



# ESL MiniConference

## Equipping the ESL Coach In TALGS Keynote, Jodi Crandall Describes New Roles for ESL/EFL Teachers

Spring 09

Jodi Crandall  
at TALGS

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This year's plenary speaker at TALGS was Dr. JoAnn Crandall, Professor of ESOL/Bilingual Education and Director of the interdisciplinary Ph.D. Program in Language, Literacy and Culture at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County (UMBC).

Crandall's 11:35 plenary, "Sharing our expertise: Working with mainstream teachers," was presented to a completely filled lecture hall with a 100-person seating capacity.

The dilemma, according to Crandall, is that you don't want the ESL teacher teaching math and science; yet ESL expertise is needed. "We cannot adapt instruction for ELLs without ESL," she explained, "and only the content area teacher has the knowledge and skills to teach that content."

She used her presentation to share models of collaboration that she has observed in her research, both for K-12 and adult learning. The first model is content-based ESL, in which there is an ESL curriculum with language, content, and critical thinking skills or, alternatively, in the context of a longer thematic unit.

The second model is sheltered instruction, in which content is adapted for ELLs. Crandall described sheltered chemistry and a sheltered math course taught by a math teacher trained to adapt instruction. A student's first English composition course in high school or college can also have a section for those who have exited ESL programs, according to Crandall, who suggests that such courses be taught by ESL-friendly and/or ESL-trained teachers. "Sheltered instruction makes a concrete basis, a real basis," she explained, for successful transition into the regular curriculum.

The next model is team teaching and paired classes. In elementary school, team teaching is one way to get around NCLB's over-emphasis on reading and still teach science, according to Crandall. Elementary ESL teachers need to be assigned to specific grades in this model, meeting in small groups with students by proficiency level in the morning, for example, and in the afternoon co-teaching with content teachers.

Paired classes are generally in community colleges, said Crandall, but could be applied in a high school context as well. These paired classes might be a history class with ELLs and English-speaking students paired with an ESL class focused on reading, for example, or a psychology class paired with an ESL class focused on writing. Crandall also has seen special vocational ESL classes for auto mechanics or landscape maintenance for ELLs, but warns that the content needs to be previewed or reviewed carefully. "If you are going to have someone teaching ELLs in a transitional class," she advised, "Make sure the person has ESL expertise."

As an example of an ongoing and successful paired class program, Crandall referenced College of Lake County, Illinois, where students rotate through ESL support classes with bilingual tutoring for entry-level, short-term certificate programs. ESL support classes meet for an hour before and after the career class, which is taught by an ESL teacher with a vocational ESL curriculum. Students receive certificates for automobile technology, landscape maintenance, general office skills, etc..., and "a very successful student from the previous term becomes a tutor for the next semester," she explained.

Programs like College of Lake County benefit their communities and American society in a number of ways, according to Crandall. "All new growth in the U.S. workforce will be from immigrants," she explained, so it is vital that these adults experience academic success in a program that gives them job readiness "with a path to advancement." Additionally, companies that employ these workers are getting someone who is trained and bilingual.

The next model that Dr. Crandall presented was the integrated thematic curriculum, for secondary schools and community colleges. In this model, teams of teachers choose a theme to develop curriculum across different subject areas (See [Barnhill](#) for an example of this at the primary school level). According to Crandall, the ESL teacher and the English language learners are assigned to one team, where thematic content is integrated. "From day one that team preaches going to high school, going to college, and getting a decent job," she explained. Curriculum is adapted with the help of a student intern, and former ELLs assist with orientation to high school. "Middle school students are paired with high school mentors," said Crandall.

She also gave an example of integrated content at Yakima Valley Community College, in Washington State, where the intensive English program begins integrating content from the lower levels of English proficiency. At level three (of five) ESL math is taught by an ESL instructor, while at level four students take math and reading for college

credit, and, at levels four and five, computer basics in the regular college curriculum.

#### Expanding the Instructional Skill Set

Another key aspect of adapting curricula for English language learners, according to Dr. Crandall, is professional development for teachers who interact with these students. "Only 12 percent of U.S. teachers have any training or professional development to teach ELLs," she explained, citing a 2002 study by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES).

Further complicating the modification of content instruction for ELLS, she suggested, is a newly relevant distinction that researcher Joy Reid has described between "ear learners" and "eye learners," as some second generation students manage to survive K-12 by depending on their learning strengths but developing traditional academic skills in neither their first nor second language.

