

# TexTESOL III Newsletter

Texas Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages

January 2007

[www.textesol.org/region3](http://www.textesol.org/region3)

## Letter from the President

### *Moving Onward!*

As I look back at the 2006 TexTESOL State Conference, I immediately return back to the theme *Focusing on the Ability to Learn*. I can remember the discussions in the hallways amongst fellow ESL professionals learning about each other, about where they worked, what they did, and who their students were. Discussions were filled with the challenges teachers faced or the suggestions they had to offer. It is precisely this kind of open dialogue amongst professionals that keeps our profession vibrant and progressive. Thank you to all who participated for taking the theme to heart!

The TexTESOL III Board would also like to extend thanks to all those who presented at the conference. There were first-time presenters who established their confidence and shared their enthusiasm for the field, as well as seasoned professionals who continued to bring new light to old topics. On behalf of TexTESOL III, I would like to encourage everyone to examine the possibility of presenting at the 2007 State Conference in Galveston. There are many wonderful ideas, research projects, and activities that are yet to be shared.

TexTESOL III looks forward to providing our increased membership with a variety of future services, including networking opportunities, workshops, scholarships, and advocacy. We want to serve as your ESL and Bilingual Education resource, so please do let us know how we can best assist you by contacting us at [contact@textesol.org](mailto:contact@textesol.org).

We are proud of our members, and we look forward to hearing from you and working with you in the future.

Cheers,  
Katherine Fouché  
TexTESOL III President

### Contents

Page 2	2006 TexTESOLers of the Year
Page 3	<i>Reduced Forms, A Powerful Tool for Listening Comprehension</i>
Page 7	<i>The Peace Song</i>
Page 8	<i>The 2006 TESOL State Conference: The Golden Days in Fall</i>
Page 10	Website Review
Page 11	Calendar of Events

# Your 2006 TexTESOLers of the Year

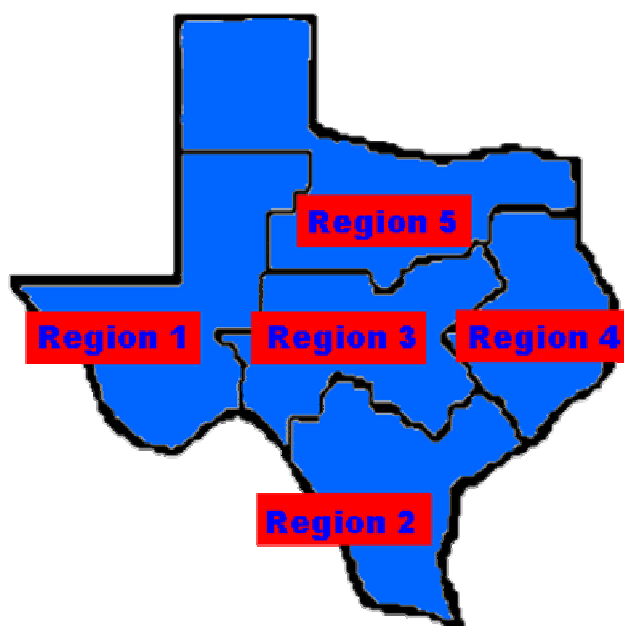
**Region I:** Alma Rosa Rodriguez

**Region II:** Dr. Sharla Jones

**Region III:** Betsy Markman

**Region IV:** Caree Phillips

**Region V:** Julie Legg



## *From the Conference...*

Approximately five hundred people attended the conference, coming from as far away as the Ukraine, Argentina and Egypt.

## 2006-2007 TexTESOL III Executive Board

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## Reduced Forms, a Powerful Tool for Listening Comprehension

By Nina Weinstein

“Recorded, pre-written dialogs are really examples of written language, not spoken language. . .”  
(Stephen Krashen and Tracy Terrell, 1983)

“ . . . a large percentage of the word-by-word borders are effectively obscured by a limited group of quite predictable—and teachable—happenings. . .” (J. Essig, 1978)

You’re auditioning for a part in a movie. You must make your lines sound natural, like the conversation the producers would overhear as they’re walking around any campus.

*Scene:* Turn to the person next to you. Something happened during the morning and you really need to tell him/her about it at lunch. Do NOT reduce ANY of the sounds in the following words. Pronounce the final “g” on “going” and “working”, the “t” on “want” and do NOT reduce the vowel sounds on “to” and “you”. However, say the following lines at a natural speed:

“I’m going to be working on something until 12:30. Do you want to go to lunch after that?”

