



WITESOL Newsletter

What's New with WITESOL

Winter 2016

At the beginning of January, the new WITESOL board members began their terms.

The new WITESOL secretary is Karen Wislocky. The two new members-at-large are Kathy Stamos (two year term) and Katie Vernezze (one year term). Kari Johnson (two year term) was re-elected to fill the third member-at-large position. [Read more about our current board.](#)

We would like to thank Rhonda Petree, Anjie Kokan, and Don Hones for their service on the board for the previous year(s). Thank you to all the WITESOL members who voted in the election.

The Annual WITESOL Writing and Art Contest is in full swing. Students of WITESOL members may submit an entry for the contest for the chance to win cash prizes. The deadline to enter the contest is February 15th. You can read more about how to submit entries for the contest on page 3 of the newsletter. This annual contest is a great perk of WITESOL membership and a wonderful way to engage students in writing and art.

Another new benefit of being a WITESOL member is the opportunity to apply for funding for WITESOL

Regional Professional Development Events.

WITESOL realizes that Wisconsin is a large state and it is not always possible for our members to travel to our annual conference. In order to reach more members and grow our organization around the state, we are offering these funding grants to host mini-conferences around Wisconsin.

We are excited to offer this opportunity for our members. You can learn more about the guidelines for submitting a request on page 4.

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Submit an article for the WITESOL Newsletter!

Submit an article or photo for the spring edition of the WITESOL Newsletter. Please email witesolboard@gmail.com with your submission by April 15th. We look forward to hearing from you!

Call for Judges: Writing and Art Contest

Are you looking for a way to get involved in WITESOL, but want something that is a low-time commitment that you can do from the comfort of your own home? Learn about how you can become a judge for our annual writing and art contest. It is a very rewarding experience and wonderful way to give back.

Attention WITESOL Members: Brianna Deering, our 2016 contest judging

coordinator is looking for judges for the 2016 Writing and Art contest. If you are interested in judging, please contact Brianna Deering at witesolcontest@gmail.com. In the subject, write "Judging 2016" and include the following in your email: Name, school or affiliation, email address, physical

address and phone number. Teachers cannot judge categories that their students are entering, so please let us know in your email the categories that you cannot judge.

Please contact Brianna by January 31, 2016.

Thank you!

TESOL Travel Award Winners

Each year, WITESOL gives out two to three TESOL Travel Awards. Members must apply for this award on an annual basis. This year's winners are: Fatma Aljarrah, Adela Larson, and Jennifer Phillips. Congratulations!

These three members won a \$1,000 TESOL Travel Award for the TESOL 2016 International Convention and Language Expo in Baltimore, Maryland, April 5th-8th.

After the convention, these three winners will be sharing an article about their experience at the convention. We look forward to sharing them in our newsletter and on our website.

The TESOL Travel Award is a special benefit that we offer to all of our WITESOL members. Each year, members are given the opportunity to apply for this prestigious award. We will again be offering this opportunity to apply later in the Fall/Winter of 2016.

Website Spotlight!

Songs and Activities for English Language Learners

<http://sandraheyersongs.com/>

Contributed by: Anjie Kokan and Sandra Heyer

Audience it serves: Adult English language learners, intensive English programs, middle school, high school (beginning and high-beginning levels)

Features: Music, stories, and interactive activities

About the website: This website has a lot of information provided by Sandra Heyer, author of *True Stories Behind the Songs* and *More True Stories Behind the Songs* published by Pearson Education. There are quite a few stories that are available for free for use in the classroom. Sandra also has audio and video to go with some of the stories.

There are interactive activity ideas on the site, too, along with tips and song recommendations.

Besides the great ideas, the other wonderful thing about this website is that there are no annoying advertisements and you do not have to make an account or give your email to use the material. Popular songs featured, like Adele's "Hello," will appeal to a wide audience of English language learners. You can even print out Sandra's story, written at the beginning level, which tells the true story behind that song.

Read more from Sandra Heyer on page 5.

WITESOL Annual Writing and Art Contest 2016

Writing and Art Contest Coordinator, Anjie Kokan

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THEME: "The Perfect School"

(What is the ideal learning environment? Students are welcome to explore how they learn best, what they need from their environment in order to learn, what their teachers need to be like, etc.)

