



2005 Wellman Award Acceptance Speech

Dr. Nancy Butler Tulare, Director Emeritus of the School of Teaching ESL

I am honored to receive the Sally Wellman Memorial Teaching Award. I hope that Sally Wellman would approve of the choice.

I was originally trained as a historian. Now, I'm a history. I'm a history of language teaching in the second half of the 20th century.

My career has been affected by new ideas, new theories, new methods, world events that caused waves of immigrants, currency fluctuations that caused students to stay home with a greater need for English teachers to come to their home countries to teach, a series of reforms, and increasing state mandates.

I have supervised teachers going for ESL Endorsement under four different sets of state requirements and have personally met the requirements for three of them.

I studied Spanish in High School using the grammar-translation method, Russian at the University of Washington via the Direct Method, learned to teach Russian in 1963 using the new and very exciting Audio Lingual Method, and after teaching in a middle school and finishing my graduate programs I taught and administrated in a grammar-based ESL program that evolved to a notional-functional curriculum and then to a communicative approach.

I learned about teaching machines in the early 60's, developed my junior-high students' expertise in threading the movie projectors, listened to students repeating over and over in the language lab, used computers in classrooms before Windows, email, or the Internet, and I now teach online classes, including a class on how to use computers to enhance classroom teaching.

I developed an intensive post-baccalaureate certificate program in TESOL for Seattle University when there was only one similar program in the US – now there are hundreds.

I have suffered through the anguish of what to call our students – ESL, EFL, ESL/EFL, ESOL, EAL (English as an Alternative Language), God forbid LEP (Limited English Proficient), and now, I'm sure finally and forever, ELL, English Language Learners.

I accept this award not for myself, but for myself in collaboration with my students, from whom I learned so much, my colleagues, with whom I had so much fun, with world events, that keep every program guessing, with the State of Washington, that keeps forcing us to look at ourselves and our classrooms in different ways, and with the profession of TESOL, that has always tried to help us interpret trends and respond to the changing language-teaching scene.

My advice to teachers who will become histories of the first half of the 21st century in language teaching is to pay attention to and think about it all, do what is required of you by your administration, but at the end of the day continue to do what you know is best for your students. It is your passion for teaching and your concern for your students that will keep everything in perspective and help you survive it all.

Thank you.

Nan Tulare