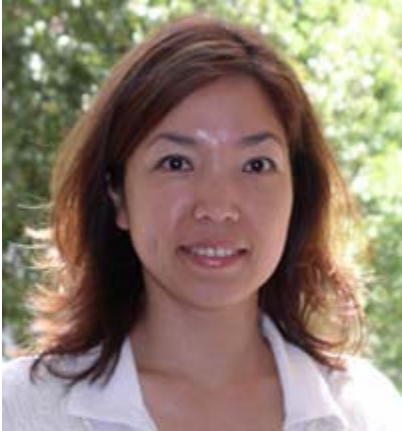


Leadership Profile: Kyung-Hee Bae

Leadership Mentoring Program: Not Just Another Award

by Kyung-Hee Bae



It was the fall of 2005. I was on the TESOL Web site “shopping” for an award, when I stumbled on the description of the Leadership Mentoring Program (LMP) award. I met the qualifications for the award, and the cash prize of \$1,000 would not hurt either; I was looking for an award mostly to help pay for the convention. The idea of a program helping me become a leader was also somewhat intriguing. I did not win the award that first year, but with the encouragement of my colleagues and friends, I reapplied. Even after I won the award, however, I had very little idea about or interest in what the award program would entail or how much I would learn from it. Essentially, it was a very selfish pursuit. What started as a self-seeking act, however, became a learning experience which strengthened me as a professional.

What I immediately learned was that, unlike other awards whose entire process typically would end at the ceremony, the LMP award program actually started at the ceremony. I was required to attend a series of workshops through TESOL’s Leadership Development Certificate Program (LDCP). Through two different strands of LDCP workshops, I learned the organizational structure, various constituent groups and their functions, and issues that may arise within or outside the organization which could potentially affect its members. While the main focus of the workshops was issues directly related to TESOL, many discussion points were something a leader in any organization would need to know. In fact, the workshops gave me knowledge/skills I still utilize daily in my professional life (outside TESOL).

I was also paired up with one of the TESOL leaders in a mentoring relationship; we communicated throughout the year and worked on a paper together. However, one part of this most important component I regret very sincerely is being too passive a participant—I could and should have contributed more from my end. While the TESOL leaders who volunteer for this program are more than eager to help and nurture prospective leaders, I believe mentees need to take initiative and be the more active participant in their relationship. After all, who would know better what they need to learn?

As with any organization, TESOL's mission and values are and should be defined by its members: they “are” TESOL. It is, however, at the leadership level where its members' goals and dreams will be realized. Thus it is crucial for the leadership not to lose touch with the membership, as in the fostering environment the LMP award provides, where both leaders and members are able to learn from each other.

For information on the Leadership Mentoring program, [click here](#). (You must be signed in as a member of TESOL.)