

# ESL Content Teachers Collaborative

School of Teaching and Learning



Keiko K. Samimy  
Project Director

## Letter from the Director

Dear ECTC Colleagues,

I hope that you have been well during this long winter season. The theme of this quarter’s ECTC newsletter is “Applying and Sharing What We’ve Learned,” and inside you will discover how the ECTC team and our alumni teachers are translating their ECTC knowledge and training into action.

On Page 2, we share with you some of the successes our alumni teachers have had in their districts applying what they’ve learned from the ECTC. Also in our newsletter, you’ll find a new teaching tip to apply in your classroom in our “Share Fair” section, plus strategies for helping your ELLs with reading in our “Book Review” section. Updates on ECTC efforts to share our findings with fellow educators are provided on Page 3.

Here at Ohio State, we’re applying what we’ve learned by working on a book proposal to be submitted to the University of Michigan Press. The book aims to compile everything we have been doing and what we have learned regarding our professional development program for enhancing collaboration between ESL and content teachers. We’re very excited about this opportunity to share our research with a larger audience.

In the meantime, let us know if there is anything we can do to help.

My best,

Keiko K. Samimy, Ph.D.

## Contents

- Letter from the Director.....1
- An ECTC Reunion ....2
- News & Announcements.....3
- Share Fair.....5
- Book Review.....7

**Volume 4, Issue 1  
Winter 2011**

In his model for evaluating professional development programs, education researcher Thomas Guskey states that educators need to ask themselves what the impact of professional development has been on the organization that teachers work in.

Since 2008, ECTC alumni have had a major impact in their schools and districts in numerous ways. The ECTC’s “trainer of trainers” approach to professional development has helped teachers to collaborate with fellow district personnel and to participate in district initiatives leading to more effective ESL programs. Here are some examples:

**Copley-Fairlawn:** creation of a 9th grade ESL Language Arts class; ECTC content teachers now recognized as authorities in TESOL and as resources for ELL students in district.

**Fremont:** revision of district’s ESL program; district-wide meeting for ELL families; and improved academic performance by ELL students, with nearly 30 ELLs exiting from program.

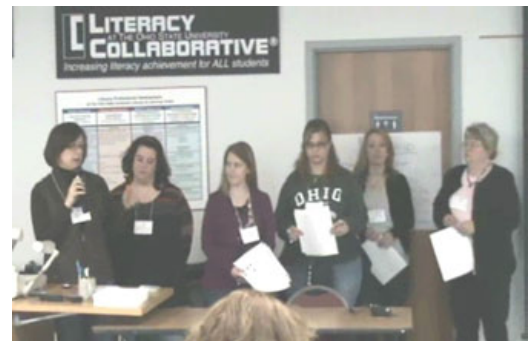
**Hilliard:** inclusion of ESL materials and documentation into district-wide literacy program; creation of Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) and data teams focused on ESL.

**New Albany-Plain Local:** creation of “ELL Survival Toolkit” for mainstream teachers and presentation of “Toolkit” at staff professional development and teacher-team meetings.

**Reynoldsburg:** launch of Moodle web site providing ESL resources and information to district educators; collaboration with district administrators to create a 9th grade sheltered-content team.

**Tippecanoe:** creation of “Electronic ESL Toolbox” for mainstream teachers and presentation of “Toolbox” to fellow teachers at district staff meeting.

**Whitehall:** creation of online newsletter for all district staff; teacher meetings with academically at-risk ELLs; and creation of “Spanish for Educators” class for teachers. ☞



*ECTC Alumni sharing the results of their training at ECTC Reunion Workshop, 2010*

For more information about Thomas Guskey, visit [www.ncela.gwu.edu/files/uploads/3/PD\\_in\\_Action.pdf](http://www.ncela.gwu.edu/files/uploads/3/PD_in_Action.pdf)

## News and Announcements

### *Sharing Knowledge with Math Teachers*

Special thanks go out to math teachers and ECTC alumni **Christina Schwartz, Melisa Ray, and Shane Fillhart** for representing the ECTC at the **2010 National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM) Regional Conference** in Denver, CO, in October. Together with Dr. Newman, the presenters shared with their fellow math teachers strategies and approaches learned through the ECTC program for teaching ELLs specifically in the math classroom. Thank you Christina, Melisa, and Shane for your on-going collaboration!

In 2011, the ECTC plans to present at other content-area conferences for social studies and language arts teachers, thereby expanding our outreach to other mainstream teachers interested in ESL professional development. Stay tuned for more information this year!

