

# Issues in Language Instruction at the Applied English Center

A Journal for Practicing and Interpreting TESL at the  
University of Kansas

Special Issue: TESOL 2014

LIPPINCOTT HALL

## Content

1.	<i>Editor's Note: On this Issue</i> Marcellino Berardo	3
<b>Section 1: AEC Faculty at TESOL 2014</b>		
2.	<i>Using Weebly to Create E-Portfolios</i> Summer Peixoto; Katie McClintic; Melissa Stamer-Peterson	5
3.	<i>Fostering Presentation Competence: Instituting a Comprehensive Presentation Curriculum</i> Elizabeth Gould; Kaitlin Gram	6
4.	<i>Creating and Using an Anthology for English for Academic Purposes</i> Marcellino Berardo; Kellie Smith Herrod	9
<b>Section 2: Summary/Commentary from TESOL 2014 Attendees</b>		
5.	<i>Teaching Cohesion Strategies: Going Beyond Logical Connectors</i> Melissa Stamer-Peterson	14
6.	<i>Curriculum Repair: If It's Broken, Fix It!</i> Melissa Stamer-Peterson	15
7.	<i>Next Generation Writing: Creating and Assessing Effective Online Discussion Forums</i> Katie McClintic	16
8.	<i>Orientation and Strategies Instruction for the Next Generation IEP Student</i> Katie McClintic	16
9.	<i>Curriculum Repair: If It's Broken, Fix It!</i> Summer Peixoto	18
10.	<i>Wonderful Words: Vocabulary Matters</i> Summer Peixoto	18
11.	<i>Assessment in English Language Teaching: Reviewing Essentials</i> Elizabeth Gould	19
12.	<i>Reading and Writing Expectations of Matriculated University Students</i> Marcellino Berardo; Elizabeth Gould	20
13.	<i>Best Practices for Sustainable In-House Professional Development</i> Marcellino Berardo	24
14.	<i>Research Fair: Issues, Approaches, and Challenges in TESOL</i> Marcellino Berardo	27

## In Every Issue

### Professional Growth Opportunities:

- Submitting to ILI@AEC
- Presenting at conferences
- Submitting to other journals

### Editor's Note

## ILI Editors

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## Professional Growth Opportunities

### Submitting to ILI@AEC

ILI@AEC accepts the following types of submissions:

- Commentary/Opinion Essays
- Reflective Essays
- Reviews of (Text)Books, Articles, Policies, Best Practices in...
- Research Papers
- Research Agendas
- Action Research
- Materials Developed by Instructors
- Lesson Plans
- Teaching Strategies
- Proposals for Presentations and Workshops
- White Papers on ...
- Descriptions of Classroom Practice
- Tests and other Assessments
- Descriptions of How Technology is Used in Your Class
- Statements on CALL at the AEC

If you are interested in contributing to ILI@AEC, e-mail your submission to: [mberardo@ku.edu](mailto:mberardo@ku.edu).

### Presenting at Conferences

- TESOL Annual Conference: <http://www.tesol.org/attend-and-learn/international-convention/convention2014/2015-session-proposals>; held in March (around the 3rd week).
- MIDTESOL Annual Conference: <http://www.midtesol.org/midtesol/>; held in October (3rd or 4th week).
- NAFSA Annual Conference: [http://www.nafsa.org/Attend\\_Events/Annual\\_Conference/](http://www.nafsa.org/Attend_Events/Annual_Conference/); held last week in May.
- NAFSA Region II Conference: [http://www.nafsa.org/Connect\\_and\\_Network/Engage\\_with\\_a\\_Community/NAFSA\\_Regions/Region\\_II/](http://www.nafsa.org/Connect_and_Network/Engage_with_a_Community/NAFSA_Regions/Region_II/); held in October (3rd week).
- ACTFL Annual Conference: <http://www.actfl.org/convention-expo>; held in November (3rd or 4th week).
- The Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition (CARLA): Source for workshops, presentations, and conferences on language teaching and learning: <http://www.carla.umn.edu/>

### Submitting to Other Journals

- TESOL Quarterly: <http://www.tesol.org/read-and-publish>
- TESOL Journal: <http://www.tesol.org/read-and-publish>
- TESOL Connections: <http://www.tesol.org/read-and-publish>
- TESOL English Language Bulletin: <http://www.tesol.org/read-and-publish>
- TESOL Interest Section Newsletters: <http://www.tesol.org/read-and-publish>
- MIDTESOL Matters: <http://www.midtesol.org/midtesol/>
- NAFSA International Educator Magazine: [http://www.nafsa.org/Learn\\_About\\_NAFSA/Staff\\_Directory/Feedback\\_Forms/Pubs/Write\\_for\\_NAFSA/](http://www.nafsa.org/Learn_About_NAFSA/Staff_Directory/Feedback_Forms/Pubs/Write_for_NAFSA/)
- The Language Educator: <http://www.actfl.org/publications/all>
- Foreign Language Annals: <http://www.actfl.org/publications/all>
- ELT Journal: <http://eltj.oxfordjournals.org/>
- Modern Language Journal: <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/10.1111/%28ISSN%291540-4781>
- English Language Teaching: <http://www.ccsenet.org/journal/index.php/elt>
- Language Teaching Research: <http://ltr.sagepub.com/>
- Journal of Applied Linguistics: <https://www.equinoxpub.com/journals/index.php/JAL>
- Journal of Pragmatics: <http://www.journals.elsevier.com/journal-of-pragmatics/>
- International Review of Applied Linguistics in Language Teaching (IRAL): <http://www.degruyter.com/view/j/iral>
- Chronicle of Higher Education: <http://chronicle.com/section/Home/5>
- Teaching and Teacher Education: <http://www.journals.elsevier.com/teaching-and-teacher-education/>
- Bilingual Research Journal: <http://www.tandfonline.com/toc/ubjr20/current>
- Language Learning: A Journal of Research in Language Studies: <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/10.1111/%28ISSN%291467-9922>
- Journal of English for Academic Purposes: <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/journal/14751585>
- Applied Language Learning Journal: <http://www.dliflc.edu/publications.aspx>
- GIST Education and Learning Research Journal: <http://gisteducation.weebly.com/journal-information.html>



### Editor's Note

The primary role of university faculty is to create and share knowledge and international conferences are excellent opportunities for colleagues around the world to share their most current work. It is in this spirit that Mark Algren asked those who went to TESOL to write up a summary of two sessions they attended. Elizabeth Gould suggested that we publish the summaries in ILI. I then asked our TESOL presenters if they could include a commentary on the session summaries and a write-up of their own presentation to let other colleagues know about professional activities going on at the AEC. Presenters graciously agreed to commit to this extra work even though we were headed into the busiest time of the semester. Our Editorial Advisory Board also worked overtime to give substantive feedback on the submissions, contributing to the overall quality of the summaries and commentaries. The result is this special TESOL 2014 issue of ILI.

This special issue is divided into two parts. In the first part, the reader will find summaries of presentations our colleagues made at TESOL. These summaries communicate and document current professional interests of faculty members and noteworthy pedagogical activities going on at the AEC. Some summaries include links to websites where readers can find more information about the topics. I encourage readers to click on the links and explore the ideas both online and in person with the author(s) of the presentations.

In the second part of this issue, the reader will find summaries/commentaries on other TESOL presentations. These summaries/commentaries were written by AEC faculty with the intention of spreading ideas from TESOL to the AEC. Some commentaries led to deeper reflection on the topic or application of particular ideas to the AEC.

Although potentially applicable, ideas in these summaries and commentaries are not intended to reflect current AEC policy and should not be interpreted as statements indicating any future direction for the AEC. Instead, they should be taken as perspectives and thoughts from our colleagues in the spirit of sharing their professional interests and experiences from TESOL 2014. It is ILI policy to encourage this free exchange of smart, relevant, and well-articulated ideas independent of how much value a particular faculty member, administrator, or committee attributes to the idea. Our most important function is to provide a platform for high quality professional communication, and in this special issue, we attempt to do just that by spotlighting our faculty's contribution to TESOL 2014 and their thoughts on some of the most current ideas in TESOL today.

