



MONETT ELEMENTARY FAMILY ENGAGEMENT LITERACY EVENT AND GIVEAWAYS



SEPTEMBER 2019

Welcome to our new iELT-Ozarks Project newsletter. We publish a newsletter twice annually. Here you can find updates on our program and learn what is going on with the students, faculty, and staff at Missouri State University.

A Focus on ELs



On September 15, Missouri's Department of Elementary and Secondary Education will host the Federal Programs conference in Osage Beach, MO. The first day of the conference will be A Focus on ELs with sessions geared to support K-12 schools and administrators across Missouri. We would love to see you there!



iELT-Ozarks Team Spotlight

Meet our iELT-Ozarks Project family engagement specialist, Dr. Jennifer Rojas-McWhinney. She has a passion for working with families.

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iELT-Ozarks Cohort 1 Graduates

We are proud to announce our latest group of graduates from the iELT-Ozarks Project. Four more cohort 1 students will be completing their studies this semester.

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Family Engagement Projects

All cohort members create and implement family engagement projects in their schools as part of the course curriculum and grounds for funding the iELT-Ozarks Project. The first projects took place fall 2018.

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Applications for Cohort 3

The final cohort of the iELT-Ozarks Project grant will begin in fall 2020. Applications for any interested teachers will open soon. Teachers may email now to be added to our interest list.

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Cohort 1 Updates

Cohort 1 of the iELT-Ozarks Project includes thirty K-12 in-service teachers from the McDonald County R-1, Monett R-1, Neosho R-5, and Springfield R-XII public school districts. Here is a look at what the first cohort accomplished over the last semesters:

- The cohort has now completed all of the core TESOL courses. The last group of cohort 1 students is completing ENG 697: Practicum in TESOL or ENG 797: Advanced Practicum in TESOL in a small group this fall where they will learn to implement SIOP techniques into the classroom and family engagement projects in their buildings. The advanced section is for students completing the MSIS degree.
- All 30 cohort 1 members earned their graduate certificates in TESOL from MSU.
- Four additional students are on track to graduate in fall 2019 and meet the requirements to earn the Missouri K-12 ELL Endorsement.
- Four students are also completing their Master of Science in Interdisciplinary Studies (MSIS) program in English Language Teaching and Literacy Education this summer/fall. They will earn this in conjunction with the Missouri K-12 ELL Endorsement and the TESOL graduate certificate.*

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR COHORT 1 RECENT 2019 GRADUATES

Summer 2019

- **Elisabeth Gangel**, Wilder Elementary, Springfield R-XII*

Fall 2019

- **Alissa Kane**, Noel Primary, McDonald County R-1*
- **Paige Oden**, Benton Elementary, Neosho R-5*
- **Heather Sides**, Benton Elementary, Neosho R-5
- **Amanda Werneke**, Benton Elementary, Neosho R-5*



Gangel



Kane



Werneke, Oden, & Sides

"I did gain a lot of useful things that I can use every single day...It was just refreshing to pull up some of those ideas maybe that I'd heard before but didn't really have time to implement. And by going through the class...it would give you a perfect opportunity to try it right then and see how it was going to work."

– **Latricia Davis**, Monett Intermediate 6th grade Science teacher and summer 2019 graduate (cohort 1)



Hello! My name is Jennifer Rojas-McWhinney, and I focus on family engagement with the iELT-Ozarks Program. It is an absolute pleasure working with you, a group of thoughtful and dedicated educators, as you actively work to enhance the learning environment you create.

I have always had a passion for working with families and have shared this passion with others striving to positively impact the lives of family members. It was this desire that propelled my educational journey as I earned my doctoral degree in Human Development and Family Studies. My research interests focus on relationship dynamics within families, family engagement, and the negotiation of beliefs. I am specifically interested in the dialogical process (examining both internal and external dialogue) of belief formation, highlighting

iELT-Ozarks Team Spotlight

the experiences of Hispanic parents and multiethnic families. It is important, as an educator, to recognize similarities as well as differences in beliefs that often exist between families and teachers and larger beliefs that impact daily life at school and home. I have enjoyed teaching undergraduate and graduate courses in face-to-face and online learning environments. Some of the courses I have taught include family engagement, cross-cultural studies, youth development, family advocacy, parenting, and lifespan development.