A PD (professional development training) does not have to involve paying a outside consultant; Crandall described a homegrown course co-taught by undergraduate and high school ESL and content faculty. Such courses have addressed a range of topics:

- Who are our ELLs? (student profiles)
- Understanding cross-cultural differences in interaction and education
- Understanding social and academic language
- Understanding how to adapt instruction, materials, and assessments
- from Dr. Crandall's Powerpoint

She explained in detail one such program, called STEP-T for ELLs, reported by Shin, of UMBC.

Crandall believes that all teachers need to become aware of the distinction between BICS (social language) and CALP (academic language) skills, as well as learning how to adapt instruction for the dual goals of content and language learning. There are three ways to adapt instruction for this purpose, she explained: 1) increase sources of information beyond a text; 2) decrease complexity of concepts, text, or tasks; and 3) increase interaction.

"Increasing the sources of information reduces reliance on academic text," according to Crandall, who suggests:

- Use pictures, charts, graphs, maps
- Use demonstrations, gestures

- Involve students in discovery and experiential learning
- Use multiple media and opportunities to learn
- from Dr. Crandall's Powerpoint

She suggests the following ways of reducing the complexity of concepts, text, or tasks:

- Activate background knowledge
- Focus on vocabulary
- Adapt texts; chunk information
- Provide graphic organizers and outlines
- Paraphrase, repeat, and summarize
- Use comprehension checks and clarification questions
- Use variety of texts and assignments
- from Dr. Crandall's Powerpoint

"I don't see enough of this," said Jodi Crandall, referring to the use of comprehension checks and clarification questions, reminding TALGS participants that "Does everybody understand this?" is not a reliable way to check comprehension. "It is important to have students repeat directions," she suggested, to be sure they understand what is expected.

Crandall gave the following as ways to increase opportunities for interaction among students:

- Use cooperative activities, such as Jigsaw and Round Robin/Round Table
- Encourage peer-, cross-age, and cross-proficiency tutoring
- Increase interactive writing with journals, response logs, and discussion boards
- Involve students in projects and literature circles
- from Dr. Crandall's Powerpoint

In adapting texts for ELLs, according to Jodi Crandall, it is important to reduce the amount of text. "Less is more," she explained. Teachers should select the most important information and use graphic organizers. Structure should also be simplified, by putting topic sentences first and reducing the number of complex sentences. In addition, teachers should strive to "build redundancy" within text by repeating key ideas, words, and phrases.

Further ideas suggested by Crandall for adapting texts are to simplify vocabulary by avoiding non-essential vocabulary, pre-teaching difficult words, and avoiding synonyms. "Synonyms can really be confusing," she explained, citing recent research by Keith Folse suggesting that presenting vocabulary in lists of semantic sets can cause problems in vocabulary acquisition.

Other ways to adapt text for English language learners, according to Crandall, is by providing visual support and relating the content to students' experiences

Dr. Crandall also advocates the use of the [Academic Word List](#), a resource based on a 3.5 million word academic corpus of 570 "headwords" and 3,000 related words. "These are the most frequently used academic words across arts, humanities, and sciences," she explained, adding that the third edition of her [American Ways](#) textbook highlights headwords.

#### New Diversity Within the ELL Population

Jodi Crandall devoted a significant portion of her keynote presentation to the teaching of "special populations" of English language learners, including students with interrupted or limited formal schooling, literacy and English proficiency (SIFE); speakers of "World English"; high achieving ELLs; Generation 1.5 students, who, Crandall said, are mostly "ear learners"; and foreign-trained professionals.

For SIFE students, ages 17 or older, she described an "Integrated ESL/Career Program," or alternate route to the high school diploma, called "Students Engaged in Pathways to Achievement" (SEPA), from a new report by Becker (Montgomery City Public Schools, 2009). These students receive ESOL instruction for personal and career development at low or high beginning levels, aligned with Maryland standards, according to Crandall. They also receive instruction to build and improve their Spanish language literacy, she said, and training in construction, restaurant management, or nail technology. This integrated program "prevents these students from slipping through the cracks," said Crandall.

World English speakers constitute "a growing number of students with limited formal schooling from English-speaking countries," explained Jodi Crandall, who described professional development trainings to help teachers understand these students; semester-long tutoring; analysis of students' language; and visits by community leaders and students.