Please send any comments or questions about particular summaries or commentaries to the authors. Any other thoughts can be sent to me: [mberardo@ku.edu](mailto:mberardo@ku.edu).

Marcellino Berardo

## Thank You to Our ILI Editorial Advisory Board!



Elizabeth Byleen



Sandra Issa

Special thanks to our editorial advisory board! This was the first issue they worked on, and their comments and guidance have already helped us to improve our processes.

[Back to Table of Contents](#)

## PRESENTATIONS BY AEC FACULTY AT TESOL 2014 PORTLAND, OREGON

This section offers summaries of the presentations AEC faculty made at TESOL 2014.



Elizabeth Gould and Kaitlin Gram



**Session Title: Using Weebly to Create E-Portfolios**

Presenter Names: Peixoto, Summer; McClintic, Katie; Stamer-Peterson, Melissa

Content Area: N/A

Session Type: E-Village



**Background**

In an effort to engage in Computer Assisted Language Learning in the classroom, Katie McClintic and Summer Peixoto were inspired to use digital portfolios, or ePortfolios, while taking classes for TESOL certification in online teaching from TESOL, Inc. Katie went through the ePortfolio creation process for the online course and is now using the same principles with her KAUST class this semester as a culminating project for their college prep year experience at KU. Similarly, last year Summer created a blended learning online hybrid course centered on portfolio building for Kansai students to illustrate their learning experiences over the course of 2013. Throughout this six-week course, Melissa Stamer-Peterson’s role was to assist in the classroom and give feedback on student portfolios. As members of the LEO team, Summer, Melissa, and Katie are attempting to lead by example by incorporating technology into their courses and pursuing professional development opportunities that include the use of CALL in daily instruction and special programs.

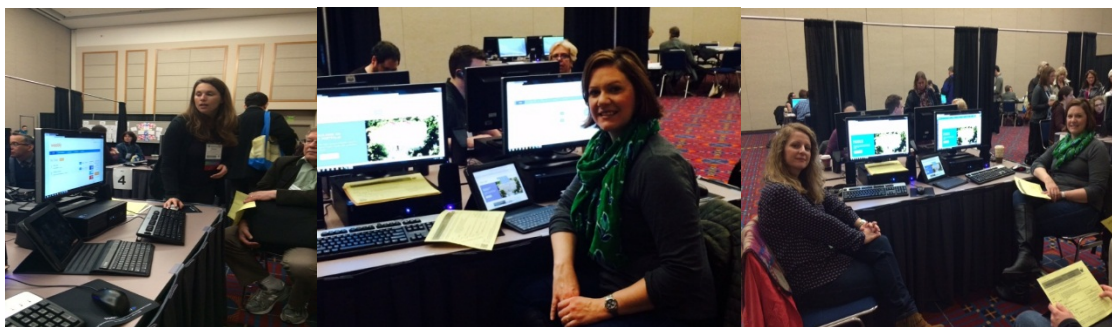
**Our Goal**

Our goal for facilitating this session was to show teachers how to guide students in creating ePortfolios with Weebly. Creating this type of portfolio benefits students because it allows them to see a comprehensive view of their progress in a skill or content area over a designated time period. In addition, creating an electronic version allows students to share their work and continue to develop it over time should they so choose. With our session, we aimed to give attendees some insight into the benefits of creating ePortfolios, some components that should be included, and ways to successfully evaluate the ePortfolios.

**EPortfolios and Weebly**

Utilizing Weebly to generate digital student portfolios is an active and multilayered way to engross students in the creative learning process. However, in order to successfully guide students through the ePortfolio creation process, teachers must take into consideration students’ linguistic competence, technology resistance, cultural background, motivation, and academic skills. Because of these complex factors, the planning and designing of ePortfolio requirements must be carefully thought out with ample scaffolding provided for students. During our presentation, we reviewed the justification and practices connected to designing ePortfolios while demonstrating the components of web page design using Weebly. Due to the ease and intuitive nature of Weebly for web page creation, it was the obvious choice for hosting our digital portfolios. Session attendees left the presentation with digital access to both student-created ePortfolio examples and the basic tools for implementing ePortfolios via a Weebly site created specifically for the presentation.

From left to right:  
Melissa Stamer-  
Peterson, Summer  
Peixoto, and Katie  
McClintic



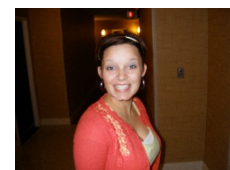
[Back to Table of Contents](#)

**Session Title: Fostering Presentation Competence: Instituting a Comprehensive Presentation Curriculum**

Presenter Names: Gould, Elizabeth; Gram, Kaitlin

Content Area: IEP

Session Type: Practice-Oriented



**Introduction**

Oral presentations are a part of the curriculum in many, if not most, academic listening/speaking courses. Often students are required to give presentations with very little direct instruction on what constitutes a good presentation let alone how to develop and present one. In this presentation, Kaitlin Gram and I explored the importance of having an oral presentation curriculum as well as its benefits. Additionally we provided an overview of an oral presentation curriculum I began developing a few years ago, which Kaitlin further developed into a full curriculum that she has implemented in the listening/speaking courses at Missouri Southern State University.

**The Problem**

When I first took on the coordinating of Level 2 listening/speaking, I discovered the focus of the course, like all listening/speaking courses at the AEC, was academic listening, and consequently (and rightly) most activities had a listening focus. Despite this, students were required to give two to three formal presentations each semester, though there were no support activities in place to help them through the presentation process. As a result, the quality of these presentations was for the most part poor; they lacked discernible structure and there was a lot of plagiarism.

In order to help students improve their oral presentation competence, I assumed I would need to develop some activities to help students better understand the components of oral presentations. However, before I delved into this time-consuming task, I wanted to be sure it was worth it. Because speaking was not a focus of the AEC curriculum, I was not sure I should spend the time creating materials that might or might not be useful to students at the AEC or as they continued into their programs of study. I therefore embarked on a mini-study with the following research questions: (1) Do students actually give oral presentations in their programs of study? (2) Will they get training on giving presentations elsewhere? (3) Are there already resources out there? In other words, do I really need to create my own materials? (4) Are there benefits in addition to improved oral presentation competence that would make this project even more worthwhile? To get answers to these questions, I reviewed some literature and talked to some of the other AEC listening/speaking coordinators with the following results.

*Presentation requirements in university courses.*

Ferris and Tagg (1996) conducted a study on the types of listening/speaking tasks ESL students need in order to be successful in their university courses. Formal speaking ranked relatively low on what university instructors considered to be difficulties for students and many disciplines stated that formal speaking was not a part of their courses. Two disciplines however, business and engineering, stated they were “concerned with formal presentation skills” (p. 309) and wanted students to be given ample opportunity to practice formal speaking skills. In addition to this information, I drew on my own college experiences and spoke with some professors in other disciplines on the KU campus and based on these conversations combined with the information from Ferris and Tagg (1996), I concluded that students in any discipline will have to give at least one formal presentation in their academic careers and that number is more likely to be higher if they are graduate students.

*Will students receive formal presentation training elsewhere?*

Looking at the general education requirements for many of the undergraduate majors offered at KU, I found that most students will be required to take a speech communications course. There are two arguments against using this as a reason not to have an oral presentation curriculum in listening/speaking courses. First, according to Dale and Wolf (2006), most

speech communication texts target native speakers and do not meet the particular needs of international students. Additionally, graduate students will most likely not have to take an introductory speech communications course and therefore would not receive this training at all.

*Are there already formal presentation materials available?*

There are some materials already developed and published to help students through the process of giving formal presentations. In fact, I have recently adopted one such text for Level 2 low intermediate Listening/Speaking, *Present Yourself 2: Viewpoints* published by Cambridge. Furthermore, many listening/speaking texts incorporate a presentation element including the *Lecture Ready* series published by Oxford and the *Pathway* series published by National Geographic/Heinle Cengage Learning. The problem is that not all programs want students to purchase two books, and due to copyright considerations, using the material from these books without purchasing them is not feasible.