One of my goals is to help educators and family service providers recognize the importance of creating accessible, safe, and supportive environments for all people to learn. This is vital for schools as well as communities. I continually seek opportunities to enhance learning in order to positively impact the lives of students and community members. With a passion for education, I am thrilled to work with diverse groups of people in a range of settings. I believe education not only occurs within a

classroom but also extends outside the classroom, and I enjoy working with parents and educators within the community. As a Certified Family Life Educator (CFLE), my goal is to increase understanding of the diversity that exists within and across families while promoting healthy family relationships and interactions. This growing interest in health sparked my desire to learn more about mental health education. As a Mental Health First Aid instructor, I facilitate trainings with school staff and administrators, university personnel, church leadership, families, and community organizations.

I believe you are each doing fantastic work, and I encourage you as you continue through this program! With communities changing and growing it is essential to examine the myriad ways we can advance our work with children and families. We must strive to overcome perceived barriers and thoughtfully examine our approaches to education and interactions with families.

Implementing Family Engagement Projects

As part of the iELT-Ozarks Project grant, all cohort students implement a family engagement project in their schools. Students work on their project proposals over the course of multiple semesters, collecting data and analyzing the gaps in their school programs to plan a project that will engage ELLs and their families. This project is carried out in Practicum, which eleven of our cohort 1 participants completed in spring 2019. Their projects included new EL welcome packs, a literacy event at a soccer tournament, multicultural reading materials, an Earth Day celebration, bilingual newsletters, family engagement bags, homework kits, and increased family communication.



Cohort 1 students Latricia Davis and Kristy Berger (from left to right) with their welcome kit materials.

Students also have the opportunity to apply for mini grants from the iELT-Ozarks Project to help fund their projects. The photo above is from Monett Intermediate where Davis and Berger worked to create bilingual welcome packs for new ELs. The cover photo on page 1 shows students Brittany Jenkins, Becky Godsey, Emily Hanson, and Kayla Haynes (left to right) from Monett Elementary at their literacy event at the district soccer tournament. They had literacy baskets families could win as well as books in English and Spanish for children to take home.



Elisabeth Gangel plays a game with Burmese students.

The photo above shows Gangel, a Wilder Elementary Teacher with Springfield R-XII schools, interacting with students during the family engagement event she planned and hosted. Gangel ensured materials were translated into Hakha Chin to better engage with their population of ELs. The event provided blank books for students to create in whichever language they wanted with their families. EL students and families were also able to learn how to play math games during the engagement event, which they could take afterwards to continue practicing and learning at home with their families. Food was also provided for families during this event.

Cohort 1 Spring 2019 PD Presentations

Each spring Missouri State University hosts an Interdisciplinary Forum. MSU graduate students are encouraged to submit research and give presentations at this forum. On May 4, 2019, three cohort 1 iELT-Ozarks Project grant students attended and presented at the MSU Interdisciplinary Forum in Springfield, Missouri. These presentations helped fulfill a graduation requirement for the MSIS degree program, which all three are completing.

Paige Oden and Amanda Werneke from Benton Elementary in Neosho R-5 schools presented a video presentation entitled, **IELT Ozarks ELL Toolkit and Family Engagement**. They showcased the toolkit they created, which helps staff in their building engage with families and include their different cultures. These students also shared their plans to engage families in academics. Reflecting on the program and their presentation, Oden and Werneke said, "We really found value in designing the toolkits throughout the courses. They directly led us to our Family Engagement Project, which we were extremely passionate about and excited about sharing with others."



Werneke and Oden (left) and part of Kane's presentation (right).

Alissa Kane from Noel Primary in McDonald County R-1 schools led a presentation entitled, **English Language Learners Toolkit for Educators Using Pinterest**. Her presentation focused on the creation of her ELL toolkit and the needs it meets. She chose to use Pinterest as her medium to gather and share ELL resources, and she presented some of her findings. Kane stated, "Creating my toolkit was extremely useful for my classroom throughout the iELT program. I have Pinterest boards that help keep resources organized and I can reference to use for different activities or strategies. Using my toolkit made me feel more at ease for my presentation at the forum because it was my work that I had become familiar with. I shared ideas I use in my classroom and real life experiences from my students. I was still nervous presenting at my first forum or conference but it ended up being a great day!"

