Thank you!

In December, we reflect on achievements of the year that is ending. 2007 has been another great year for ATESOL NSW.

For their contribution to the continued growth and vitality of our association we thank:
- All our 450+ members, the essential part of our organisation;
- The hundreds of teachers and students who attended our professional development events in 2007;
- Our newsletter contributors: Ronald Carter, Michael McCarthy, Rosie Antenucci, Margie Sainsbury, Sara Lyons, Jonny Wells and Kath Brandon;
- All presenters at our eleven Professional Development events: Susie Hadid, Kim Self, Jeannine Garnett, Rosa Ochoa, Kerry Heubel, Cristina Murru, Jonny Wells, Darrell Hilton, Catharine Yiapp, Padmini Sampathkumar, Anne McIntyre, Jenny Newell, Patricia Paring, Jenny Tierney and Kylie Lowe;
- Dorothy Hoddinott, who was guest speaker at our AGM, Kaye Greenleaf of Cambridge University Press who supplied prizes and review copies of books; and Abbeys Language Book Centre for co-sponsoring our annual prize for the top HSC English (ESL) Student;
- Patrick Hickey and Jill Sillar at PTC (the Professional Teachers Council), ATESOL's secretariat.

Merry Christmas to everyone from Councillors & Executive Officer of ATESOL NSW
Welcome to the summer edition of ATESOL NSW’s newsletter. This December there is an air of expectation. Prime Minister, Kevin Rudd, promises an “education revolution.” How will that be manifested for ESL teachers and our students? Will more ESL teachers be appointed? Will more resources be directed toward resettlement services for refugees? Will the additional computers promised for high schools be harnessed to make learning more engaging and productive?

One thing is certain: for anyone with opinions on these matters, this is a good time to make contact with the new government and make your views known. Contact your local MP or Ms Julia Gillard MP, Deputy Prime Minister responsible for Education, Employment & Workplace Relations and Social Inclusion at Julia.Gillard.MP@aph.gov.au or by mail at PO Box 6022, House of Representatives, Parliament House, Canberra ACT 2600.

There is also an air of expectation, even anxiety, among this year’s crop of HSC students. Only a few weeks ago around 400 of them were sitting at the Sydney Masonic Centre intently listening to presenters at HSC English (ESL) Revision Day. In this issue, find out more about three of the presenters and their journeys as ESL teachers.

For their contributions to this issue, thank you very much to Pornsawan Brawn, Kath Brandon, Anne McIntyre, Emma Vale and Jenny Newell.

I wish you all a very Merry Christmas and Peace in 2008.

Helen Fong
Executive Officer/Newsletter Editor
0427 536 897, email helenfong@bigpond.com
At this time of year, we reflect on what has happened over the past twelve months. As a nation, we have a new government — and the effects of this change are yet to be gauged. This will be an area where we as an association will need to work with our affiliated “umbrella” groups to ensure that the needs of our students and their families are considered. The Education Revolution must be relevant for our clientele. We will also need to continue our calls to have the citizenship test reviewed, and/or the processes of administering it reconsidered.

By the time you read this, Kathy Rushton and Robert Jackson, two of our Councillors (and former secretary and past president respectively), will have received their Outstanding Professional Service Awards at the Professional Teachers Council presentation evening. Both have made considerable contributions to the development and support of the Stage 6 English (ESL) course, in addition to the numerous initiatives that ATESOL has taken on under their stewardship. Both thoroughly deserve their awards and I believe I speak for the membership of ATESOL when I say, “Well done!”

The professional development program that our current Council has conducted has been varied and, measuring by the participation rates, relevant to the many sectors of our membership. I would like to acknowledge the work of the Councillors (from all school sectors as well as a range of adult contexts) for the time and effort that they have devoted to ensuring that each of these activities has run smoothly. If you can identify a need that we are not meeting, please feel free to contact any of the Councillors to suggest a topic of concern, an engaging and informative presenter, a program or resource that should be highlighted… We welcome your involvement.

In the coming year, you have the opportunity to participate in the inaugural national conference sponsored by ACTA, our national body. The Pedagogies of Connection theme opens the way for challenging and thought-provoking presentations. Early in the year, the draft program should become available with details of the concurrent sessions that will complement the panel of speakers already identified. It is likely to be many years before this conference returns to a venue like Alice Springs. Do consider finding a ways and means of attending at least part of the conference. At the very least, add your name to the Expressions of Interest so that you receive regular, obligation-free email updates.

Have a safe and happy holiday experience, and return to the fray rested and energised for a productive and innovative year of learning ahead.