*Are there benefits in addition to improved presentation competence?*

According to the literature, learning how to give oral presentations provides benefits outside the realm of listening/speaking. Richards (2008) states that some of the skills used for what he calls “talk as performance” are similar to those needed for formal writing including predictable organization and sequencing, and a focus on both form and accuracy, as well as using appropriate vocabulary. Based on this, it can be argued that developing presentation skills will also help students with their critical thinking and writing skills. Moreover, giving them a structure to follow, not to mention the virtue of simply surviving their presentations, will hopefully help them improve their confidence in not only formal speaking tasks but also in personal interactions though it should be mentioned that according to Richards (2008), these skills are not necessarily transferrable.

The results of my mini-study helped me conclude that creating a curriculum that would help students develop better oral presentation competence would be a worthwhile endeavor. I began the process of creating a curriculum with materials related to choosing a presentation topic, creating an outline, developing solid introductions, transitions and conclusions, and using notes effectively. These materials were used for one semester with some success. Because the materials were new, a lot of revision was needed at the end of the semester, but the presentations improved enough that I felt the work of revising the materials would be worth my time. As these materials were being piloted, however, I discovered the existence of the *Present Yourself* series and thought these books would work well with the Level 2 Listening/Speaking course and decided to use this book the following semester rather than revise the curriculum I had created. In the meantime, Kaitlin had gotten a job as the listening/speaking coordinator and instructor at Missouri Southern State University. Kaitlin took what I had done for one semester and developed and expanded it into a five-level oral presentation curriculum.

### **Creating the Curriculum**

When creating the curriculum, Kaitlin had to consider the implications of it from the point of view of faculty as well as students. From the beginning of the process, Kaitlin took a top-down approach to the curriculum by first considering the overarching goal of the curriculum and how this goal would affect other instructors in the program. For example, she looked at the curriculum of the reading/writing instructors to be sure that her curriculum would validate theirs and vice versa. She wanted to be sure that any language objectives she was requiring of students would not be beyond what they were learning in other courses at the same level.

She also made sure that the curriculum was student-centered with motivation as a main focus. To do this, she made sure to include instruction and discussion on explaining why and when these skills would be needed. Additionally, she wanted to make sure to provide them with as much scaffolding as possible as well as provide them with applicable topic choices for their presentations, giving them the opportunity to expand their knowledge whether academically or culturally. Finally, she included teaching by example as a component of the curriculum, so that the instructor could model a presentation for the students.

## **The Curriculum**

The curriculum that Kaitlin has developed is comprehensive and includes all components teachers would need to implement it. Specifically, for each level of the curriculum, Kaitlin developed the following components:

- Scope and sequence
- Power points introducing each topic
- Worksheets for many of the topics
- Two or more presentations assignments including rubrics
- Student self-evaluations for each assignment
- Sample presentations

## **Conclusion**

Like all curriculum projects, this one is a constant work in progress. That said, the results have been positive and therefore have made this effort valuable. Student performance in oral presentations has noticeably improved with the implementation of a more structured curriculum. Although having this structured curriculum does not completely take away the anxiety students feel at having to stand and speak in front of their peers, it does lessen it considerably and the confidence they gain in speaking after giving a presentation is evident.

[Back to Table of Contents](#)



## **Session Title: Creating and Using an Anthology for English for Academic Purposes**

Presenter Names: Berardo, Marcellino; Smith Herrod, Kellie

Content Area: IEP

Session Type: Practice-Oriented



### **Introduction**

We created an anthology for English for academic purposes (EAP), which includes a collection of chapters from different textbooks typically used in the sciences, humanities, and social sciences. We chose textbook chapters because our high-intermediate reading/writing students, mostly undergraduate students, will be exposed to textbooks in all of their freshman and sophomore courses. Some of these students are already taking two or more freshman-sophomore level courses. We chose disciplines from the sciences, humanities, and social sciences because our undergraduate students must fulfill KU Core requirements, which include courses in these fields.

The content in the textbook chapters, however, is not the point of the anthology. The point of the anthology is to illustrate academic English in different disciplinary contexts. We use the anthology to teach students how academic concepts get expressed in English and to help students work with entire textbook chapters.

### **Our Goals**

Our goal is to give our students a linguistic and academic experience more representative of what they will be exposed to in typical undergraduate textbooks. We also have the following related goals:

- To help integrate EAP students into the university
- To offer more intellectually challenging content
- To expose students to textbooks from required courses
- To demonstrate the use of general academic words and jargon in their disciplinary context
- To introduce students to discipline-specific ways to present or “package” knowledge
- To demonstrate the volume of reading material in non-ESL classes

We addressed our goals by creating and using an anthology for EAP.

### **Textbook Language: ESL Vs General Education**

Research indicates that the language in ESL textbooks is different from the language in general education textbooks (Miller 2011; Woodward-Kron 2008). Moreover, research on language used in textbooks is starting to show that even among the different disciplines, grammar structures (Deroey 2012) and individual academic vocabulary words are used in different ways (Hyland & Tse 2007). In light of this research and our own professional observations of language in ESL and general education textbooks, we decided to use authentic textbook chapters from the sciences, humanities and social sciences to give our students a more representative sample of academic English. Authentic chapters also allow us to address our academic goals.

### **Authentic Materials and Sustained Content-based Pedagogy**

The textbook chapters we chose have 20-40 pages of content. This length allows for a sustained content approach to reading academic texts. A sustained content approach in ESL is not new. We consider our anthology in line with Camiciottoli’s (2002) discussion on sustained content where she stated that

“...English language students progressively explore a relatively limited number of topics in a single subject area and use the same authentic materials as their native-speaker counterparts in mainstream courses, while learning and practicing language skills at the same time....[S]ustained content

instruction has the broader objective of also acquiring content knowledge and expertise in addition to ‘emphasiz[ing] language proficiency (pp. 169-170).’”

We also see our anthology as playing a central role in content-based language pedagogy, also commonly accepted in ESL. To characterize our anthology from this perspective, consider Stoller’s (2004) review of models of content-based instruction. She finds a continuum with content-driven and language-driven approaches on either end (p. 268). We consider our anthology and materials we developed to be more on the content-driven side of the continuum.

### **Six Strategies for AURC: Materials for the Anthology**

At this point, we had our academic goals, textbook chapters, and a commonly accepted approach to teaching ESL. What we did not have was teaching material. Textbook chapters explicitly teach academic concepts. They do not explicitly teach the way the concepts get expressed in English at the level of word forms, word choice, phrases, collocations, grammar, topic sentences, and development of topics into paragraphs and essays. In addition to the language, we also needed to help our students work with or “engage” entire chapters. We examined what we meant by “engage” and came up with AURC, which stands for Accessing, Understanding, Recreating, and Critically thinking about the language and content. We developed six strategies to help students engage language and content over the length of a chapter. The strategies act as a template we use to produce materials for each chapter in a systematic way.

1. *Introduce the discipline (pre-reading)*: To introduce the discipline, we contextualize it within the university. In particular, we begin the course with a discussion of the organization of the university into Schools and Colleges, each of which consists of departments. We have activities that help students discover websites starting with the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. We also have activities that introduce students to departmental websites where the Chair of the department typically provides a “welcome” or overview of the department and departmental strengths. The department is used as a general context for the chapter.

2. *Interact with the vocabulary and jargon*: To help students with key vocabulary, we include instruction and activities that demonstrate there is much more to word knowledge than the meaning of the word. We take a meaning-form-use approach. We look at general academic vocabulary, discipline-specific jargon, and collocations that appear in the chapter. Examples from a chapter on economics are *market economy*, *property rights*, and *business cycle*.

3. *Exploit the hierarchical organization of the chapter*: We help students access the chapter and understand the main points by exploiting the hierarchical organization of the chapter. Each chapter is divided into sections, which in turn are divided into subsections. The headings of the sections offer the main points of the chapter and the headings of the subsections identify the main ideas of the paragraphs within the subsections. Using the idea of a hierarchy at the paragraph level, we can divide the paragraph into a topic sentence and explanation which can include examples, definitions, and details.

