**Intermountain TESOL Conference, West Yellowstone, Sep. 18th and 19th, 2015**

1. *Using Open Educational Resources in ESL Programs*

* Students spend about $1,328 on textbooks ($700 - $1,300 annually) or 20 - 30% of students overall costs.
* Working with open content is a better academic move (Pearson, etc. have taken control of the curriculum and taken teachers out---teacher becomes a facilitator).
* OER provides us opportunities to move away from textbook driven curriculum.
* See openstax
* See Americanenglish.state.gov

OER is really exciting and this presentation was a real eye-opener for me. Now the plan is to start implementing this as best we can. Certainly, I see this as working for reading and writing. I will need to follow up on how it would work in ESL, but the same principles apply to all courses and the more we work with OER the more we can adapt it to various courses.

1. *Interaction and Learning in the Group Writing Conference*

* Create an Engl 1010 course that is multilingual only (or ELLs).
* Think about a structured response to writing, e.g., I suggest that…
* Modelling: use templates
* Conferencing: negotiation, scaffolding, emergent agency, active participation
* Students must take an active role in the discussion as a peer reader.
* Students write reflections on the peer review and the revisions they need to make.

So, Engl 1010 for ELLs is something that might actually happen at SLCC and this is exciting. I liked the ideas on conferencing and how to encourage students to be more interactive.

1. *The Value of Discourse-level Activities in College-level ESL Instruction*

* There is a gap between sentence level grammar instruction and academic needs of L2 learners
* Form-focused instruction (fluency and accuracy): no links between form and meaning
* See National Geographic Open Archives

4. *Essential of Curriculum Design and Development for ESL Teachers*

* Class – Course – Program
* ADDIE: Analysis Design Develop Implement Evaluate
* Learning Outcome – Assessment & Feedback – Learning Experience
* Who controls curriculum development?

As we consider curriculum through ESL accreditation it would be worth looking into this approach. (I need to follow up with Dean as he also attended this session and had some literature).

5. *Using Student-led Discussion Groups*

* Choose a listening, e.g., NPR, CNN; pre-listening, teach some vocabulary, students lead a discussion.
* Read: everyone reads the same article; make a list of questions; students lead a discussion
* Students need plenty of guidance: clear expectations (use template, model, etc.)
* Follow up and push them to use more complex language.
* See “User’s Manuel for Student-led Discussions”

These ideas would work well in ESL 1010 and 1030.

6. *ESL Writing Conferences: They Whys and Hows, and More*

* Focus on global writing problems first
* Sitting down with students: How is your writing going? How can I help you? Tell me about…? What do you plan to do next? How do you feel about this piece/draft? Do you have any questions or concerns? Is this essay easy/hard for you?
* See writingwithrebecca.com
* Students must respond to text
* Students should have paper in front of them to take notes.
* Offer praise when you can

So, I was thinking when to have conferences because I see them as highly valuable. For 0900 students it would work during class because others can be working in the lab.

7. *The Heart of Communicative Language Teaching: Improving Interaction in the Classroom*

* To build trust you need one-on-one interaction.
* 3 things necessary for effective interaction: exchanges need to be frequent, positive, and low-risk
* What can we do to create a culture of interaction
* See calm.com

I like the idea of frequent, positive, and low-risk. This can apply to all classes. Group work can be challenging, and it’s not always necessary or desirable. Balance is appropriate.

8. *Motivating and Teaching Writing Students to Own Their Writing*

* See “Benefits of a Student Self Grading Model” by Maryellan Weimer
* Use more sample essays for students to find errors---works better in groups
* Use rubric for peer evaluations.

This presentation was probably the most useful for me and I not only adapted the principle of rubrics for peer evaluation but presented my own version of this method at a subsequent conference.