Keep practicing until it sounds like native speaker discourse. Do you think you got the part? Could you follow the “pronunciation rules” above and make it sound natural?

### What do we know about reduced forms?

There can be misconceptions about who uses reduced forms and what causes them. Are they slang or improper speech? Do educated people use them? How common are they? In other words, should we teach English learners to understand reduced forms, and if so, how?

Reduced forms are the spontaneous pronunciation changes in adjacent words or sounds spoken at a

natural speed. Some prevalent examples include \*gonna, \*wanna, \*hafta and \*gotta (Bowen, 1975).

In seven hours of unscripted recordings by highly educated native English speakers in both formal and informal situations, 305 reduced forms were used (Weinstein, 1984). \*Gonna (going to + verb), \*wanna (want to) and \*hafta (have to) were the most common reduced forms, one of which was used about every two minutes. If we include the other reduced forms in the seven-hour unscripted sample, the frequency rate would be at least one reduced form per minute. Although there was no statistical significance for informality as a cause of reduced forms, there was statistical significance for speed of speech. Put another way, the faster the speech, the more reduction (Weinstein, 1984).

The following table shows how speed of speech affects reduction:

**Table 1:**

Speed of Speech	Level	Example
Slow	1	want to
Faster	2	want *ta
Fastest	3	*wanna

Which level is used by native English speakers the most frequently?

**Table 2:**

Speed of Speech	Level	Example	Number of times used (in seven hours)
Slow	1	want to	8
Faster	2	want *ta	47
Fastest	3	*wanna	258

Level 3, the fastest level and the level with the most reduction, is overwhelmingly the most common (Weinstein, 1984).

If students expect to hear sentences with no reduction, such as: “What do you want to do?” but native English speakers predominantly say,

“\*Whaddaya \*wanna do?” how can the English learner “translate” one into the other? The only form in the above sentence that wasn’t reduced was “do”. In other words, if language teachers teach reduced forms as a listening comprehension tool, their students will have a powerful advantage when listening to native English speakers.

### **How do we teach reduced forms?**

Show students Table 1 on the board. Which level do they think is the most common? Have them vote by raising their hands. Then explain that the following results were from a recording of seven hours of unscripted speech from highly educated native English speakers. Put the frequency counts from Table 2 on the board. Learning to hear Level 1 pronunciation won’t improve their listening comprehension beyond a certain point because they’ll rarely, if ever, encounter it. If they want to dramatically strengthen their comprehension of real spoken English, they need to learn to understand the common reduced forms that represent Level 3.

Step One is to learn the fifty to seventy most common reduced forms contextualized in simple but natural spoken English (Weinstein, 2001). Step One isn’t the only element of spoken English, but because reduced forms are ubiquitous in spoken English, they’re the strongest place to start.

Step Two transfers this tool to the real world. English learners need to be able to understand these reduced forms when native English speakers say them in real conversation. If English learners have access to native English speakers, after you teach them to understand \*wanna, for instance, tell them to focus on \*wanna in the English they hear outside of the classroom. At the next class, ask students if they heard \*wanna “outside”. Does anyone remember part of the context in which they heard it? Do the same with other common reduced forms as you teach English learners to understand them. Every time they can hear one of these common reductions outside of the classroom and understand it, they’ve moved forward in their own listening comprehension.

Step Three focuses on increasing their understanding of natural spoken English. There are many listening books to choose from to help them increase their comprehension of recordings of native English speakers.

### **Some Guidelines**

It’s easier to understand an interview-type of discussion with two speakers than a discussion with three or more speakers. Generally, the more speakers, the more difficult the listening material.

When you find a listening book that includes authentic listening material with two speakers, play a sample. Does it include reduced forms? Does it sound natural? Natural spoken English (also) includes false starts, pauses, repetitions, asides, explanations (I mean), pause holders (you know) and so forth (Krashen and Terrell, 1983).

It’s more of a real world activity with students’ books closed, but if that’s too difficult, have them follow a script in the book to make the material easier. Your goal should be to play more and more of the material with students’ books closed.

If you need to make the material more accessible, play the focus material in logical chunks; not the whole segment. For each chunk, play it the first time for general understanding. Ask questions like:

- 1) Who are the speakers? (gender, approximate age, etc.)
- 2) Where are they (or, Where do you think they are?)
- 3) What’s the main topic?
- 4) Is there a problem or a difference of opinion? What is it?