4. *Use visuals and graphic aids from the chapter*: Textbook chapters are visual in nature. Photographs are common but so are cartoons, graphs, charts, maps, and models. When working with pictures, it becomes much easier to explain terms. For example, in a history chapter on Buddhism, the expression “fasting ascetic” appears. Associated with the term is an emaciated Siddhartha Gotama before he became the Buddha or enlightened one. The picture starkly portrayed his ribs and other skeletal features, communicating the discipline of strict abstention from food.

5. *Exploit the discipline-specific ways content is presented*: The approach a discipline takes and the nature of the subject matter dictate how that content is portrayed. For example, astronomy chapters are filled with sharp pictures of objects in the nighttime sky. History makes use of chronologies, maps, and passages from original documents attributed to key historical figures. In a chapter on economics, the emphasis is on listing principles, which includes explanations and definitions. A biology chapter organizes life into a massive hierarchy that begins with the individual atom and gets larger until it reaches the ecosystem and biosphere.

6. *Exploit highlighting techniques used in the chapter:* Textbooks make it easy to identify key concepts through various highlighting techniques. Most typical are font sizes, colors, and types, which are all used to show importance. The use of bullet points to make lists stand out from the text is also somewhat common. Key terms are also commonly pulled out of the text and highlighted in margins for easy access.

### **Critique on Authentic Textbooks for EAP**

When considering any approach to EAP, including the use of this kind of anthology, we must address critiques and challenges. We have already addressed challenges to using our EAP anthologies in Berardo & Smith Herrod (2012). Here we consider a critique on using introductory level textbooks from Hyland (1999).

#### *Hyland's Critique on Textbooks*

Hyland (1999) writes "...[i]ntroductory textbooks are obviously not representative of academic discourse in general (p. 4)." Hyland explains that "...course-books are often depicted as the repositories of codified knowledge...account[ing] for their somewhat peripheral status in the pantheon of academic genres where they are often seen by academics and administrators as commercial products unrelated to research" (p. 4). Hyland emphasized the prestigious role research articles have in academia.

Hyland's study found differences in the way language is used in textbooks and research articles. In particular, "[h]edges were almost three times more common in the RAs [research articles]..." (p.10). This finding is particularly important because it suggests that exclusive reliance on textbooks will result in less exposure to certain kinds of academic language.

*Response:* We agree with Hyland (1999) that textbooks are considered less academically prestigious than research articles but this does not mean textbooks are less *important* than research articles to students in freshmen and sophomore level classes. Textbooks are ubiquitous as Hyland himself notes:

Textbooks are perhaps the genre most commonly encountered by undergraduate students and constitute one of the primary means by which the concepts and analytical methods of a discipline are acquired. They play a central role in the learners' experience and understanding of a subject by providing a coherently ordered epistemological map of the disciplinary landscape and, through their textual practices, can help convey the norms, values and ideological assumptions of a particular academic culture. (p. 3)

First and second year students need to learn to extract key concepts from textbooks in a wide variety of disciplines that make up general education courses. All of our students who are in a degree program will encounter textbooks. In AECR 140, we expose students to textbooks but also to other kinds of academic writing such as departmental websites and research and other articles. Although we give students exposure to other genres, most of the reading in AECR 140, however, does come from textbook chapters.

### **Concluding Remarks**

Creating and using an anthology for EAP requires materials writers and instructors to work with authentic materials. Once the anthology is created, teaching materials are needed in order for students to use it. We developed materials to help students access, understand, recreate, and critically think about the content in the textbook chapters. Six strategies were developed to help students engage the chapter. Although there are concerns and challenges to using an anthology, we believe they can be overcome.

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[Back to Table of Contents](#)



## Summary/Commentary from TESOL 2014 Attendees PORTLAND, OREGON

In this section, AEC faculty report on selected sessions from TESOL 2014. All summaries and commentaries are written by AEC faculty.



Melissa Stamer-Peterson and Katie McClintic



### Summary/Commentary

Melissa Stamer-Peterson

#### **Session Title: Teaching Cohesion Strategies: Going Beyond Logical Connectors**

Presenters: Wendy Wang, Kay Stremmer, Erin Luyendyk and Susan Brokaw, Eastern Michigan University

Content area: Intensive English Programs

Session type: Practice-Oriented

#### **Summary**

Teaching cohesion is often either overlooked or assumed to be understood in the ESL context, but students often do not fundamentally understand what cohesion is or how to apply cohesion to their writing. When looking at cohesion in English, students need to understand grammatical cohesion (reference, substitution, ellipsis), lexico-grammatical cohesion (using conjunctions), and lexical cohesion (repetition, synonym, superordinate, general terms, collocation). Grammatical cohesion is often addressed in a grammar textbook, lexical cohesion in a reading textbook, and conjunctions are typically addressed in academic writing, according to the presenters. ESL textbooks predominately represent logical connectors as the chosen method of cohesion. However, in order to better help students with cohesion strategies, ESL teachers must know what logical connectors are, but most textbooks fail to comprehensively address them – or, if they do, they are more likely to give a short list of connectors. Textbooks infrequently offer exercises to allow students to adequately practice these skills. In a review of academic ESL writing textbooks, the presenters found that pronouns, demonstratives, synonyms, logical connectors and repetition of key words are the most common forms of cohesion. Few textbooks include the use of coordination and/or subordination to connect ideas, the use of consistent subjects or putting new information at the end of a sentence for emphasis (references: Dollahite & Haun, 2012; Raimes, 2008; Swales & Feak, 2012).

When learning cohesive strategies explicitly, students typically go through three stages of development: writing without cohesion (no connections between ideas), using emphatic logical connectors (using sentence-initial transition words like thus, therefore, then, furthermore), writing with cohesion strategies (employing lexical cohesion strategies and phrasal connectors). In order to encourage students to employ the third stage, teachers are encouraged to present cohesion strategies using authentic, rather than ESL, texts. This provides students with repeated exposure to key pedagogical issues in second language academic writing, such as paraphrasing, summarizing, and avoiding plagiarism. Teachers should also engage students in cohesion analysis, provide students with opportunities to practice using cohesion strategies one at a time, and, finally, encourage students to use these strategies in their own writing. Teachers should, in summary, never assume that students inherently understand cohesion, but, instead, should teach these strategies explicitly.

#### **Commentary**

The information and materials from this presentation can be applied to our classes in the AEC. When students first begin writing at level 4 high-intermediate, they tend to utilize basic lexico-grammatical cohesion strategies – using basic transitions at the beginning of each sentence. Most students have a subset of transitions they are comfortable using. However, it is important that they have a larger pool from which to draw. After they have shown mastery of a variety of sentence-first transitions, we can then move to more complicated, less innate cohesion strategies: employing lexical cohesion (repetition, synonyms, superordinate terms, general terms, collocations with phrasal connectors) and grammatical cohesion (reference, substitution, ellipsis). It is first important for students to observe these strategies used in natural, academic English in various fields of study which they will encounter. Once they can recognize that academics regularly employ lexical and grammatical cohesion strategies, they will be ready to begin incorporating these into their own writing. Teachers can then begin to introduce ways to link sentences within (or between once within has been mastered) paragraphs using the new strategies. Activities should be designed explicitly, naming the strategies, and giving

clear examples. An essay or short paper should be assigned once students have understood how to implement these strategies skillfully into their own writing. Cohesion should be scored separately from grammar and content on the next essay so students realize that this is an important element of writing and Western thought.

**Session Title: Curriculum Repair: If It's Broken, Fix It!**

Presenters: Gloria Munson and Vicki Sorensen, University of Texas at Arlington

Content area: Materials Development

Session type: Practice-Oriented

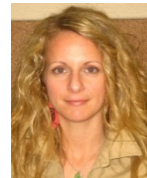
**Summary**

This presentation focused on curriculum repair and the road to accreditation. At UT-Arlington, the presenters began reviewing and repairing the curriculum in 2012 as an on-going process. This IEP has a three-semester academic year with 16 weeks in the Fall and Spring and 10 weeks in the Summer. The presenters teach three courses: Reading/Writing, Grammar, and Speaking/Listening.