Best wishes
Connie Mudge
New service to members in 2008

e-bulletin

As the newsletter is published on a quarterly basis, we’ve found that we cannot pass on all the interesting information which we receive to our members in the most timely manner. This includes information on courses and events conducted by other organisations which we sometimes receive at short notice and awards for which ESL teachers may be nominated. It also includes reminders of ATESOL’s upcoming courses and information about the cancellation or postponement of any courses. (The latter information is very important if you have not booked for an event but intend to attend anyway.)

To remedy the situation, we will start an e-bulletin on a trial basis in 2008. The bulletin will be sent out approximately eight times a year, only if there is useful information to impart.

If you have provided your email address to us, you will automatically receive the e-bulletin. However, if you are among the 200 or so members who have not given us their email addresses, please contact Patrick Hickey at our secretariat at PTC on (02) 9564 3322 or fax (02) 9564 2342 to be put on our e-bulletin mailing list. Please note, your contact details will not be given to any other person or organisation. You may unsubscribe at any time.

Do you have an event you want to publicise?

Sometimes a school may have an event which would be of interest to ESL teachers and which it would like to publicise eg performances by ESL students, or an event to celebrate a particular culture. If you are from a not-for-profit institution and you have an event you would like to publicise, please send information to helenfong@bigpond.com. If it arrives at the right time, we will do our best to include it in the e-bulletin.

Australian Council of TESOL Associations
Inaugural International TESOL Conference
Hosted by ESL Educators (South Australia) Pedagogies of Connection
...in Alice Springs, Northern Territory, Australia

10–12 July 2008

Pedagogies of Connection

Developing Individual and Community Identities

...following a TESOL Symposium

9 July 2008

Keeping Language Diversity Alive
FIRST IN CLASS

Congratulations Esther Choi

The winner of the annual ATESOL NSW/Abbeys Language Book Centre award for the top student in HSC English (ESL) for 2006 was Ming Jun (Esther) Choi who was a student of Burwood Girls High School.

The prize is a book voucher for $250.00 and a certificate. Ming Jun (Esther), of Korean background, was invited back to her school to address school leavers at the Year 12 Graduation on 26 September 2007. She received her award at that time.

The photo shows her with her teacher, Janice Raynor, who was a presenter at ATESOL’s HSC English (ESL) Revision Day in October.

New service to members in 2008

The 2008 Asia TEFL International Conference

Globalizing Asia: The Role of ELT

August 1–3 2008

Sanur Paradise Plaza Hotel, Bali, Indonesia

The Asia TEFL International Conference Committee is now accepting presentation proposals in the content areas listed on its website for its 6th conference to be held in Bali, Indonesia, in August, 2008. The official language for the conference, including presentations and submissions, is English. For further information go to:

http://new.asiatefl.org/2008conference/conference2.html
Three High School Teachers

The annual HSC English (ESL) Revision Day conducted by ATESOL NSW is always an exciting event. On this day, up to 600 of the state’s HSC English (ESL) students gather for last-minute guidance by highly experienced Stage 6 teachers.

They come from all around Sydney and beyond – Killara, Hunters Hill, Bonnyrigg, Lakemba, Parramatta, to name a few suburbs.

Although the event takes place during the school holidays, there are always about 50 teachers who take time out of their holidays for their own professional development and to support students who are attending with them. Some teachers bring students from distant places, usually travelling by bus or train. This year one teacher drove four students from Queanbeyan.

To see the teachers at HSC English (ESL) Revision Day and the respect in which they are held by their students, and to see the students eagerly clustered around the presenters to ask questions after each session is to realise the crucial importance of ESL teachers in secondary schools. Now, meet three secondary school teachers who were presenters at this year’s HSC English (ESL) Revision Day.

Emma Vale

Emma Vale is currently on maternity leave from the Department of Education and training. In 2007 she has been part-time method lecturing at UNSW and consulting in ESL with various organisations. At HSC English (ESL) Revision Day 2007 she presented the Listening paper.

Can you tell me how you became an ESL teacher?

Being an ESL teacher wasn’t something I always wanted to do but I was always interested in other cultures and languages. At university I studied Indonesian and TESOL as double teaching methods. At Sydney University I was fortunate to study TESOL with Paul Dufficy. I thought I would become an ESL/LOTE teacher.

What happened when you graduated?

There were no positions for an Indonesian and ESL teacher when I graduated. In 1992 I started out as an ESL teacher at Holroyd High School where Dorothy Hoddinott was principal. I stayed there for eight years. There was an IEC (Intensive English Centre) next door with Maria Grace-Spence as head. It was an exciting time. There were a lot of new arrivals and great demand for our skills.

