

UofM First-Year Writing Program

CAPster



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Upcoming Events

Mark your calendars for this and other events happening this month!

- **September 6th at 5pm:** Faculty vs. Grad Student Kickball Game at Tobey Park
- **September 9th at 4pm:** English Department Colloquium, Patterson Hall 456
 - **Courtney Santo**, “From Anecdote to Essay: Transforming the Personal into the Public”
- **September 21st, 1-4pm:** MOCH x Memphis Public Libraries: Hip Hop Gen X Class Reunion at Orange Mound Public Library
- **September 30th at 4pm:** English Department Colloquium in Patterson Hall 456
 - **Christopher Allan Black**, “Anti Gallows Sentiment in Native American Execution Sermons”

We want to celebrate you! Please send your upcoming conference presentations, publications, and defenses to Lindsay Helms (lldailey@memphis.edu).

12 Ways to Support ELLs (English Language Learners)

excerpts pulled from the article ["12 Ways to Support English Learners in the Mainstream Classroom"](#) by Jennifer Gonzalez

1. Make it visual

Instructions – even basic directions for classroom procedures – should be written on the board whenever possible. Challenging concepts should be diagrammed or supported with pictures. And modeling the steps of a process or showing students what a finished product should look like can go a long way toward helping students understand.

2. Build in More Group Work

"Kids aren't just empty glasses that we pour stuff into and then at the end of the day they dump it back onto a test," says Kim, an ESL teacher who was the subject of my [Gonzalez's] very first podcast interview. "If you really want the kids to learn, they've got to be engaged." That means less teacher-led, whole-class instruction, and more small groups, where students can practice language with their peers in a more personal, lower-risk setting.



3. Communicate with the ESL Teacher

Just talk to each other. Talk about what's going on in your classrooms, invite each other to special presentations, share what your students are learning, and the words will naturally find their way into the ESL class.

4. Honor the "Silent Period."

Many new language learners go through a silent period, during which they will speak very little, if at all. Just knowing that this is a normal stage in second language acquisition should help relieve any pressure you feel to move them toward talking too quickly.

12 Ways to Support ELLs

5. Allow Some Scaffolding with the Native Language
When a student is still very new to a language, it's okay to pair him with other students who speak his native language. "Letting them explain things or ask questions in their first language gets them to relax and feel like a part of the class."

6. Look Out for Culturally Unique Vocabulary
"For most of these kids, their background knowledge is lacking, especially with things that are unique to American or westernized culture," says Eddington. "It's important to directly teach certain vocabulary words."

7. Use Sentence Frames to Give Students Practice with Academic Language
Sentence frames – partially completed sentences like "I disagree with what _____ said because..." – show students how to structure language in a formal way. Consider adding a page of sentence frames, particularly those that might help introduce quotations, to Canvas.

8. Pre-Teach Whenever Possible
If you're going to be reading a certain article next week, give ESL students a copy of it now. If you plan to show a YouTube video tomorrow, send a link to your ESL students today. Any chance you can give these students to preview material will increase the odds that they'll understand it on the day you present it to everyone else.



9. Learn About the Cultural Background of Your Students...
Our second-language populations grow more diverse every year. Taking the time to learn the basics of where a child comes from – exactly, not 'somewhere in the Middle East/South America/Asia/Africa' – tells the student that you respect her enough to bother.

12 Ways to Support ELLs

10. ...But Don't Make a Child Speak for His Entire Culture

In her podcast interview, [ESL teacher] Kim shared a story about watching a teacher ask a new Iraqi student how he felt about the war in his country, right in the middle of class. “That’s not cultural inclusiveness,” she explains. “I’ve seen teachers do this and then pat themselves on the back. The students’ English is limited so they can’t express themselves very well, and they don’t want to ‘represent’; they just want to be there.”