Play the chunk again. The second time is a push for more precision. Replay sentences they didn’t understand or had difficulty understanding. If there’s a sentence with a common reduced form, ask them to tell you the words in the sentence. Ask them how “want to”, for instance, was pronounced. The more experience they have hearing the reduced forms, the easier it will be to understand them in the real world.

If there's a word they don't understand, ask them to reproduce any sounds they can. If they can reproduce the sounds, have them say the word aloud in the context of the sentence. Does the word give them a positive or a negative feeling? They may understand enough of the word to understand the sentence. Are there any clues in the other words in the sentence? What do they guess the sentence means?

Because this is real spoken English, English learners don't need to hear it perfectly to be successful. Success can be measured in improvement. Pre test and post test scores that show dramatic improvement constitute successful mastery of real world listening material.

The teacher can move away from the components of spoken English (reduced forms, pauses, repetitions, etc.) when they can understand the discussion without pointing these out. When learners don't understand the discussion, however, they have a powerful tool to figure it out.

### **Should We Teach English Learners to Use Reduced Forms in Their Own Speech?**

English learners who are pronouncing every written sound of their words are really speaking "written English" (See Table 2, Level 1). And yet, the research above shows that reduced forms are *spontaneous* forms caused by speed of speech. As we know, many English learners speak English too slowly to reach the speed where reduction occurs naturally. Thus, they won't sound natural if they "force" reduced forms into their spoken English.

However, there's an extremely powerful compromise that can make English learners' spoken English sound more natural instantly without impacting communication.

As mentioned above, \*gonna, \*wanna and \*hafta are the most common reduced forms (Weinstein, 1984). These three forms are so common, each is pronounced as a chunk, as if it were a vocabulary word rather than a pronunciation change caused by speed of speech. Because of this, they're relatively easy for English learners to pronounce naturally.

Due to the fact that one is used approximately every two minutes, although English learners are only using three reduced forms, it sounds like they're using a lot more, thus "naturalizing" their speech without raising major pronunciation issues.

*\*an asterisk reminds readers reduced forms are representations of spoken English and not part of the written language*

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*Nina Weinstein holds a Master of Arts in TESL/applied linguistics from UCLA. She's taught for thirty years. Currently, she teaches English in private industry. She was a teaching fellow at Harvard and has published twenty ESL/EFL textbooks.*

## **Texas Foreign Language Education Conference (TexFLEC) 2007**

*Theory in Practice : Innovative Approaches to Teaching and Research in  
Second/Foreign Languages*

*March 30-31, 2007; Austin, Texas*

### **KEYNOTE SPEAKERS**

**Dr. Douglas Brown and Dr. Anna Chamot**

Information: <http://studentorgs.utexas.edu/flesa/txflec/>

E-mail: [TexFLEC@ccwf.cc.utexas.edu](mailto:TexFLEC@ccwf.cc.utexas.edu)

**By Said Abdel-Daim El-Sabagh**

*Dear Readers,*

*I had written this poem after a long discussion with a friend from another nation as an expression about living together peacefully in one world, regardless of our different colors, languages or faiths. We have no reason to fight, as I mentioned, since everything is enough for us to live on together.*

*This poem is my message to every human on Earth to understand and stop violations. Then we all will live in peace together forever.*

## ACCEPT THE OTHER

To live in peace together  
We have to accept the other

The universe is wide enough  
For us to live together

The sky is high enough  
For us to fly together

The ocean is deep enough  
For us to dive together

To live in peace together  
We have to accept the other

The air is quite enough  
For us to breathe together

The food is much enough  
For us to feed together

The water is fairly enough  
For us to drink together

To live in peace together  
We have to accept the other

Who is, you think, the other?  
Your neighbor is the other

Your friend could be the other  
Your partner might be the other

Concerning our first father and mother  
The other for sure is sister or brother

SO

To live in peace together  
We have to accept the other



Said Abdel-Daim El-Sabagh (third from the left) in Austin, visiting from Egypt for the 2006 TextESOL State Conference

## **The 2006 TexTESOL State Conference: The Golden Days in Fall**

**By Frank Cronin**

Sunny fall days in Austin greeted the exhibitors, teachers and conference workers who attended the 28<sup>th</sup> annual TESOL State Conference on Thursday, October 26th through Saturday, October 28<sup>th</sup>. This year's conference was held at two neighboring hotels, The Omni Hotel – Southpark and the Marriott Austin Airport South. Two shuttles running from the early morning until the end of each day's activities conveniently transported all from one hotel to another.