While completing the CEA accreditation process, they noticed that they use the same curriculum for the 10-week program that they do for the 16-week program. Their mission was to document every part of the curriculum and repair areas of weakness – and this was an area of weakness. The short semester did not seem to impact the students negatively, but according to CEA, there was a problem in the disparity in semester length. Their goal was to fix the problem with semester length by teaching appropriate content to fit the needs of the students and the time constraint. Their second directive was to align all parts of the curriculum with student learning outcomes. They planned as follows: semester one was for reviewing the length of semesters to improve balance; semester two was for matching course objectives with student learning outcomes; semester three was for aligning these objectives, semester four was for reviewing final exams, and semester five was for reviewing materials and textbooks.

In order to start this process, they needed buy-in from the staff and faculty, so, in developing this new curriculum, they conducted faculty-wide brainstorm sessions and surveys. They found that in the 10-week program, there was less time to absorb and practice the material, less time in areas of instruction, inability of some instructors to complete the syllabus, increased stress, and omission of some positive repetitiveness. After discussing possible alternatives with faculty, they came up with the idea to have summer modules, which added class-time during the week. These were different from regular classes in that there was no homework and all activities were completed.

[Back to Table of Contents](#)



### Summary/Commentary

Katie McClintic

#### **Session Title: Next Generation Writing: Creating and Assessing Effective Online Discussion Forums**

Presenter: Sigrun Biesenbach-Lucas and Donette Brantner-Artenie, Georgetown University

Content Area: Second Language Writing/Composition

Session Type: Practice-Oriented

#### **Summary**

This session focused on how to teach strategies for writing academic discussion board posts. The presenters discussed their rationale for including this type of specific writing for students in an academic setting. They also shared ideas about what writing/critical thinking skills students need in order to successfully write for this particular purpose. Finally, the presenters shared material that they had developed through the teaching of this course, along with samples of student writing.

#### *Sample Materials*

<http://goo.gl/NrFrfq>

<http://goo.gl/BswUOE>

#### **Commentary**

As part of the AEC mission statement, one of our goals is to prepare our students academically in order to compete in their KU courses. The use of discussion boards has increasingly become a staple in university classes, and will be more so in the future as universities look to incorporate online/blended class formats into the curriculum. However there is little writing support available to help students be successful in this new writing format. I think the content of this presentation was relevant for not only the upper level writing courses at the AEC, but should also be introduced with modifications in the lower levels as well. In addition, I think it is of particular relevance to some of the short-term programs.

#### **Session Title: Orientation and Strategies Instruction for the Next Generation IEP Student**

Presenter: Linda Carlson, Ami Christensen, and Tom Carlson, University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire

Content Area: Intensive English Programs

Session Type: Practice-Oriented

#### **Summary**

This presentation focused on ways to help IEP students understand what is expected of them in the US university system as well as how to become more integrated into the larger community. The presenters shared information about specific courses they have developed in their IEP in order to accomplish this. The courses focused on using student mentors and grouping students in cohorts to provide a support system for international students.

#### *Sample Materials*

<http://goo.gl/RX1Qmv>

<http://goo.gl/Qigkrn>



## Commentary

As the number of international students on US university campuses continues to grow, it is becoming more challenging for counseling programs such as ours at the AEC to help students integrate into American society. This is due in part to the large numbers represented from particular countries, especially China and Saudi Arabia. What I found the most interesting in this presentation was the idea of using former language center students and/or international students as mentors to new cohorts of arriving students. This could be one way for the AEC counselors to increase the number of ways we provide support to our students in addition to the services we already provide.

[Back to Table of Contents](#)



## Summary/Commentary

Summer Peixoto

### **Session Title: Curriculum Repair: If It's Broken, Fix It!**

Presenters: Gloria Munson and Vicki Sorensen, University of Texas at Arlington

Content area: IEP

Session type: Practice-Oriented

#### **Summary**

In this session, the presenters shared their experiences in assessing and changing an old patchwork curriculum in an IEP to provide continuity between standards and textbook selection to meet CEA standards. They created a means to address two specific issues: test security and disparity between the 16 week and 10 week curriculum guides. One curriculum review technique they used involved using color-coded and multi-sized post-it notes to engage the audience in questions, answers, and review of information intended to evaluate the curriculum. According to the presenters, the most important part of the entire progression of events leading to CEA approval, was making sure teachers were involved in the various stages of curriculum repair.

#### **Commentary**

The session was engaging and the presenters were clearly knowledgeable about the topic, while being forthcoming about their experiences pursuing CEA accreditation. The session was incredibly useful to the AEC as we are going through a similar process at the moment. As an instructor, I do not always know all the pieces involved in this type of change, so viewing this from their perspective really helped me understand the process better. Also, the handout and techniques used during the session could prove useful as a tool in our own CEA accreditation process as we work toward alignment.

### **Session Title: Wonderful Words: Vocabulary Matters**

Digital Presence: <http://vocabmatters.pbworks.com/w/page/70553099/FrontPage>

Content area: CALL

Session type: E-Village

#### **Summary**

The session leader explained her experiences in presenting this session in the E-Village Online session. She collected many digital vocabulary teaching resources while teaching a course on vocabulary, collated the material and information from the class, and created a comprehensive list of various websites and tools for vocabulary practice.

#### **Commentary**

While I noticed that AEC teachers are already using some of the resources mentioned such as Quizlet and Voicethread, I will review the resources on the list provided to see if there is anything we could add to the LEO web page or share with other instructors. The presenter also inspired me to think about creating something for the TESOL E-Village Online session for next year. We can certainly add the handout resources to our AEC technology Blackboard site to keep as a useful teaching resource.

[Back to Table of Contents](#)



## Summary/Commentary

Elizabeth Gould

### **Session Title: Assessment in English Language Teaching: Reviewing Essentials**

Presenters: Lia Plakans, University of Iowa; Diane Schmitt, Nottingham Trent University; and Deborah Crusan, Wright State University

Content Area: N/A

Session Type: TESOL in Focus

### **Summary**

This session was labeled a “TESOL in Focus” session, which is a session sponsored by the TESOL International Association that highlights “special projects and initiatives to further the field, or partnerships with colleague associations.” The colleague association presenting with TESOL members in this session was the International Language Testing Association, and the presenters discussed and gave examples of different types of assessment. Although they mentioned types of assessments such as proficiency exams and aptitude tests, the main focus of their presentation was a description of diagnostic, formative and summative assessments.

#### *Diagnostic Exams*

The presenters stated that this type of exam is intended to identify strengths and weaknesses of students in a particular skill area. They did not mention this test as a use for determining appropriate placement of students. The presenter gave an example of a reading/writing diagnostic assessment which was quite similar to what we use for the proficiency test.

#### *Formative Assessment*

The presenters defined this as assessment for learning and said these assessments are activities we do on a daily basis. The presenter described this type of assessment as “plain good teaching” and something teachers should engage in on a daily basis. She suggested that the activities done in class or assigned as homework should always have a purpose and that questions instructors should ask themselves when creating these assessments are, “What would successful completion of a task look like? What would unsuccessful completion look like?”

#### *Summative Assessment*

Summative assessments are done at the completion of a large chunk of learning such as at the end of a chapter, unit or semester. These tests are used to determine if students have achieved the learning outcomes given them within the determined timeframe. These assessments are generally more formal in nature and should be assessed for reliability and validity.

### **Commentary**

This was a good session for individuals not very familiar with assessment, but I was hoping to get new information about assessment. Unfortunately, the presenters did not provide new insight into research in the area. Despite this, I was reminded of an important concept. The theme that permeated their presentation was that assessment should be integrated with learning, and this reminded me that we should always consider the purpose of any activity we do in the classroom and determine how we can measure, quantitatively or qualitatively, whether or not learning has occurred.