Another important way to enhance educational outcomes for English language learners is through programs that encourage, stimulate, and reward high-achieving ELLs, such as an "International Honors Council," which Crandall described as "a series of activities to help students foresee that they could go to college, and be successful in college." Honors Council activities have included college field trips, college and FAFSA applications, keyboarding skills for college essays, mentoring by previous Honors Council members, test-taking strategies, and a

"bilingual career day."

In addressing the needs of Generation 1.5 students, Crandall noted that these individuals are neither first nor second generation immigrants, and they speak a language other than English at home. "Most came after elementary school," she explained, "but still have problems with academic English, especially writing." She again cited Joy Reid's research findings that most of these students are "ear learners," not "eye learners." Crandall believes there is a need today for special sections of ESL and general courses which incorporate a focus on academic register.

As a good model for accommodating the needs of foreign-trained professionals who migrate to the United States, Jodi Crandall highlighted the success of the "**Welcome Back Initiative**," an International Health Worker Assistance Center" based in San Francisco, Los Angeles, San Diego, Providence, and other American cities. "The goal of this program is to help foreign-trained health care professionals to access comparable or more appropriate positions in the U.S.," she explained.

Jodi Crandall also praised "Carreras en Salud" (Healthcare Career Pathways), which, she said, "articulate a bilingual pathway for adult ELLs seeking positions in health care at entry levels or higher." Among participating programs are **Chicago Healthcare Bridge Partnership-Instituto del Progreso Latino**, Humboldt Park Vocational Center of Wright College, the National Council de la Raza, and about 300 hospitals and nursing homes.

#### Principles for Effective Collaboration

Dr. Crandall concluded her keynote session with her suggested guiding principles to help ESL professionals in working with content colleagues. Her first guiding principle is ESL teacher leadership, by which she means providing academic and career-rich ESL instruction, assisting counselors with scheduling, and advocating for there being an ESL counselor. "It is good for the ESL teacher to help in scheduling," said Crandall, "and to steer students away from toxic folks," those teachers with attitudes like "I don't know why they don't speak English" or "bring them to me after they speak English."

Jodi Crandall's second guiding principle is increased instructional time, including after-school tutoring, Saturday classes, summer school, block scheduling, and lunchtime tutoring.

Her third principle is involve more people in education, using some of the following ideas:

- Peer- and cross-age tutoring for service learning credits
- University interns to help
- Orientation to high school by successful high-schoolers who are former ELLs
- Graduates of Honors Council as mentors to new college students
- from Dr. Crandall's Powerpoint

The fourth guiding principle for ESL teachers collaborating with content teachers is link to parents and community, through monthly meetings for parents on topics important to them, using community members as "funds of knowledge" in the curriculum, involving parents in educational activities such as field trips or Saturday classes, and encouraging parents to see high school graduation and college as viable options for their children.

Crandall's fifth principle is develop leadership through such events as a "weekend cross-cultural leadership institute" with Outward Bound activities, resolution writing, etc.; morning announcements on the PA system, and bilingual career days.

Finally, Jodi Crandall asks schools and teachers to "stop telling families of kids to forget L1," and instead to help families and students see being bilingual as a key piece of their job-skill set for the careers of the future. "All new growth in the U.S. workforce will come from immigrants," predicted Crandall.

#### Advocating for ELL Students

ESL teachers play a crucial role in the lives of their students, reiterated Dr. Crandall in closing her keynote address, "We need to remember that learning English takes a long time." It is also important to recognize that "students can't afford to wait to pursue their goals," she added, "so we have to address these in our ESL classes and help our colleagues to see how they can help ELLs meet their academic and career goals." Her final suggestion was that "we may also have to help ELLs see that they can have those aspirations."

A quarter century ago, Jo Ann Crandall was instrumental in making content-based instruction so straightforward and integral to ESL/EFL teaching that it is now implicit in nearly every textbook and technique used anywhere English is taught. Her new focus, on sheltered English and collaborative teaching relationships between ESL and content faculty, addresses the most challenging skill domain for today's ESL teachers, whether in K-12, higher education, or vocational adult programs.

TALGS participants came away from Dr. Crandall's keynote with practical knowledge and awareness to inform their new roles as coaches and advocates for culturally and linguistically diverse learners.

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