Cash Prizes for Students of WITESOL Members

NEW THIS YEAR: We will be going to an electronic format for both submissions, judging and printing. Teachers will submit their entries via a form on our WITESOL website for essays and poetry, and through witesolcontest@gmail.com for art. This new format will help us save on expenses.

RULES

1. Entrants: Only English Language Learners currently enrolled in a class or program taught by a teacher who is a current WITESOL member are eligible. Entrants must be enrolled in one of the following levels of education: primary (K-2), intermediate (grades 3-5), middle school (grades 6-8), high school (grades 9-12), or adult education (university, technical college or other ESL/literacy program).

2. Format: Entries must be written in English. All entries must be typed. Each essay should have a title, a body of at least five sentences and a maximum of 350 words. Poetry can be up to one page, free verse or rhyme. Any form is acceptable for an art project (crayons, pencils, painting, photography, multimedia, etc.). It should be completed on an 8 1/2 x 11 sheet of paper. We are only accepting scanned copies of the artwork or a digital photo.

3. Topic: The 2016 contest theme is "The Perfect School." Students can write about how they learn best, what they need from their environment in order to learn, what their teachers need to be like, etc. Similarly, art projects submitted must adhere to the same theme. Any medium is acceptable for an art project, but the scanned artwork must be clear and easy to see.

4. Submission Process: Each teacher may submit a maximum of three essays and three art projects for each level. A **separate entry form** must accompany each essay and art project. Teachers will submit essays individually through our website form, and art work will be submitted to this address: witesolcontest@gmail.com. Teachers should consult our **website** for specific directions about submitting artwork because both the electronic form and an email is needed in that category.

DEADLINE: Monday, February 15

JUDGING

The student's teacher may make suggestions for improvement. However, the final essay or artwork should reflect the student's own best effort. A committee made up of WITESOL Executive Board members and other member judges will make the final determination on work submitted. Essays will be judged on the basis of content, originality, organization and adherence to the rules of the contest. Artwork will be judged on the basis of content, originality and adherence to the rules of the contest.

AWARDS

A total of 15 prizes will be awarded for writing:

5 prizes of \$50 each (one first prize for each level)

5 prizes of \$30 each (one second prize for each level)

5 prizes of \$20 each (one third prize for each level)

A total of 6 prizes will be awarded for art:

1 prize of \$50 (grand prize winner)

5 prizes of \$30 each (one prize for each level)

We will publish all winners' work in an electronic booklet available on our website.

Note: Because this year we are going electronic, we understand that there might be some problems. Please write to witesolcontest@gmail.com if you have any problem or need help. We will work with you to ensure your students can participate.

**Guidelines for Requests for Funding:
WITESOL Regional Professional Development Events**
January 2016

WITESOL welcomes requests for regional mini-workshops, mini-conferences, or other professional development events organized by WITESOL members to provide professional development opportunities for teachers, administrators, other staff who work with English learners and their families. Individuals or local teams of WITESOL members may develop proposals for these events using the following guidelines.

WHAT IS FUNDED:

WITESOL will support funding for 3-5 grants of \$500 to \$1,000 each for regional workshops, mini-conferences, or other professional development (up to \$3,000 total for any calendar year). These amounts are subject to approval from a committee of the WITESOL Board and the availability of funds from WITESOL. The purpose of this funding is to support efforts by WITESOL members to provide smaller professional development opportunities at the regional level in Wisconsin outside of the annual conference.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE:

Those who submit proposals must be members of WITESOL. Individual WITESOL members or local teams of members are eligible to submit a proposal for funding.

GUIDELINES FOR PROPOSALS:

1. **Focus of Proposal:** Proposals must focus on providing professional development (PD) to improve the instruction of English learners (ELs) and/or the capacity of staff or families to advance the learning of ELs.
2. **Intended Audience:** The intended audience for the proposed PD should be a specific region, school district, or CESA district in Wisconsin. PD events must take place in Wisconsin.
3. **Event date:** The professional development (PD) event should not be scheduled for the month before or the month of the annual WITESOL conference (not October or November). See WITESOL website (witesol.com) for the date of the conference.
4. Please include the following in any proposal:
 - **Contact information:** Name of contact person, affiliation, email address, and phone number (include a cell phone number)
 - **Purpose or rationale for the PD event** – Why is the event needed?
 - **Brief description of event** – What kind of event are you planning (e.g., a mini-workshop, a mini-conference, something else)?
 - **Targeted audience(s) for the event** – Who is the event planned for? Which group(s) do you hope to attract? How will you publicize the event?
 - **A timeline or proposed schedule of the event** – What will happen that day?
 - **Anticipated outcome(s)** – What do you hope to accomplish by hosting the event?
 - **Anticipated budget** – What parts of the PD event will you support? What parts do you need help to fund?
5. **Length of proposal:** Aim for 1-2 pages for the proposal and one page for the budget. Please do not exceed 3 pages total. Proposals should be typed and submitted as an attachment to an email and sent to both the President and Past President of WITESOL (see witesol.com under Board Members for current names and email addresses).

DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION OF PROPOSALS:

- March 1: for PD events April – June
- June 1: for PD events July – December (check date of WITESOL annual conference)
- December 1: for PD events January – March

Decisions on funding proposals will normally be made 3-4 weeks after the submission deadline.

Singing in the Classroom -- When Less is More

Sandra Heyer - songs@ticon.net

Whitewater Community Adult ESL

Whitewater, WI



Not long ago, I was flipping through radio stations in my car when I came across an oldies station playing “Raindrops Keep Falling on My Head,” the song that accompanied the iconic scene in the 1969 movie *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid*. I began to sing along, a little surprised that I knew the words. But the bigger surprise was that I wasn’t singing in English -- I was singing in German. Ach, du lieber Himmel! Where did *that* come from? I had probably learned the lyrics when I was teaching German in the early 1970s. Whole swaths of German have disappeared from the landscape of my brain since then, but there the song lyrics were, pretty much intact over four decades later.

Language learners and teachers know that singing popular songs in the target language can be a powerful learning technique; it can also help learners feel connected to the new culture. However, if you teach beginners, as I do, your attempts at having students sing along with recordings may have had mixed results. For the activity to work, the planets have to be perfectly aligned: The song’s lyrics have to be simple, the tempo not too fast, the rhythm predictable, and the melody universally appealing. That’s a pretty tall order.

After several disappointing experiences with sing-alongs in my class, I had abandoned the activity. Then came the “Ah ha!” moment -- or perhaps more aptly, the “Duh!” moment, as in retrospect the solution seems obvious. If it’s difficult for students to sing a whole song, why not ask them to sing *part* of a song -- the chorus, for example, or only part of that part? That would limit the amount of language in the task while at the same time giving students multiple times to repeat it.

I started with Bruce Springsteen’s version of “Pay Me My Money Down.” I asked my students to sing just the chorus:

Pay me, pay me.
Pay me my money down.
Pay me, or go to jail.
Pay me my money down.

Bingo! My class of adult learners sang along, and one woman, who had come to class after an eight-hour workday, continued to sing solo after the recording had ended. More successful lessons singing just *parts* of songs followed: For example, we sang the chorus of “Renegades” along with the X Ambassadors and the chorus of “Love Yourself,” which repeats four times, along with Justin Bieber. After each lesson, I couldn’t help but think of the old adage: “More with Less.”

An article by Marilyn Abbott, "Using Music to Promote L2 Learning Among Adult Learners" (*Tesol Journal*, Vol. 11, No. 1), opened up even more possibilities. She recommends having students read song lyrics aloud, maintaining the rhythm of the song and emphasizing the syllables that are accented when the song is sung. With some skepticism, I tried it. It worked. For example, my students probably wouldn't have been able to sing this line from the Pharrell Williams song "Happy": *Clap your hands if you feel like a room without a roof*. But they loved saying it while he sang it.

Like it or not, American popular music has become the soundtrack of life in the United States. I like to think that someday my students will hear a song at a mall, grocery store, gas station, or dentist's office and think, "I know that song!" Or maybe decades from now, a line in a song my students have sung or spoken in class will spontaneously come to them out of the blue. Maybe after getting good news, he or she will think, "I feel as happy as a room without a roof," and then wonder: "Where did *that* come from?"



WITESOL made it easier to renew your membership with our new online form. [Sign up or renew today!](#)

WITESOL

Wisconsin Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages

[**witesol.com**](http://witesol.com)

[**witesolboard@gmail.com**](mailto:witesolboard@gmail.com)

WITESOL is the professional organization for Wisconsin Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages. As an affiliate of TESOL International, it represents and provides professional development and other opportunities to educators of English Language Learners and bilingual students of all levels and ages around the state of Wisconsin.

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