[Back to Table of Contents](#)

### Summary/Commentary

Marcellino Berardo and Elizabeth Gould



#### Session Title: Reading and Writing Expectations of Matriculated University Students

Presenters: Neil J Anderson, Brigham Young University; Norman Evans, Brigham Young University; James Hartshorn, Brigham Young University; Rochelle Keogh, University of Arkansas; and Elizabeth Webster, Michigan State University

Content Area: Applied Linguistics

Session Type: Colloquium

#### Summary

In this colloquium, presenters reviewed three separate but related research studies on the reading and writing expectations of matriculated university students and the implications for ELL students. The first study presented was a national survey done of university faculty in five of the most common majors at universities with a high percentage of international students. The other two presenters in the colloquium discussed the results of their interviews with international students and faculty members at their respective universities.

##### *U.S. National Survey.*

The first presenters in this colloquium, all from Brigham Young University, summarized the results of a national study they conducted of faculty in five of the most common majors for international students: Biology, Business, Computer Science, Engineering, and Psychology. The faculty members came from thirty different institutions that were identified as having a large percentage of international students. Specifically, at each campus, one course in each major was targeted as representing the “most essential beginning course for that major” (Anderson, et. al, handout, TESOL 2014, p.1). The researchers identified four research questions for this study:

1. How important are reading and writing compared to listening and speaking?
2. How much reading and writing are expected of students in their first major course?
3. What expectations do faculty have for student reading and writing?
4. What are the greatest reading and writing challenges?

The presenters identified a number of implications drawn from their research. First, they determined that faculty members perceive the receptive skills of listening and reading to be the most important language skills in their classrooms. Second, they found that the amount of reading required in introductory courses for all majors is quite high. Third, students are required to write large amounts of text in various forms in these introductory courses. Fourth, the researchers believe the results of their study indicate that the “one size fits all approach to academic reading should be reexamined” (Anderson, et. al, handout, TESOL 2014, p.4). Fifth, the researchers believe that ELL students should be given exposure to a wider variety of writing genres. Sixth, the researchers suggest that ELL students should be exposed to discipline specific reading materials as well as focused instruction in motivation and strategic reading. Finally, writing instruction should be focused on discipline specific genres, as well as having a focus on clarity and grammatical accuracy in writing.

##### *Academic Challenges: The International Student Point of View.*

Rochelle Keogh presented a survey of international students conducted at the University of Arkansas which sought to discover the academic challenges international students face as identified by the international students themselves. The researcher interviewed 181 undergraduate and graduate students majoring in science, engineering, business and social science. The guiding questions for this study were:

1. What are the academic challenges of international students?
2. What is the perceived importance of reading and writing to international students?



3. What types and amount of reading are required of international students?
4. What types and amount of writing are required of international students?

The researcher drew a number of implications from the results of her study that she suggested academic English programs around the country should consider. First she recommends that programs conduct their own survey to determine campus-specific needs of ELL students and additionally suggests that programs actively “raise awareness of these findings” (Anderson, et. al, handout, TESOL 2014, p.6) across the campus. For students who have matriculated out of the academic English program or were able to skip it altogether, she indicates the need to create writing orientation sessions and provide tutoring services for new students as well as provide training for writing center staff on the specific writing needs of ELL students. For students enrolled in the academic English program, she suggests either having a section of reading/writing classes tailored to Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math students (STEM) or business students, or having reading/writing instructors consider student majors when designing tasks. She also suggests incorporating more technical writing activities for STEM students as well as direct instruction on writing formal/informal emails. Finally she suggests increasing the “focus on reading skills in class, but limit the amount of additional reading homework” (Anderson, et. al, handout, TESOL 2014, p.6) and teaching various test-taking strategies with a specific focus on how to write concisely and fluently.

#### *Faculty Perspectives on What Students Need*

Elizabeth Webster presented a needs assessment of faculty at Michigan State University. Faculty were surveyed and interviewed. The results of this needs assessment revealed that the main genres of reading expected of students in university courses included textbooks, academic articles, and media articles and ninety-one percent of participants stated that students were required to read between zero and fifty pages per week. Sixty-three percent stated that international students struggled with reading comprehension. Regarding writing expectations, the researcher found that 81% of faculty include some form of writing in the total class grade but that 46% do not include grammar or language use in those grades. The participants identified short answers, research papers, responses, summaries and lab reports as the main types of writing students have to do in their classes. The needs assessment also revealed that both domestic and international students struggle with academic honesty issues and that there is an “immediate need to teach international students about academic honesty” (Anderson, et. al, handout, TESOL 2014, p.7).

The researcher provided implications of this study that were similar to the other presenters in the colloquium. In particular, she suggested the incorporation of major-specific reading and writing activities, the inclusion of test-taking instruction, (e.g., how to write for exams), and direct instruction of email writing in classes. Additionally, she suggested instruction on academic honesty across the curriculum and recommended creating workshops on cultural norms.

#### **Commentary**

This presentation reports on research that lays the groundwork for a reinterpretation of teaching EAP. It recognizes that there is little research on discipline-specific faculty expectations for students and it targets disciplines that are most popular among international students making this research directly relevant to the international student population. This research also supports the idea that we should analyze authentic textbooks and writing assignments across the disciplines to help our students better prepare for their academic program.

The innovation is the discipline-specific approach to EAP. Professors of different disciplines appear to have different expectations of their students. For example, this study reports that business professors expect students to read approximately 85 pages per week while biology professors expect a little more than half that amount (45 pages) and only 37.5 pages are expected in computer science. These data contrast significantly with the length of typical readings in ESL textbooks for high-intermediate and advanced students. The length of research writing assignments also varies among the disciplines from approximately 30 pages in biology to nearly 20 pages in engineering to fewer than 5 pages in computer science. When asked about requirements for writing prose, as opposed to research, the page numbers go up for all disciplines. If it turns out that different disciplines have different demands, then a “one size fits all” approach to teaching

English for university study may not be appropriate. An example of a “one size fits all” approach would be the exclusive instruction of the 5-paragraph essay and grammar structures out of disciplinary context with the good intention that students will be able to transfer what they learned to the diversity of writing requirements from general education courses and classes in one’s academic discipline. Whether students make the connection or not, to adequately prepare our students for their academic careers, the kinds of discoveries reported on in this presentation should not go unnoticed by materials writers and teachers of EAP.

A striking comment from the presentation was the report that students do not know how to read or write like biologists or psychologists. This comment was intended to reflect all students, not just international students. At first, this comment seemed strange. Why should introductory level university students be able to read and write in discipline-specific ways *before* taking the relevant courses? One explanation might be that the comment was intended to reflect weaknesses in students’ high school education, an increasingly common complaint. Interpreted another way, however, this comment is quite revealing. It suggests that academia is about joining different discourse communities with agreed upon conventions for reading and writing. Students need to learn how to interact with texts in discipline-specific ways. If this is the case, then EAP curricula may need to reflect this fact. Our students may benefit from exposure to discipline-specific materials and instruction that show them how to engage the language, topics and organization styles used in different disciplines. To be clear, as EAP instructors we are not responsible for the *concepts* in different disciplines. We are, however, responsible for teaching how the language expresses academic concepts. Unlike our colleagues in biology and psychology, for example, we operate at the levels of word forms, word choice, phrases, collocations, grammar structures, topic sentences of paragraphs, and how topic sentences get developed into paragraphs and essays and other genres. The disciplines provide the content, and we provide instruction on how that content gets constructed and disseminated in academic English.

Surprising to us were the results on the importance of linguistic accuracy in writing. On a scale of 1 to 4 where 1 is not important and 4 is very important, the mean score for professors in psychology was 2.88. Biology was similar with 2.43 and computer science trailed off with 1.93. As EAP instructors, these low ratings for the importance of linguistic accuracy are hard to accept.

Of course we do not accept these data automatically. These findings will need to be replicated. Moreover, these findings may or may not be relevant for KU professors. The presenters suggested that attendees do the same research at their home institutions. We recommend that we replicate the study at KU to find out what KU faculty expectations are for students and what our international students expect of our faculty and their classes.

