joanna worked to get a committee up and running and to organize the December Policy Update event with John Segota (with 45 attendees on a cold December night). Colleen joined Joanna as Co-Chair shortly thereafter. Their committee is upwards of 40 members strong. Get involved!

I also want to highlight our Non-Native English-Speaking Teachers (NNEST) Caucus, led by [Sevtap Frantz](#). This caucus's primary mission is to raise awareness about the benefits that NNESTs bring to teaching and learning communities. At the heart of our shared profession, we are coaches of multicultural awareness, facilitators of communicative competence, and most of all life-long learners of culture and language. The NNEST Caucus is a dedicated group of NNESTs and NESTs collaborating on current issues that touch our profession, sometimes more than we realize. To join us in this meaningful conversation, contact Sevtap.

The Newsletter Editors worked collaboratively to produce this newsletter full of rich ideas. I hope that you find useful tips and insights in this edition. And we hope to see you at the next WATESOL event!

In peace,  
Heather Tatton-Harris  
WATESOL President 2016-17



# TESOL PRECONVENTION INSTITUTES

Betsy Lindeman Wong | Northern Virginia Community College | blwong@nvcc.edu

Thanks to WATESOL's travel grant, I was able to attend two preconvention institutes of the 2016 TESOL International Conference. The institutes took a fresh approach to two common challenges: How to respond to ineffective writing from sources in a helpful but non-punitive way, and how to design listening activities that help students to process the nuances and complexities of authentic speech.

## Responding to Ineffective Writing from Sources

When students borrow text from other sources, this borrowing falls along a spectrum, according to presenters Jennifer Mott-Smith (Townson University) and Zuzana Tomas (Eastern Michigan University). At one end of the spectrum is highly ineffective source use, or plagiarism; at the other end is effective source use, with citations, paraphrases, and boundary markers that signal movement to and from others' ideas.

In the middle is a problematic occurrence called "patchwriting" (Howard, 1999), which results when little pieces – ideas or actual language – are taken from other sources, patched together without attribution, and juxtaposed with the student's own ideas and writing. In any one paper, a student can have a mix of effective, problematic, and ineffective source use, Mott-Smith and Tomas said. This spectrum illustrates why it isn't enough to simply give students a handout of rules for avoiding plagiarism and expect them to internalize that.

It's also important to consider why students may improperly use sources, according to the presenters. Students might feel that their own words do not sound as academic or eloquent as the original author's, or may believe that the information reflects their own prior learning, so they did not need to cite it. Alternatively, they may be wary of having too many citations but might not understand the content well enough to put it into their own words.

Whatever the reason, students need to understand when and why they are not citing sources correctly – and as teachers, we can we respond to this in different ways. For example, Mott-Smith and Tomas asked, when you have students locate sources for their research paper, do you ...

- Recommend search databases?
- Arrange for a session led by a librarian?
- Teach what constitutes "good" sources?
- Model how you find the right sources?
- Address linguistic and cultural accessibility?

This scaffolding helps students to choose sources that are at an accessible linguistic level, Mott-Smith and Tomas said. They recommend having learners do research within one theme so that students will have an understanding of the vocabulary and concepts involved and know appropriate synonyms, which will help them to paraphrase. Once students have found sources for a research paper, they should rate each source's credibility, relevance, interest, and accessibility.

In order to understand why citations are necessary, it is helpful for students to look at the citations within a journal article and identify the reason why an author referenced the sources, choosing from a checklist like this one that the presenters developed:

### Functions for referencing a source:

- Giving support for a claim
- Letting readers know who the author's allies are
- Name-dropping to establish authority
- Showing a gap in the resource
- Indicating that the author disagrees with the idea
- Establishing credibility
- Describing the context for the author's position

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*Continued from “Functions...”*

- Introducing an idea that’s controversial
- Referring the reader to the article that establishes or explains the concept

After students have located appropriate sources, they need to learn how to cite and paraphrase ideas. They can learn paraphrasing skills by analyzing and discussing examples of effective and ineffective paraphrasing (or “patchwriting”).