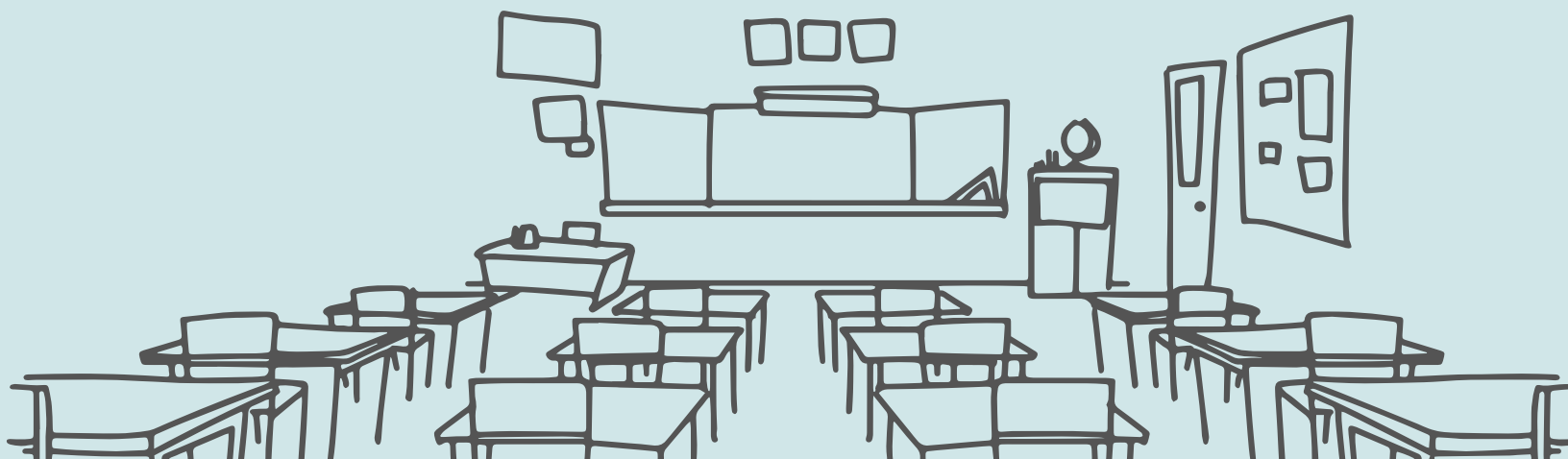
11. Show Them How to Take Themselves Less Seriously...

By modeling the risk-taking that’s required to learn a new language, you help students develop the courage to take their own risks, and to have a sense of humor about it. “I tried to say the word ‘paint’ (pinta) in Portuguese and instead I said the word for ‘penis’ (pinto). They all roared with laughter while I stood there with a What?? look on my face,” Yurkosky says. “When they explained what I’d said, I laughed so hard! I told them that laughing was fine because sometimes mistakes are really funny, but ridicule is never okay.”

12. ...But Always Take Them Seriously

“It breaks my heart when I hear teachers say [ELL students] don’t know anything,” says [Ohio-based ESL teacher] Melissa Eddington. “These are brilliant kids and they know a lot. They just can’t tell us in English yet.” Make a conscious effort to see past the accent and the mispronunciations and treat every interaction — every student — with the respect they deserve.

Read the full article at cultofpedagogy.com



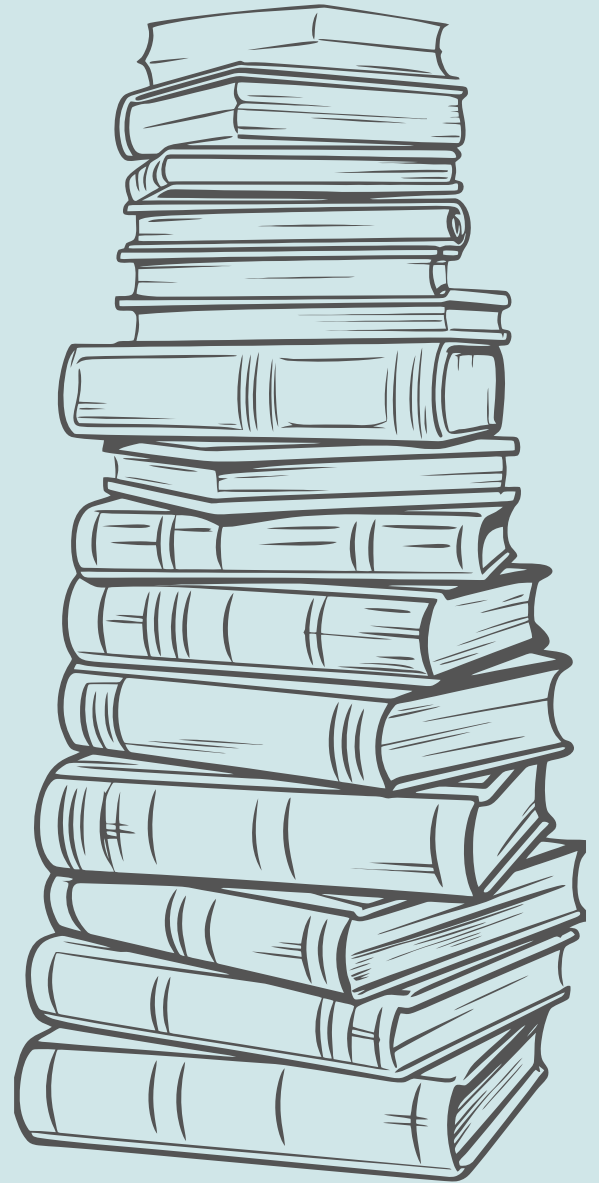
Experiences as a Grad Student with Kendra Vanderlip