### *ECTC Presenting in Minneapolis!*

We are proud to announce that **CARLA** (The Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition) recently accepted **three** ECTC papers for presentation at the **Seventh International Conference on Language Teacher Education**, to be held at the University of Minnesota in May 2011. The presentations will focus on three areas of continuing research for the ECTC:

- The Effect of Training on Teachers' Knowledge about Second Language Acquisition
- Fostering Collaborative Practices with ESL and Content Teachers
- Self-Study of Three Online Language Teacher Educators

### *Interested in Participating?*

Attention district administrators and ESL teachers! Are you interested in ESL training for a team of content-area teachers in your district? Contact Steven about how you can participate in the ECTC in 2011-2012 ([swisnor@ehe.osu.edu](mailto:swisnor@ehe.osu.edu)).

Continued on page 4

## News and Announcements, Continued

### *Social Network with the ECTC*

Attention ECTC alumni! Would you like a convenient way to stay in touch with your fellow content and ESL teachers? We have created **an invitation-only social network through Ning** ([www.ning.com](http://www.ning.com)) especially for teachers to join and continue the collaboration. Our Ning network has similar features as Carmen (chat, forums), and membership is limited just to graduates of the ECTC program. For more information and an invitation, ECTC alumni can contact Steven ([swisnor@ehe.osu.edu](mailto:swisnor@ehe.osu.edu)).

### *ECTC Graduates, Please Stay in Touch!*

As always, you can send us updated information about your recent activities, conference attendance or presentations, and experiences working with ELLs, so that we can share your successes with colleagues. Please e-mail your updates to [swisnor@ehe.osu.edu](mailto:swisnor@ehe.osu.edu).

### The ESL-Content Teachers Collaborative (ECTC) Newsletter

The ECTC Newsletter is a quarterly newsletter for participants and friends of the ESL-Content Teachers Collaborative—a professional development program in the School of Teaching and Learning in the College of Education and Human Ecology, The Ohio State University. The program is funded by a five-year, \$1.5 million award from the U.S. Department of Education's Office of English Language Acquisition (OELA).

*Project Director:* Keiko Samimy

*Project Co-Director:* Karen Newman

*Project Manager & Editor:* Steven Wisnor

*Graduate Assistants:* Kathleen Seyler, Sunyung Song, Yunyan Zhang

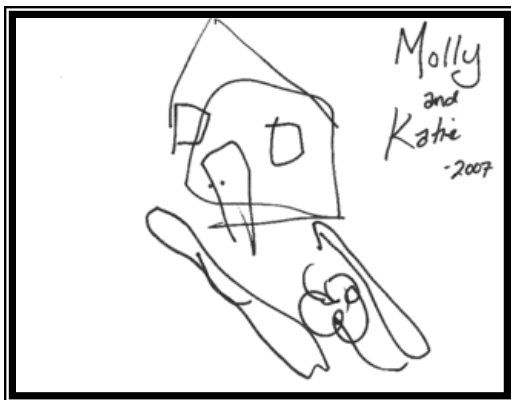
## Collaborative Communication: Drawing Together

By Kathleen Seyler

*The goal of this activity and its variations is for students to work together collaboratively, differentiate between concepts or vocabulary, negotiate meaning orally, express their ideas through graphics, and understand the importance of communicating with one another to clarify meaning.*

**Step 1- Pair:** Have students pair up and get a sheet of paper and one marker (washable, not permanent) to share. Each partner places one hand on the same marker and closes their eyes, so as to work together to draw one picture.

**Step 2- Draw Collaboratively:** Ask all students to imagine—without talking—their *home*, what it looks like, and what it means to them. Still with eyes closed and without talking, each pair of students draws *home* with their partners. Students can only use the one hand that is on the marker. The objective is for the students to work together to create one complete drawing of *home*. Give the students a few minutes to complete the drawing.



**Step 3- Draw with Communication:** Have the students get a new sheet of paper, close their eyes again, and draw another picture together of the word *home*. This time, students are allowed to speak with their partner but still cannot look while they draw. The emphasis here is on communicating orally and negotiating meaning collaboratively. Remind students not to open their eyes to help them draw.

**Step 4- Discussion:** Have the students open their eyes and look at their drawing, discussing what each intended to draw for the word *home*. Ask for feedback from the whole class about the end-product, as well as the drawing process. Further discussion can focus on culture differences and how students learn about one another and share their ideas, perspectives, and opinions.

Continued on page 6

## Share Fair, Continued

The drawings can become materials for a variety of classroom uses, such as illustrated word walls, writing prompts, discussion prompts, and review activities.

**Variation 1-** To **practice following directions**, students can draw together (eyes closed or open) as the teacher reads a set of instructions. Consider using graph paper so that directions can be given more precisely (e.g., “Draw a straight line down 4 boxes; draw over left 6 boxes; then draw up 4 boxes; and continue the line 6 boxes to the right”). This process can be used to create a number of academic objects, such as geometric shapes, graphs, charts, life cycles, or even timelines. By using only one marker to produce a single graphic described by a teacher, students work on communicating orally, negotiating meaning, following directions, and collaborating on a joint task.

