



## **Editor's Note: On the Expanding Relevance of the Applied English Center**

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The Applied English Center (AEC) is expanding its relevance across campus. This is particularly important because the AEC, as well as intensive English programs (IEPs) across the country, is experiencing declining numbers of ESL students. Reported in the ICEF Monitor (2017), an online newsletter for international education, a recent survey by the Institute of International Education found a 19% decline in numbers of students enrolled in IEPs. Crucial is the reported response to this decline. Nationally, IEPs are expanding short-term program options, offering new specialized and pathway programs, engaging more with international recruiting agents, and reducing tuition and fees to be as attractive as possible to wide groups of international students, scholars, and instructors. The AEC and the Office of International Programs have been engaging in similar activities.

Reasons cited in the ICEF Monitor (2017) article for the declining numbers of IEP students and the expansion of programs are external to the profession. These include decreases in government-sponsored programs, the current political climate in the US, an increase in competition, and world economic trends. It is important to note, however, that the profession is not just being “pushed” by external forces to expand its relevance. Current English for academic purposes (EAP) research is revealing and specifying different uses of English depending on the academic discipline. Consider, for example, academic vocabulary and phrases. Discipline-specific lists of words and lexical bundles have been identified for mathematics (Cunningham, 2017), engineering (Hsu, 2014), chemistry (Valipouri & Nassaji, 2013), environmental science (Liu & Han, 2015), pharmacy (Grabowski, 2015), nursing (Yang, 2015), medicine (Wang, Liang, & Ge, 2008), agriculture (Martínez, Beck, & Panza, 2009), and macro groupings of academic subjects along a hard/soft discipline continuum (Durrant, 2017). These and other studies are questioning a general or “one-size-fits-all” approach to

teaching academic English.<sup>1</sup> Bluntly put, knowing how English is used in different disciplines allows us to make our pedagogy more effective and relevant to more disciplines and to more groups of international students, scholars, and teachers.

This issue of *ILI* explores the expanding relevance of the AEC including new directions and new relationships with programs, professional schools, and individual departments across campus. Melissa Stamer Peterson begins the issue by addressing a discipline that the AEC has traditionally not explored, mathematics. To many EAP instructors, it may seem that since mathematics is its own language, students can get by on formulae and their background knowledge of how mathematics works without having to use much English. Stamer Peterson, however, convincingly argues against this notion and expands the relevance of EAP to mathematics by examining the crucial role English plays in discipline-specific word meanings, application problems, asking questions in class, and following directions.

Jenny Selvedge's article bridges the IEP with the English Department. Wondering how we can prepare our students better for their *post*-IEP studies, Selvedge met with the Associate Director of Freshmen-Sophomore English and discovered that the writing assignments students do in the IEP qualitatively differ from the writing assignments in ENGL 101. Specifically, Selvedge focuses on *rhetorical flexibility*, which requires students to "stretch" their ability to use English by expressing a message in different, even multi-modal ways, depending on the purpose of the message and the audience.

Expanding the AEC's relevance to professional schools, Berardo outlines five points he considered when creating an ESP course for the School of Pharmacy. After a brief consideration of key points in the ESP literature, he reviews how English is used in the community pharmacy setting to identify authentic usage, which is central to the selection and development of maximally relevant course materials. The needs analysis that was done for the course along with the student learning outcomes and the overall approach to the course are also included. The article ends with a section on materials and activities. Grading rubrics are offered in the two appendices.

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<sup>1</sup> For more see Hyland and Tse (2007), Hyland (2009), Flowerdew (2016) and Murray (2016). For a recent discussion on English for general academic purposes vs English for specific academic purposes see Hyland (2016).

Carolyn Heacock, Summer Peixoto, Melissa Stamer Peterson, Baiba Šedriks, and Marina Greene discuss professional development within the EAP context of KU AAP, a pathway program consisting of EAP and KU Core (General Education) courses. In their article, they explain how they collaborated to create an instrument to help EAP instructors become better teachers. The instrument, the Collaborative Approach to Instructional Development is a four-step process involving pre and post-observation meetings, a classroom visit, and a written summary. This kind of professional development requires open discussion in a collegial rather than an evaluative context.

Before ending this Note, I must thank our Senior Editor Melissa Stamer Peterson for her critical examination of ideas in these articles. Every contribution to this issue of *ILI* is higher in quality because of her. I must also thank our Senior Design Editor, Elizabeth Gould, who took the lead on the time-consuming but immensely important job of accreditation and still made time for designing and formatting this issue of *ILI*. The professional appearance of *ILI* and its user-friendly nature is due to her. The most important *thanks*, as always, goes to AEC faculty, staff, and administration. Their intellectual curiosity, devotion, and interest are the reasons why our Center has this journal.

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