### **Listen Again: Strategies for an Integrated Approach to Listening Skills**

Listening is the skill over which learners feel the least control – and for which teachers have received the least training, according to Marnie Reed of Boston University. Teachers typically receive curricular guidelines like, “Students will understand academic and professional discussions,” but they’re left on their own to determine what to teach in order to aid learners in processing aural input. This necessitates a new approach to listening instruction that is skill-based and metacognitive at each step.

Here are the four steps, according to Reed:

#### **Step 1: Operationalize goals**

Learners must develop their listening skills to understand not only utterance content but also speaker intent, which is where comprehension often breaks down. Consider using short speech samples to parse connected speech through instruction in the pronunciation features of linking, blending, and gliding. Another helpful skill is sentence inferencing to understand the implicational use of intonation. For example, when a student asks, “Can I turn in my homework late?” and the teacher replies, “You can ...”, the words are affirmative, but the message is negative. An operational goal for learners might be to make inferences based on contrastive stress and intonation.

#### **Step 2: Use adequate and authentic teaching material**

Choosing real speech samples with unplanned speech, such as “pauses, false starts, rephrasing, and fillers,” gives listeners much-needed repetition and extra processing time (Vandergrift & Goh, 2012, p. 154). Authentic speech sources include podcasts such as National Public Radio’s “This American Life,” TED Talks, radio shows, and open source lectures. In selecting materials, teachers should identify a specific objective for a lesson with the speech sample, considering what they need to teach learners before listening and what learners will be able to discuss or manipulate after listening to the sample.

#### **Step 3: Plan strategies for teaching listening**

An important strategy for teaching listening involves metacognition, or the perception of the different processes used in listening in order to build comprehension. To this end, teachers can help learners to understand word segmentation – that is, the idea that they won’t hear each word individually – and to be aware of how intonation affects meaning. Students need explicit practice producing these aspects of speech in order to perceive them in listening.

#### **Step 4: Implement diagnostic formative and summative assessment.**

Any diagnostic assessment of learners’ listening skills should address metacognitive goals as well as skill-based listening goals. For example, students could share their initial perceptions about how English is spoken by responding whether they agree or disagree with such statements as, “Native speakers use dictionary (‘correct’) pronunciation in conversation.” Another useful metacognitive assessment is to listen for contrastive stress in order to match utterances with their actual meanings, or to use one’s awareness of intonation to decide whether a speaker has just heard good or bad news.

With these four steps, students can move from unconscious incompetence to unconscious competence in listening and speaking.

## What to Do in a Student Conference

In a video from the Eastern Michigan University Library (2014), Zuzana Tomas models how to effectively discuss potential plagiarism or source issues with students. Here are some tips:

- Begin by pointing out what worked well in the paper to make your student comfortable.
- Encourage your student to use institutional resources like the writing center.
- Relate to your student (“If this were me, I would consider ...”).
- Make an effort to understand your student’s reading and decision-making process (“What made you choose ...?”).
- Use gestures and rephrase key information and unknown vocabulary to reinforce meaning.
- Help your student with useful academic language. Example: “Discussing ... is beyond the scope of this paper.”
- Frame problematic source use from the perspective of your student’s voice or her ability to integrate arguments.
- Give your student direct advice on how to improve problematic sections.
- Guide your student in selecting sources (e.g., Wikipedia: “I wouldn’t use it as your main source, but it’s okay to use initially for basic information”).
- Focus on the purpose of source use and citations.
- Reassure your student and refer to the assessment tool (“You can lose one point if you don’t meet the page requirement, but you can lose many points if you ...”).
- Have your student summarize the revision plan you create.
- Highlight key takeaways.
- Once again, relate to your student (“I know how difficult it is to ...”), ending on a positive note.

## References

Howard, R. M. (1999). *Standing in the shadow of giants: Plagiarists, authors, collaborators*. Stanford, CT: Ablex.

Vandergrift, L., & Goh, C. M. (2012) *Teaching and learning second language listening: Metacognition in action*. New York and London: Routledge.

**Video Source:** *Departing from punishing plagiarism: Toward addressing ineffective source use pedagogically*, by Eastern Michigan University Library (2014, October 2), retrieved from: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?WSfrwzo&feature=youtu.be>

### Betsy Lindeman Wong

teaches a variety of classes in NOVA’s Intensive English and TESOL certificate programs. She has co-authored a textbook and teacher’s guide for Pearson Longman and currently writes and consults for Burlington English.



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