

SAN DIEGO CATESOL CHAPTER NEWSLETTER

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Message from the Editor

Katy Bailey, SD City & MiraCosta Colleges

Dear Readers,
Welcome to the San Diego CATESOL Chapter's newsletter. In this issue you will find helpful tech tips and introductions to some of our board members. We also look back at the happy coincidence of the Fall 2022 CATESOL conference's being held adjacent to a cat-themed event.

Since you are taking a moment to read the newsletter, we hope you will [join us in our monthly meetings](#), alternating in-person and via Zoom every other month. Additionally, please consider contributing to the next issue of the newsletter, scheduled to come out in Fall 2023.

Happy Reading!

From the San Diego Chapter Coordinator

Burcu Chatham, IRC



Hello colleagues and friends in the ESL Community,

I am your chapter coordinator, Burcu Chatham, a first-generation immigrant and a life-long ESL learner. I currently work for the International Rescue Committee as a

Vocational ESL Instructor, teaching Afghan and Ukrainian refugees. At the beginning of my ESL career in 2017, I took an associate professor role in Namseoul University in South Korea to teach English courses to Korean, Chinese, and Uzbek students. Soon after our return to the US, I started teaching English in the Riverside County Library Systems and started the first online conversation club sessions in their Adult Literacy Program. During that time, I was lucky to be able to

complete my MA in TESOL degree online at the Middlebury Institute of International Studies.

I joined CATESOL in 2020 before the first virtual state conference and met Lydia and Ryane, our two past coordinators, in a Zoom event and instantly became a part of the San Diego Chapter as an Associate Treasurer. So, I experienced CATESOL both state and regionwide in the pandemic mode until I was elected to be the new Coordinator of the San Diego Chapter in 2022. Hearing from past officers and members about our pre-pandemic chapter events, I have aspired to bring all of us together in-person as much as possible without jeopardizing our health and making sure from time to time we could still take advantage of participating in events from the comfort of our homes.

With this aspiration in my heart together with our like-minded, highly resourceful board members, Amanda, Angie, Katy, Celeste, Ryane, and Lydia, our agenda for 2022-2023 organization year has been set to entertain alternate formats. Since our first November 2022 board meeting, as some of you have already joined them, we have run two virtual speaker presentations on AI writing systems and one winter social event to welcome the New Year together enjoying a variety of good food and drink.

While you are reading this letter, we will be holding our in-person Spring event, 'Earth Day Panel: Being a Resourceful Educator' and are so ready to plan more in-person meetings. I know that we are still in a recovery mode and our world has changed so much because of the pandemic, but being a part of the CATESOL San Diego Chapter has brought a great sense of purpose to my life and helped me connect with amazing people from our community. Their support and friendship have kept me moving forward in my profession and energized me to coordinate more and better events as much as possible for you all.

This is just a start, and I know we cannot go to pre-pandemic days, but we can create even better and more events. So, please join us, volunteer with us, and if nothing else, please participate in our online and in-person events! We will get stronger and better if we plan, work, and have fun together!

CAT-ESOL 2022

Amanda Simons, SDSU & SDCCE

I had seen someone sharing on my Instagram months before: CatCon at the Pasadena Convention Center, October 1 & 2, 2022. “That’s weird,” I thought. “That’s the same time and place as CATESOL; how would the two conventions co-exist?” Imagine my amusement and happiness when I got to the Pasadena convention center on Thursday, September 29 and saw that CATESOL and Cat Con were happening in different parts of the convention center with overlapping dates.

Also adding to my joy: the jokes about Cat Con throughout the convention. I’m guessing some people got tired of it, but not me. The Thursday night plenary opened with “Welcome to Cat Con!” before admitting that people were actually at CATESOL 2022. When presenting the Rick Sullivan award to TESOL graduate students, the presenter asked where the 4 out of 9 non-present awardees were. My favorite answer from the crowd: “They’re at CatCon” (the correct answer: they were in class and would be coming the following day).

By now, I’m sure you’ve gotten the chance to read [the CATESOL Newsletter that reflected on the 2022 CATESOL Conference](#) and learn highlights and insights from the multi-day event. One thing not mentioned: CatCon.

So, what is CatCon? In a nutshell, it’s a 2-day event featuring cat adoptions, cat celebrities, and cat merchandise. The cat celebrities are both feline and human, and the various vendors are hawking merchandise for felines and humans.

The spectacle of people dressing up in their finest cat couture, cooing over kitties and cat-adjacent celebrities, and lining up to do so delighted me in many ways, both ironically and unironically, as a participant and as an

observer. After much deliberation, I committed and ended up buying a Saturday (Cat-urday) ticket.

The timing worked out well because I would attend a session at CATESOL that would get my synapses firing and turning over some interesting pedagogical questions. Then, I’d go to CatCon and let my brain be mushy for silly kitty shenanigans. When it was time for the next CATESOL session, I’d had enough of a mental break that I was excited and ready for the takeaways, discussions, and theory from the various presentations.

Some highlights:

- I met Merlin the Ragdoll cat, and he was asleep (pictured left)
- Browsed the kitten adoption center and saw some adorable felines ([they ended up sending 136 kittens to their forever homes!](#))
- [Hunky Australian firefighters selling calendars that featured them holding kittens](#): a bit of a naked (pun intended) cash grab, but I’m not complaining.



Was it worth the \$40+ ticket price? Not really. Do I have regrets? Absolutely not.

PS: [CatCon 2023 is August 5 & 6](#), and you can find a similar experience locally at [PopCats San Diego June 23-25](#)

Join the SD Chapter!

There are **many reasons and ways** to get involved in your local CATESOL chapter:

- ◆ Come to our monthly meetings or social events
- ◆ Volunteer at chapter-organized workshops
- ◆ Write an article for publication in our Newsletter Or better yet ...