The research that was presented at the colloquium was limited in scope. For example, the presentation only considered popular majors. At KU, we can expand on the study by considering KU Core courses since most of our undergraduates will need to take those classes. We could also consider ENGL 101 and 102. Although math is universal, we may also want to find out what math faculty expect of beginning level students with respect to the four language skills. Any professional school with high numbers of international students should also be considered. We also have graduate students in the School of Education. The same kind of research can be done in conjunction with our colleagues in the School of Education but at the graduate level.

There are other ways we could go beyond the research presented at this colloquium. For example, we could explore the ways different disciplines “package” their content. For instance, introductory history textbooks use chronologies and maps while astronomy textbooks make use of photographs of the nighttime sky. Economics chapters list, explain, and illustrate principles, while communications studies textbooks incorporate models, which are common ways to present content in the disciplines. These ways of packaging content can be explored along with relevant language. In particular, the linguistic expression of concepts in the different disciplines can be examined. For example, textbook chapters make heavy use of noun phrases and noun clauses to introduce sections and subsections of chapters. These noun phrases/clauses encapsulate the main idea of a section and subsection. Are noun phrases used the same way across all disciplines? How are they used

in lectures? In a study that focused on noun clauses, Deroey (2012) found that they were mostly used “to highlight aspects of content information” and that “there was also disciplinary variation in their use” (p. 112). What about other grammar structures, collocations, or even individual words on the generic Academic Word List? Research by Hyland and Tse (2007) shows that even the same word on the AWL can be used differently and can have different meanings depending on the discipline. This line of research supports a discipline-specific approach to teaching EAP and could expose our students to the way academic English is authentically used in the context of different disciplines.

The presentation reported on exciting findings. These findings have the potential to motivate our own research project at KU and may lead to a realignment of our curriculum based on discipline-specific expectations of the very faculty members who will be teaching international students coming out of the AEC.

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[Back to Table of Contents](#)

## Summary/Commentary

Marcellino Berardo



### Session Title: Best Practices for Sustainable In-House Professional Development

Digital Presence: <http://tinyurl.com/k9bzeos>

Presenters: Ian Nichols, University of Pennsylvania; and Maureen Templeman, University of South Florida

Content Area: Teacher Development

Session Type: Practice-Oriented

### Summary

This presentation was about creating the infrastructure for sustainable in-house professional development. It started with barriers to professional development and then sketched out an infrastructure that could sustain professional development.

#### *Five Barriers to Effective Professional Development Experience*

The five barriers to an effective professional development experience are application, location, missed opportunity, processing the information, and forgetfulness. The following questions were used to help the presenters address the barriers and create their professional development program at their institutions. The presenters suggested that different programs can use these questions in their efforts to sustain in-house professional development.

- *Application*: How can we encourage and monitor application of new professional development concepts and skills?
- *Location*: What is the best location for professional development materials?
- *Missed Opportunity*: What if a person misses a professional development opportunity?
- *Processing the Information*: How does a person organize and digest so much information?
- *Forgetfulness*: What if a person forgets everything before being able to apply it?

#### *Best Practices for Sustainable Professional Development*

The presenters offered five best practices for sustainable professional development. They are listed below.

1. Pre- and post-workshop activities
  - a. The IEP can have a faculty development day where classes are canceled. A survey can be created to find out what instructors want and need. Faculty can also state one or more goals on the survey. There can also be a post workshop survey to follow up on if the workshop was helpful and if the faculty members were able to implement ideas from the workshop or accomplish goals.
  - b. *Issue*: Who would be the one to create the surveys?
2. Faculty learning communities
 

Faculty learning communities are small groups of faculty members who come together to discuss an article, book, or idea. Five suggestions were given to facilitate the faculty learning communities.

  - a. Set specific goals.
  - b. Set duration. (How long will the learning community meet for?)
  - c. Set regular meetings.
  - d. Focus on collaboration and accountability.
  - e. An issue was uneven interest and participation. Not everyone will have the same desire to explore the topic of discussion.
3. Shared storage space
 

Presenters offered five points to consider when thinking about storage space for any video, audio, images, or written materials that come from professional development activities.

- a. Google Drive, Dropbox, Local Networks
  - b. Types of Information: Videos, PowerPoints presentations, articles, etc.
  - c. *Issue*: Someone needs to manage the storage space and be responsible for recording, archiving, updating, etc.
  - d. *Issue*: Levels of access. Who gets access and who does not
  - e. *Issue*: Privacy laws such as the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)
4. Flipped model
    - a. Faculty can review videos or read articles before workshops or professional development activities.
    - b. Develop teacher training materials/teacher demos.
  5. Course managers/Program coordinators
    - a. Course managers or coordinators can affect the course by modifying the materials. They create the course syllabi and have textbook choice and control over many in-class and homework activities. They also create assessments.
    - b. *Issue*: Compensation.
    - c. *Duties*: Communication with teachers, presenters at workshops, committees, and administrators.
    - d. *Barrier*: Absent course manager. If a course manager is not performing his/her duties, instruction can suffer.

### Commentary

Since the presentation was mostly about infrastructure relevant to sustaining in-house professional development, not many professional development activities were suggested. However, the presentation helped me think more deeply about professional development at the AEC. The presentation inspired me to come up with a definition of professional development and related concepts as well as suggest our e-journal, *Issues in Language Instruction (ILI)*, as a way AEC faculty can sustain professional development.

#### *Definition and Discussion of Professional Development and Related Activities*

The Applied English Center has a “longstanding effort to promote the professional development of AEC faculty and staff” and will fund “professional development activities” (AEC Faculty Handbook 2013-2014, p. 76). Opportunities for professional development listed in the Faculty Handbook include conferences, workshops, webinars, KU courses, IT workshops, Center for Teaching Excellence workshops, attendance and volunteer opportunities at Mid-TESOL, TESOL International, and NAFSA (pp. 76-77). We also have a growing library and an in-house e-journal devoted to capturing how we practice and interpret TESL at the University of Kansas. Although there is much opportunity at the AEC, there appears to be no definition of professional development.

The following is an initial attempt at defining professional development at the AEC.

*Professional development at the AEC is rooted in the practice of TESL at the University of Kansas and consists of any advancement that is beyond or different from an individual’s current knowledge or ability as an ESL professional.*

The University of Kansas makes a distinction between professional development and research. The distinction can be illustrated in the titles of offices of KU upper administration. We have a Vice Chancellor for Research<sup>1</sup> and Vice Provost for Faculty Development.<sup>2</sup> If the university makes this distinction, we too can explore the distinction within the context of the AEC. My definition of professional development refers to advancements the individual makes in his/her knowledge or ability. In contrast, I refer to research as advancements in the field that an individual or team makes. The distinction is between the individual and the field. Research, then, includes professional development but professional development is a wider concept and does not necessarily include research. An individual can engage in both research activities, which

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.news.ku.edu/2014/03/31/steve-warren-step-down-vice-chancellor-research-ku>

<sup>2</sup> <http://facultydevelopment.ku.edu/>



advance the field, and professional development activities, which may be well-known in the field but new to the individual.

The AEC also has a category called Research and Development or R&D. This category seems to overlap with professional development and research. Because of the overlap, I explored a possible distinction among (1) research, (2) professional development, and (3) R&D within the context of the AEC. Based on my understanding of how R&D has been typically interpreted at the AEC, R&D is more about the creation of materials and other products that may or may not advance the individual's knowledge or the profession itself. In this sense, R&D can be considered *creation* rather than *advancement* per se. This does not mean R&D cannot lead to professional development and advancement of the field. Creation of materials, for example, not only facilitates instruction but can also lead to professional development for individual instructors and, at its best, can lead to advancements in the field.

#### *Caution*

The definition of professional development should refer to practicing TESL at the University of Kansas and be interpreted as connecting new knowledge and abilities with practice. Faculty members engaged in professional development (or research or R&D) should make this connection obvious. One caution, however, needs to be made. By defining professional development, we necessarily set parameters around what gets acknowledged and what does not. Someone or some committee will have to make decisions about what is relevant to the AEC and what is not. All decision makers must remain ferociously open-minded to understanding the relevance of different kinds of professional development activities to the practice of TESL at the University of Kansas. For example, two years ago researching corporate models of TESL would have been considered peripheral at best to practicing TESL at the University of Kansas. In light of KU's new corporate partnership with Shorelight, that kind of "peripheral" research is now directly relevant to TESL at KU. Professional development policy must allow our faculty the academic space to develop, explore, and identify wide ranges of ideas and trends in the profession because these ideas and trends may even end up at our university.