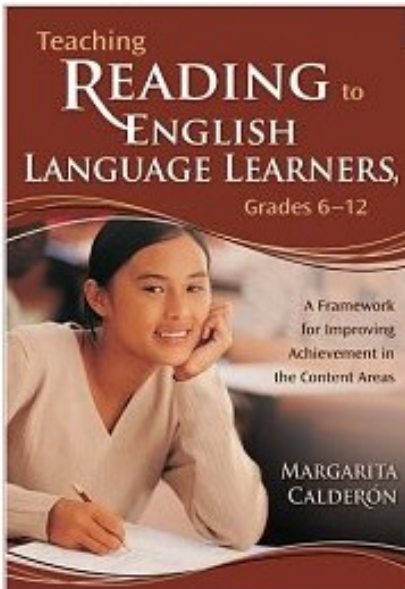
**Variation 2-** To **introduce content concepts, non-count vocabulary, or any central idea with multiple interpretations** (e.g., *war, main characters, liberty, holidays, happiness*) students can work in pairs and draw their interpretation together, first without communicating and then a second time using oral communication and negotiation. A variation of a “Think-Pair-Share” activity, this technique provides a basis for whole-class discussions about the multiple meanings, interpretations, and ideas students have about a major concept.

**Variation 3-** To **reinforce specific vocabulary words or items**, students can work in pairs by drawing the meanings. This activity works well when notable characteristic differences are present, such as in the types of clouds, geometric shapes, literary characters, countries or places in the world, famous works of art, or even written words that are difficult to spell and remember. This activity is useful for review sessions or for quick comprehension checks. ☺

*In each issue, the ECTC team presents a brief teaching idea for you to use in your work with English language learners.*

Calderón, M. (2007). *Teaching Reading to English Language Learners, Grades 6-12: A Framework for Improving Achievement in the Content Areas*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press. Pp. 161. ISBN: 1412909260 (paperback).

American primary schools devote much time and attention to explicit reading instruction and intervention. However, those ELLs who enter secondary schools behind their peers in reading ability face a daunting challenge: acquire and use literacy skills that are complex, content-embedded, and necessary not only for academic achievement in the classroom, but also for success on high stakes exams and for accessing information in our text-heavy culture.



Margarita Calderón’s book, *Teaching Reading to English Language Learners, Grades 6-12*, addresses the question teachers ask when faced with students in this situation: “How can my ELLs ever catch up?” The book offers mainstream secondary teachers a field-tested protocol (called ExC-ELL) to systematically address content-focused literacy instruction, with emphasis on lesson planning, vocabulary instruction, and a dynamic approach to pre-reading, in-class reading, and post-reading activities. Calderón also provides ESL teachers and professional development specialists with informative chapters on staff development planning and teacher coaching.

The book’s strengths lay in the resources that mainstream teachers can easily read over and extract for their own use. Calderón writes directly to teachers, and her book can be considered a field manual that teachers can grab and reference while planning their lesson. As a part of the ExC-ELL protocol, a 10-step lesson planning guide for combining content and literacy instruction provides a ready-made blueprint. An entire chapter is dedicated to vocabulary and ways to provide explicit vocabulary instruction before, during, and after a reading activity.

Continued on page 8

## Book Review, Continued

The heart of this text is a step-by-step explanation of how content teachers can combine the teaching of reading skills with content instruction. Using the 10-step lesson planning guide, Calderón provides teachers a sequence of tasks meant to prepare the text, the students, and teachers themselves for the reading lesson. The research foundation for each step is laid out in the second chapter. Chapter 4 focuses on teachers' selection of appropriate skills and learning questions, strategies for in-class reading, methods of partner reading and cooperative learning, and debriefing strategies. Later chapters further explore how to apply these steps and strategies specifically in the math, science, and language arts classrooms.

Some readers will take issue with a few aspects of the text. The content-focused chapters repeat much of the same information, though this is understandable given that content teachers might only read the chapter relevant to their own specific content area. Unfortunately, much of this useful information is not elaborated on in the brief chapter dealing with social studies, which simply contains a "vignette" of one specific lesson plan on trading and bartering. Several of the end-of-chapter summary points do not enhance teachers' understanding of literacy (e.g., "Science can be very exciting or very dull"), and the observation protocol touted by Calderón as a tool for teacher observation and coaching (the "EOP") is not adequately described, reproduced, or cited for teachers to track down a copy.

Nevertheless, Calderón's book meets the needs of secondary teachers looking for a comprehensive method for providing content-based literacy instruction to their ELL students. ☞