

## **Professional Development Matters**

Robert Hill, Alliant International University  
Recipient of 2018 CATESOL San Diego Regional Conference Stipend

Recently, I was privileged to present and attend the 2018 CATESOL San Diego Regional Conference at the Educational Cultural Complex. I have previously attended regional and state conferences in Santa Clara and San Diego for the last two years. However, this conference was the first time I presented a session by myself. The experience of preparing and sharing a presentation with the attendees was beneficial. The topic of my presentation was service-learning and consequently the audience took useful information from the session.

Although I volunteered at the registration table in the morning, I was able to attend the plenary speech. Generally, the plenary speaker is the highlight of many conferences, and this was true for the San Diego Regional Conference. Jayme Adelson-Goldstein's plenary session titled "Surfing the Waves of Change in Challenging Times" set a tone for the remainder of the conference. Her presentation looked at several factors affecting ESL such as technology, funding, standards, and immigration. Additionally, she gave 15 tips to help teachers maneuver the challenging times. From my standpoint, the overall message of knowing the challenges as well as how to solve them was beneficial. I feel the issues we face as ESL teachers and administrators are solvable with collaboration with each other.

During the conference, I had the opportunity to attend the concurrent sessions. Except for the time spent presenting and volunteering at the local San Diego CATESOL Chapter table, I attended sessions throughout the day. The first session I attended was titled "College ESL Learner's Perspectives on Extensive Reading and Strategy Use" hosted by Soo Min Lee and Dr. Jin-Suk Byun of Alliant International University. I found their session very useful as I am interested in teaching reading in the future. Their session was research based, however, one could find the session worthwhile. I found the methodology used practical for thinking about the ways to teach reading.

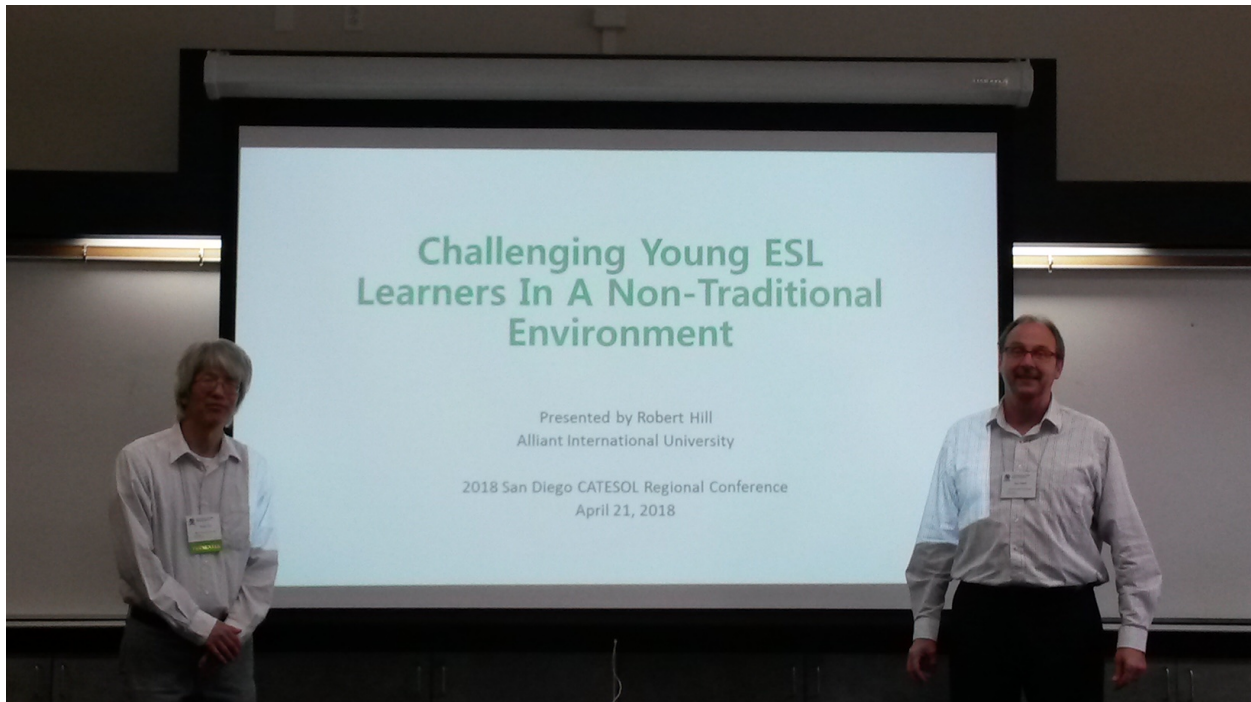
The other session I attended was from Learning Upgrade titled "Smartphones Meet ESL: How an App Transforms Your Class" presented by Vinod Lobo. The Learning Upgrade App is an interesting way to promote literacy. Students can use a cell phone, laptop, or desktop to access the app. I found this session helpful as I am interested in incorporating appropriate technology in my ESL classrooms. Additionally, I was curious to see how this app was received by students and teachers. During the presentation, Vinod showed a couple of promotional videos on the Learning Upgrade App. The interesting part to me was that the app was directed to both young learners and adults. In the videos both sets of learners raved about the wonderfulness of the app. I would like to hear a little more feedback but in general I think it is appropriate for a classroom with some modifications.

I highly recommend attending a CATESOL Regional conference for the following reasons. Firstly, for both novice and experienced teachers, conferences allow us to learn about the latest teaching methodology and techniques. We live in the 21st century; thus, we need 21st century tools to be successful in the classroom. Secondly, conferences are a great way to network. There

are teachers and administrators from around San Diego county attending each year. As TESOL is a competitive market, knowing the right people can make a difference. Thirdly, conferences are a great time to reevaluate and reflect on teaching in the classroom. One can become energized from attending conferences; therefore, we go back to the classroom with new vigor. Lastly, from an extrinsic point of view, one can state professional development participation on one's CV or resumé. Many administrators are looking for job applicants with professional development experiences. Each conference, workshop or professional development opportunity allows teachers chances to grow and learn.

I was very fortunate to be one of three CATESOL Education Foundation Stipend Recipients to attend the 2018 CATESOL San Diego Regional Conference. I am hopeful that the other recipients had an equal rewarding time there. I wish to express my profound thanks to the CATESOL Education Foundation for the opportunity to attend the conference. Lastly, I would like to thank my wife, Soo Min for her support helping me with my presentation. I originally met her at a San Diego Chapter meeting. Being a member of CATESOL has all kinds of benefits!

I strongly encourage teachers to attend the CATESOL State Conference in Anaheim later this year. Let's face the challenges together!



Robert M. Hill is a Master's student in TESOL at Alliant International University and works part-time in ESL.