This conference featured scores of presenters covering all aspects of our field including all the different skills like listening, pronunciation, reading and writing at all levels for all students. A small but select group of keynote and featured speakers shared their expertise. Twenty six exhibitors presented the tried and new in CD ROMs, textbooks and other items.

### *From the Conference...*

Over 20 exhibitors contributed in all areas of the conference.

The pre-conference speakers spoke on a variety of issues with very practical considerations. Federico Salas-Isnardi drawing on his many years of teaching and his current job as Assistant State Director of Adult Education in Texas focused on the questions surrounding content standards. Evangelina Orozco of Austin ISD spoke on the problems undocumented immigrants have getting into higher education. Robert Pinhero spoke about the importance of health literacy to those whose English language limitations result in problems coursing through the health system.

The conference offered experienced, interesting featured speakers. The Plenary Speaker, Jayme Adelson-Goldenstein, started Friday's proceedings with a talk that focused on strategies that help teachers in the student centered classroom. The Keynote Speaker, Linda McNeil, spoke on Friday about her particular deep concern about how the shift toward more standardized testing is hurting our students' "intellectual and cultural heritages." Many in attendance nodded in agreement with much of what she said; certainly many will look to her books on the same topic, the drawbacks of standardized testing.

The featured speakers included the current president of TESOL, Jun Liu and a former president of TESOL, Michele J. Sabino. On Friday morning Jun Liu spoke on "Competence of Incompetence: A Pedagogical Perspective" in which he pointed out that experienced teachers using cultural cues and contextualization can use their students' lack of communicative competence as a point of teaching. On the next morning, Michele Sabino's talk, "Walking a Mile in Their Shoes," encouraged all teachers to remain learners and to share this dual identity with their students. Nancy Steward's talk, "Levels of Learning" centered on issues concerning ESL at the community college and university levels.

Even a good sized sampling of the different concurrent sessions would not give a fair picture of the variety of topics, from "Women in EFL Textbooks on Iran and Turkey" to "Secondary Newcomer Programs in Austin ISD". Former ESL students spoke at "Achieving Success: Former Students Report on Their EFL/ESL Instruction." Touching on a new aspect of technology, Sharla Jones who did her Ph.D. work on blogs, presented "Blogging: Benefits and Drawbacks for the Writing Process Approach" and "Blogging: The Next Generation of CALL."



A particularly important presentation centered on how TESOL and individual teachers can advocate for TESOL's issues, teachers, and students. Terry Shearer and Donald Weasenforth recapped TESOL's first annual Capitol Hill visit that took place last summer in our nation's capital. They also offered many practical strategies to help teachers become more aware of the legislation involved in education and become more involved in working with legislators at all levels. As many of us already handle the many jobs of being a teacher, this is one job many of us don't have time for or enough knowledge about. This presentation was very helpful and motivating.

Given my recent interest in mathematics I particularly liked Nancy Siddens' session, "Increasing Interaction and Comprehension in Math." Her presentation was well organized with many good handouts and other materials. This presentation gave quite a few specifics about how to blend ESL and content areas.

The conference also had its social moments. On Friday evening Cubano Bop, a local band featuring a Spanish tinge on many jazz standards like Horace Silver's "Song for My Father" provided the music for the conference reception. Attendees enjoyed snacking on the foods, dancing to the music and winning raffle prizes. On Saturday at the

luncheon, Conjunto Atzlan played their bilingual blend of conjunto, an accordion music of Tejanos. Their lyrics show that they have stayed committed to the political ideas of the La Raza movement of the seventies. The band is headed by Jose Flores, an English teacher at Austin Community College and Juan Tejeda who has been important in establishing the long standing Conjunto -Tejano Music Festival held every May in San Antonio and the more recent International Accordion Festival which happens every October in San Antonio. The luncheon also honored this year's TexTESOLers of the year from every affiliate. And the luncheon featured a talk by TESOL president Jun Liu on what he hopes to accomplish during his term, including a more interactive and member oriented website.

The conference ended in an appropriate place, the Omni hotel bar, Sweetwater's. This get-together was billed as "Giddy Up to Galveston" to promote next year's conference and allowed all who attended to make plans for next year's conference, win raffle prizes and say their goodbyes to their fellow members of TexTESOL.

*Frank Cronin has tutored and taught at Austin Community College for twenty years. He is a past board member of TexTESOL III from 1996 to 2004 as delegate, secretary and president.*

### *From the Conference...*

"I enjoyed this experience which made me appreciate what our members do and who they are inside the United States."