- ◆ Become a **chapter liaison** for your school

To learn more, visit us at:

catesolsandiego.weebly.com

Using the Google Suite in ESL Writing Classes

Celeste Coleman, CSUSM American Language & Culture Institute

Having trouble keeping track of what your students' writing process looks like? Finding it difficult to get them to work together on writing assignments? Wanting a more impressive way for them to share their writing? The Google suite can help! In this short article, I'll detail how I use four tools within the Google platform to monitor student progress, improve classroom management, prevent plagiarism, facilitate collaboration, and showcase student work.

Drive

As you're probably aware, Drive is a cloud-based storage service that is free to use (up to 15 GB, enough space for many, many files). I have my students save all their work to Drive, which helps to ensure that they are always able to find their assignments and never lose their progress, as each keystroke is saved automatically. It also serves as a base from which to share their files with me so that we can take advantage of the tools below.

Docs

Google Docs is in many ways akin to Microsoft Word, offering equivalent formatting options; however, it enables the instructor to take a more active role in observing the work that's been done in a document, both live and after the fact. When my students are engaging in an in-class writing assignment, I have them create a Google Doc and share it with me. I then have each student's document open on my computer to monitor their progress. I can see who has been stuck in the same place for a while, who may have misunderstood the assignment, and who has copied and pasted from a source so that I can strategically approach these students with the right information, just in time, as I roam around the room. I can also see who is producing a steady stream of writing and whose flow should not be interrupted. For an at-home assignment,

I can open the version history to gain valuable insights into each student's writing process.

Slides

Slides is the Google version of PowerPoint and can be a great tool for facilitating student collaboration. When we are researching a topic together during our pre-writing information gathering, I will create a Google Slides file, giving everyone access. Students will then collaborate to find specific pieces of information related to the topic, with teams recording their findings and reactions in separate slides. At the end, we have live document that we can all refer to as we sum up and prepare to engage in individual writing.

Sites

As students compile a collection of different types of writing, I have them embed their documents into a Google Site to share as a portfolio. I create the site and give students access so that I can check their progress and troubleshoot any issues that come up. With all their documents already housed in Drive, building their Site is a quick process. Toward the end of the semester, I give students time to customize the look and layout of the Site, then they present their portfolios. They take great pride in these, and they are helpful in reinforcing that we write for an audience rather than as a solitary act.

As you can see, Google offers many free and easily accessible options that can be very useful to ESL students and teachers. If you'd like a little more training before you get started with using these tools in your classroom, free courses and very low-cost (\$10-\$25) certification programs are available on the Google for Education website at edu.google.com.

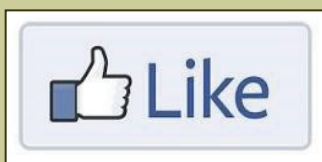
Board Member Spotlight: Secretary/Associate Treasurer

Angie Gozum, UCSD Division of Extended Studies

I have been delighted to be part of the San Diego CATESOL board this past year, and I have enjoyed collaborating and networking with all my local, professional colleagues.

Although I was born in Canada, I have lived in San Diego for most of my life. I grew up in North County where my parents had a Greek restaurant in Encinitas (The Greek American Family Restaurant). If you're thinking that this sounds a lot like *My Big Fat Greek Wedding*, then you are right! The movie is eerily accurate in many ways—minus the Windex obsession. I stayed in San Diego and completed my BA in theatre arts and sociology at the University of San Diego. During my

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Chapter Coordinator:

Burcu Chatham

Assistant Chapter Coordinator:

Amanda Simons

Social Media Manager:

Ryane Willis

Past Chapter Coordinators:

Ryane Willis & Lydia Sparksworthy

Secretary & Associate Treasurer:

Angie Gozum

Webmaster:

Celeste Coleman

Newsletter Editor:

Katy Bailey

college career, I completed two study abroad trips that forever shaped my personal values, beliefs, and choices. My time spent sailing around the world with Semester at Sea was eye-opening and life-changing. Within 4 months, we traveled to 8 countries: Japan, China, Viet Nam, India,

South Africa, Mauritius, Ghana, and Brazil. This experience fueled my passion for international and global education and led me to pursue a master's in TESOL at the Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterey (MIIS).

Fast forward to today, I have been working at UC San Diego Extended Studies for the past 7 years. I began as an ESL instructor in the English Language Institute, and then moved into an administration role as an International Studies Services Advisor. After that, I became the TEFL Certificate & ESL Program Manager, overseeing credit-bearing programs and courses for local and international students. I spearheaded many efforts of process improvements and efficiencies along with developing and launching new ESL courses and a TEFL practicum teaching component. I am now a Change Practitioner assisting the university and staff with the launch of a new student information system (and I thought that dealing with complaining students was hard!).

I chose to volunteer with San Diego CATESOL for many reasons, but most importantly to expand my professional network and to stay current within the industry. In my role as Program Manager, I felt siloed in my own little bubble. At one point, I wanted to be able to provide more resources and information to our instructors and speak more confidently about industry research and trends. I wanted to be more of an expert resource to our teachers in training to share valuable information about the career landscape as an ESL/EFL educator.

I have been thrilled to be part of the San Diego CATESOL board and to be able to work with such dedicated, creative, and passionate colleagues. I encourage others who may be toying with the idea of volunteering to try it out! Everyone on the board is juggling 384 other things, so we are all highly cognizant of time and availability, and we make deliberate choices regarding events and meetings because of this. You will build a great network by collaborating and working with other professionals from different schools and parts of San Diego. I'm happy to be a resource and answer any questions you may have about joining the board. As my grandmother always says, "Many hands make light work," and this is certainly the kind of work that you want to be part of!