Kendra Vanderlip shared their experiences as a MFA and doctoral student at the all CAP meeting on August 28th. Here's a summary of Kendra's experience along with some advice:

“ I like to compare both grad school and teaching to the famous Big Brother tagline: “**Expect the Unexpected.**” It doesn't seem to matter how well prepared you are, without fail, something will go amiss, and each year is inescapably harder than the previous year, as yet another responsibility is typically added on. For example, during my first year during my MFA experience, I dealt with the **worst bout of homesickness**. My second year was both my first year of teaching as well as serving as Managing Editor at the Pinch.



My third year of my MFA, my father died three weeks before my defense. During my Ph.D., I dealt with Co-Vid, an identity crisis and a failed marriage. **These things happen, and it's all about how you recover** when, inevitably, something goes wrong. Like Big Brother, you should build alliances! Your cohort of fellow teaching fellows will be your greatest assets. Share lessons, ideas, workloads. Strategize times to work together (and hold each other accountable). **Figure out your ride or die**: these cohort members are the people you can write with, study with, swap writing back and forth with, and when things get tough, people you can go to for help. **Make sure you reward yourself** when you hit specific goals and scheduled downtime.



Go to department functions as much as possible, because you can strengthen your resume and broaden your circle of colleagues by watching how others in your field are navigating key events. And remember, **when things get too hard because life happens**, reach out to your thesis/dissertation director as soon as possible, so they can help you strategize on how to move forward. Nothing about grad school is meant to be easy. It's a chaotic, stressful mess. But learning to manage it early will set you up for success! —”

UofM English Graduate Organization

UMEGO is so back! The UofM English Graduate Organization is open to all English grad students (no dues!) and provides opportunities for [networking and professionalization](#) throughout the year.

In the past, UMEGO has hosted graduate student [celebrations of success](#), has run fundraisers like bake sales, and has organized beginning- and end-of-year kickball and softball games.

Beginning this academic year, UMEGO will also host a [graduate student conference](#) right here in Memphis, TN.

Check out the new webpage, reach out to the new executive board for more info, and [consider serving in one of the two open roles](#) on the executive board!

memphis.edu/english/graduate/organizations/umego

Resource Spotlight:

Academic Conferences 101

Over the summer, English department faculty worked together to create a new webpage with the goal of providing English graduate students with resources, tips and tricks, and general guidelines for all things academic conferences. On the [Academic Conferences 101 page](#), you will find info on:

- Finding a conference
- Current list of English-related academic conferences, organized by field/concentration
- Writing a proposal
- Funding
- Attending a conference
- Presenting at a conference

Let us know what resources you'd like to see highlighted in future issues, or what resources you'd benefit from seeing on our website!

- email epsmith2@memphis.edu with suggestions

CAP Calendar

September 3:

First Year CAP meets in Cadres

Professional CAP meets in 315

September 10:

First Year CAP meets in PT 456

Professional CAP meets in PT 315

Teaching CAP meets in Cadres

September 17:

First Year CAP meets in Cadres

Professional CAP meets in PT 315

September 24:

All CAP meeting in PT 456