We invite all current cohort teachers currently in the iELT-Ozarks Project to consider submitting a proposal to present at a conference in 2020. If accepted, cohort members may submit a mini travel grant proposal to iELT-Ozarks Project to assist with funding for attending and presenting at this regional professional development conference.

UP NEXT FOR THE iELT TEAM AND COHORT STUDENTS...

- September 2019 – A Focus on ELs, Osage Beach, MO
- September 2019 – MIDTESOL, Omaha, NE
- November 2019 – NPJ Directors Meeting, Arlington, VA
- March/April 2020 – TESOL International, Denver, CO
- May 2020 – MSU Interdisciplinary Forum, Springfield, MO

Cohort 2 Updates

Cohort 2 of the iELT-Ozarks Project includes twenty-nine K-12 in-service teachers enrolled from McDonald County R-1, Monett R-1, Neosho R-5, and Springfield R-XII public school districts. Here is a look at what the second cohort has been up to recently:

- In spring 2019, cohort 2 members completed ENG 688: Sociolinguistics in Language Teaching and ENG 695: Principles of Second Language Acquisition.
- In summer 2019, all cohort 2 students took ENG 690: Grammatical Analysis.
- This fall, cohort 2 students are taking ENG 691: Linguistic Theory followed by ENG 605: Methods in TESOL.
- The first small group of cohort 2 teachers will begin their practicum course in the spring semester.
- The first group of cohort 2 students will graduate in May! Look for highlights in the next issue of *Network* for detailed information.




A wordless books literacy activity at cohort 2 orientation.


"This course showed me how hard it really is when learning a new language and all the concepts that go into it. It made me feel empathetic for my EL students when they don't understand reading a word problem in my math class, not because they don't know how to do the math, but the language of the problem can be extremely confusing and difficult. I really enjoyed this class because I feel like it opened my eyes so much!"


– Alyssa Orr, Monett High School math teacher (cohort 2) on taking ENG 690: Grammatical Analysis

Recommended TESOL Internet Resources

Here are some suggested internet-based resources and social media pages to look into. They will help you stay up-to-date on everything involving TESOL.

 Friend us on Facebook to stay up-to-date on all things related to the iELT-Ozarks Project. Our Facebook name is **iELT Ozarks**. You may also want to follow other TESOL-related pages. Check out **MELL in Missouri**, **MIDTESOL**, and **Office of English Language Acquisition (OELA)**.

 **Colorín Colorado!** Another helpful resource we recommend is the website <https://www.colorincolorado.org/>. This site is bilingual in English and Spanish and has great tips and articles on teaching ELLs as well as working with diverse families.

 If you are on Pinterest, we recommend following our program director, **Andrea Hellman**. Her Pinterest boards are full of EL resources, including ideas for enhancing SIOP implementation, family engagement, multicultural literacy, and anchor charts. You'll find some quick tips and tools here.

Looking Ahead - Cohort 3 in Fall 2020

Cohort 3, the last grant-funded cohort of the iELT-Ozarks Project, will begin coursework in fall 2020. Participants will come mainly from our four partner districts with a few seats reserved for teachers from other high-need areas of Missouri. Applications for cohort 3 will be open September 11 – October 7, 2019. Look for an announcement on our website. Anyone interested may also email us to be added to the interest list (see contact information box below). Once the application goes live, those on the interest list will receive an email inviting them to apply.

Recent cohort 1 graduate Amber Bledsoe, ELL teacher at Monett Intermediate School, supports the program saying, "I would have to say that the decision to take part in the iELT-Ozarks TESOL program was one of the smartest decisions as an educator I have made. I know that I have become an advocate for my ELL students and feel that I am now able to better meet the needs of my students."

Visit our website at <https://www.missouristate.edu/iELT-Ozarks/>

Partner Districts



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