#### *Issues in Language Instruction (ILI)*

One way for AEC instructors to continue to develop professionally is to contribute to our e-journal, *Issues in Language Instruction at the AEC*. This journal is devoted to sharing ideas and capturing tacit knowledge faculty members accumulate with experience. Contributions can be written or in interview form. The content of the contributions is open to all professional ESL-related activities and interests of the instructors. Ideas published in *ILI* can lead to presentations and publications in other journals.

#### **Conclusion**

Professional development needs to be an on-going activity. The field will pass us by if we stop developing as individual professionals. By not contributing to the profession (research), we become less relevant to organizations such as TESOL and MIDTESOL. When we stop creating (R&D), we water down instruction and conform to generic ESL textbooks and materials that publishers target to the widest audience possible. We can certainly make a good argument for professional development, but it is a struggle to sustain. To lessen this struggle, we need to find ways for professional development to emerge naturally from our teaching, faculty meetings, and other professional interactions. Initiated by the presentation I attended, suggestions in this commentary simply contribute to the discussion.

[Back to Table of Contents](#)

## Summary/Commentary

Marcellino Berardo



### **Session Title: Research Fair: Issues, Approaches, and Challenges in TESOL**

Presenters: Amanda Kibler, University of Virginia; Mario Lopez-Gopar, UABJO, Mexico; Peter Sayer, University of Texas, San Antonio; Diane Dagenais, Simon Fraser University, Canada; and Michael Legutke, Justus Liebig University, Germany

Content Area: None

Session Type: TESOL in Focus

### **Summary**

This presentation addressed the research-teaching divide. The idea is that there should not be a divide because research should inform practice and practice should inform research. The presentation was divided into four parts. The introduction was given by Mario Lopez-Gopar, who introduced the panel. Then Peter Sayer, Diane Dagenais, and Michael Legutke briefly talked about their research and about different research issues to consider. For the last 20 minutes we discussed our research at our institutions in small break-out groups.

#### *Peter Sayer*

Peter Sayer has done a lot of EFL work in Mexico. For him, research is not only about modifying a dominant theory of teaching or second language acquisition. Research can also start with descriptions of what teachers and students are doing. Then there can be follow-up questions to explain what was observed. This is a kind of “bottom up” research that consists of ethnographic descriptions of what happens in the classroom. Sometimes teachers bring up questions and problems they are experiencing. The researcher, then, helps the teacher answer the questions and solve the problems. This is research!

The approach is inductive and does not begin with predetermined categories, making this kind of research more qualitative than quantitative. Any theory of language pedagogy or second language acquisition will have to account for the descriptions and observations that researchers make, so this kind of research is at the heart of the knowledge of our field.

#### *Diane Dagenais*

Diane Dagenais is a French speaking Canadian who now lives in Vancouver. Dagenais’ research agenda includes: (1) identifying multilingual and multimodal competencies, (2) designing multilingual and multimodal competencies, and (3) refining methods for video analysis for policy makers to give a realistic picture of language learning so we can have realistic expectations of our students. Dagenais is interested in translanguaging, which refers to code-switching, code blending, and Interlanguage<sup>3</sup> characteristics.

Dagenais promotes multilingualism and translanguaging and notes that non-target-like forms of the language, especially when written, are not acceptable in educational institutions but are a necessary part of the process of language learning.

#### *Michael Legutke*

For Legutke, Clarke’s (1994) TESOL Quarterly article is a landmark article for the discussion on the research-teaching divide. Legutke has 7 key issues and questions relevant to bridging the research-teaching divide. These issues and questions are for faculty to address, so no definitive answers were given.

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<sup>3</sup> I noticed Dagenais did not use the word Interlanguage but seemed to describe Interlanguage characteristics in the speech of students she works with.

1. *A Community of Teachers and Researchers*: How do you establish a community of teachers and researchers where we meet face-to-face and “speak the same language?”
2. *Sustainability*: How do we sustain the community of teachers and researchers?
3. *Process of Collaborative Inquiry*: How do we start a process of collaborative inquiry where the classroom is the center of discussion/research?
4. *Diversity of Interests*: How do we bring together the interests of teachers and the interests of researchers?
5. *Joint Understanding of Key Concepts*: How do we arrive at an understanding of key concepts that is understood and valued equally by researchers and teachers?
6. *Notion of Change and Teachers’ Professional Confidence*: How do we deal with the changing profession and our levels of confidence that get affected by change? I think we have a structural advantage here because we accept the idea of professional development.
7. *Professional Politics*: How do we bring TESOL and AAAL closer together? Researchers do not want to be involved in the messy work of teaching and teachers do not want to be challenged to change by new research.

#### *Break-out Groups*

In our group I brought up our e-journal, *ILI*. I explained that we are interested in capturing and sharing tacit knowledge, the kind of knowledge that a teacher acquires over years of experience. Our focus is the AEC and our main question is, “how is TESOL practiced and interpreted at the University of Kansas?” By staying focused on our institution, we can keep the quality of submissions high because we have experienced faculty who know much about the mission, goals, instruction, assessment, technology, and institutional history of the Applied English Center. One Japanese scholar said her department had something similar. The facilitator of our group, Diane Dagenais, liked the idea and wanted to bring it back to her department. She said the graduate students had something like *ILI* but the faculty did not. The idea of an in-house journal was very well-received and I learned that different versions of in-house e-journals are being created at different institutions as one way to bridge the research-teaching divide.

#### **Commentary**

This presentation made clear that teachers can also be researchers. Noted by others and restated in Clarke (1994) “...all teachers have theories” and “[g]ood teachers are scholars by definition: They pose questions, test assumptions, revise beliefs, and proceed based on what they have learned” (p. 22). Unfortunately, theories of language pedagogy do not come from classroom teachers because language teachers have little time to formalize their theories, which puts them at a disadvantage to other professionals who theorize about language instruction but do not teach language classes. A point to be made here is that no fully adequate theory of language instruction can come from another discipline. It must come from language teachers because they are most familiar with every detail of the practice. This means that for a comprehensive theory of language teaching to emerge, language teachers must be significantly involved.

We at the AEC are dealing with the research-teaching divide in a slightly different sense. We focus on professional development. We understand the importance of professional development and encourage instructors to pursue professional development activities, which could include research. Language instruction, however, is a highly time-consuming activity. There is often little time at the end of the week to devote to significant reading or writing in the profession. Financial restrictions on travel to conferences and workshops also make it difficult for instructors to participate in professional development activities.

To encourage faculty to continue with their professional development, we have year-end self-evaluation forms that ask faculty to report on their professional development activities. This is a kind of “stick” approach to professional development in the sense that there is pressure to do the activities in an environment where teachers have little extra time.

We need a carrot. To encourage faculty development, it may be worth exploring a Senior Lecturer position at the AEC. The AEC currently has no Senior Lecturer position although such a position exists at the university.<sup>4</sup>

A Senior Lecturer at the AEC would have to have a long, distinguished teaching career at the AEC. In addition, a Senior Lecturer might also need to have a record of professional development and accomplishments that goes beyond the usual teaching duties. This might include getting another graduate degree in a related field, significant experience leading workshops in language teaching, publications, or significant active participation in a related professional organization. The idea is to acknowledge hardworking, devoted faculty for excellence in teaching and for significant professional growth over a sustained period.

### References

Clarke, M. A. (1994). The Dysfunctions of the Theory/Practice Discourse. *TESOL Quarterly* 28(1), 9-26.

[Back to Table of Contents](#)

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<sup>4</sup> For more information see Guidelines on Academic Appointments in the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences  
<http://policy.ku.edu/CLAS/academic-appointments>.