Jun Liu, TESOL President

## Website Review

Website URL: <http://www.esl-images.com/>

Name: *ESL-Images*

Audience: secondary, adult; beginner/intermediate levels

Cost: \$29.99/6 months (reduced price for 1 year commitment and multi-user subscriptions)

### Summary

*ESL-Images* is a resource for simple cartoon images that demonstrate various parts of speech in English. The website is divided into three areas: *Vocabulary Images*, *Grammar Image Sets*, and *Lesson Plans*. The “Vocabulary Images” section offers images based on practical themes like “At the Airport” and “Environment, Energy and Pollution.” The website allows users to print images in a choice of color or black and white. They can be printed as individual “flashcards” or as multiple images per pages, with or without labels. The website offers its images in clusters called “Grammar Image Sets” which provide examples of grammatical variations in English. For example, the “there is/there are” set include images of scenes with singular and plural objects that can elicit the usage of the terms being instructed. “Lesson Plans” provides instructional guides including readings and activities that cover a variety of sociolinguistic, grammatical and cultural themes.

### Review

The images available on this website are clear, accurately portraying their intended meaning. They can be used to supplement a wide variety of topics. The images facilitate communication, regardless of literacy skills. The website is easy to navigate and the ability to manipulate the presentation of the images allows for their various usages during instruction. The Grammar Image Sets provide examples of those difficult-to-explain variations in language. The lesson plans are comprehensive in that they address sociolinguistic and cultural aspects of English, including structure and usage. *ESL-Images* can add visual value to ESL lessons for learner at all ages and levels. As a primary instructional tool, this website would be best used for adult education conversation courses.

The Vocabulary Images provided per theme can be limited. While the picture resources are organized in a user-friendly fashion, the user may find the website inadequate as a comprehensive picture dictionary. Users need to be aware that not all lesson plans are intended for all language ability levels nor do they address all language skills. The lesson plans have been developed with specific intentions. If this website is not being used as a primary teaching tool, it would be best for the user to review the Lesson Plan prior to units of instruction in order to determine their adaptability. The lesson plans would need to be supplemented for students to demonstrate higher order thinking skills.

*Reviewer: Danielle Bragaw, ESL Teacher, Austin ISD*

## Calendar of Events

### February, 2007

**7-10.** NABE 36<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference, "One Nation: Many Languages, Many Cultures in a Changing World," San Jose, CA. <http://www.nabe.org/conference.html>

**8-11.** California Association of Teachers of English, "Fertile Ground: A Landscape of Voices," Fresno Radisson Hotel and Convention Center, Fresno, California, USA. Web site <http://www.CATEWeb.org>

**10.** TESOL Applied Linguistics Graduate Students, East Carolina University, Greenville, North Carolina, USA. Proposals invited from ESL teachers and Applied Linguistics Graduate students. Contact Stephen William Hinman, E-mail [swh0514@ecu.edu](mailto:swh0514@ecu.edu). Web site <http://core.ecu.edu/engl/talgs/conference/conference.htm>

### March, 2007

**2-4.** The Reading Matrix, "Coming Together: The Shrinking Global Village," Online Conference. E-mail [Liontas@fredonia.edu](mailto:Liontas@fredonia.edu). Web site <http://www.readingmatrix.com>

**21-24.** TESOL, "TESOL 2007: Tides of Change," Washington State Convention & Trade Center, Seattle,

Washington, USA. E-mail [conventions@tesol.org](mailto:conventions@tesol.org). Web site <http://www.tesol.org>

### April, 2007

**2-4.** International Society for Language Studies, Honolulu, Hawaii, USA. Web site <http://www.isls-inc.org/conference/conference.html>

**13-16.** Creativity Workshop in New York, NY. <http://www.exploringcreativity.net/newyork.html>

**21-24.** AAAL (Association of Applied Linguistics) 2007 Annual Conference, Costa Mesa, CA. <http://www.aaal.org/aaal2007/index.htm>

### June, 2007

**1-29.** School for International Training (SIT) TESOL Certificate Summer Intensive Course, International Language Center, San Antonio, TX. Web site: <http://www.globaltefl.org>

### Call for Newsletter Submissions

Do you have some thoughts on the teaching of English to speakers of other languages? Do you have personal stories to share that are related to TESOL issues? Do you have some helpful tips for other TESOLers? If you do, please consider submitting an article to TexTESOL III Newsletter. Submission deadlines:

<b>Submission</b>	12/1	3/1	6/1	9/1
<b>Publication</b>	1/15	4/15	7/15	10/15

Visit <http://www.textesol.org/region3/> for submission types and guidelines.