Dorothy was supportive of anything which could help ESL students. Neither Dorothy nor Maria were conservative educators. They supported innovation. Many high school ESL teachers work on their own and there is limited understanding of what ESL is among their colleagues. In contrast, when I worked at Holroyd, we shared a staff room with teachers from the IEC and the high school ESL teaching was flexible and able to be what we as a team thought it should be.

Did you ever feel overwhelmed by the needs of the students?

There was always a sense of urgency about the needs of the kids. We always had to ensure we had ways of accessing all students who needed support. So many students at our school were from refugee backgrounds. Some had low or no literacy in their first language. It was both exciting and exhausting.

I was fortunate to start at Holroyd. As a young teacher, I had lots of energy and enthusiasm. Through Dorothy I was exposed to a lot of professional development. Dorothy was an ATESOL councillor and when I was in my second year of teaching she suggested that I join Council.

What sort of commitment is required of teachers interested in joining Council? What can teachers gain in return?

Being on Council, doing it properly is hard work. It is a really important role, helping fellow teachers. DET provides some good PD, but where else can you go? I think you need to be prepared to offer at least a Saturday or Thursday night a term to help run a PD session and you need to attend the monthly meetings which run for an hour or so. Whatever time you spend attending the meeting, you need to spend an equivalent amount of time reading the agenda and documents being discussed, as well as the minutes and following up with actions if necessary.

But if you have the time to be on Council you get to meet people teaching beyond the coalface. You get to participate in advocacy and activism. It provides you with skills and knowledge which can be good for your career. Membership of Council is good particularly if you are a teacher
Three High School Teachers

Three High School Teachers without children or one whose children are at school or grown up. It can be hard with small children to find the time to participate actively.

What advice would you give a teacher who was just starting out as an ESL teacher?

There are advantages to going to a school with a large ESL population and other ESL teachers. Take every opportunity to undertake professional development. Don’t see it as an imposition. Visit bookshops which specialise in ESL, Abbeys Language Bookshop and the Bridge Bookshop. Build up your professional library.

What are the current challenges for ESL in secondary schools?

Migration patterns are always changing. There are the ongoing needs of refugee students. Many of the same issues remain. There is no head teacher of ESL so it can make it hard to have an ESL advocate within a school. There are simple logistical issues such as timetabling which may make it hard to do what is required for ESL students.

What advice would you give to a teacher who is new to Stage 6 English (ESL)?

Go to professional development workshops. A lot of material is available through DET, ATESOL NSW QT projects and the ETA. Talk to the Multicultural Programs Unit. Come to ATESOL PD and network. Link up with your closest school with an English ESL class. There shouldn’t be anyone out there who doesn’t have access to the information they need.

What books would you recommend for an ESL teacher’s professional library?

Texts that I have on my shelf that I’ve found useful for reflection and strategies include:


Hammond, J. (2001) Scaffolding teaching and learning in language and literacy education. Also research based explorations of what works in the classrooms within the lens of the scaffolding metaphor.


Humphreys, S. and Droga, L. Grammar and Meaning, Target Texts, Berry Australia contact target_texts@ozemail.com.au or go to www.targettexts.com. This one is a really good functional grammar reference, practical and understandable with exercises.


Jenny Newell

Jenny teaches at Killara High School. She presented on Paper 1 at the HSC English (ESL) Revision Day in October 2007.

Can you tell me how you came to be an ESL teacher?

Unlike most other ESL teachers, I trained first and foremost to teach ESL, undertaking a two year full time ESL/EFL training course at the Australian School of Pacific Administration, a Commonwealth teacher training institution located in Sydney, the purpose of which was to train and post teachers to pre-independence Papua New Guinea. After an eventful 10 years of teaching in the Western Highlands of PNG (during which time I taught one of the past prime ministers, Mr Pius Wingti) I returned to Sydney with my family. I transferred to the NSW Teaching Service, completed a degree with Honours in ESL and have been teaching at Killara High School for most of the time since then.

Once my own children had spread their wings and left home, I decided that it was time again to look at education systems further afield. I was very curious to experience other ideas and approaches to teaching and learning and so in 2003 I applied to teach ESL in an English international school in Hong
Kong. That was the best three year professional development any teacher could have had. Much of the pedagogy with which we are engaging now in NSW and many ideas and policies we have recently introduced have been well-embedded overseas such as A-E scaling, personalised and differentiated teaching and learning, a national curriculum (of which there are murmurs here), interactive whiteboards in all classrooms and connected learning communities to name a few. I was also at a school that was in the process of accreditation to teach the International Baccalaureate. That long and arduous process in itself provided us all with a steep learning curve. On my return to Australia, I discovered that much of the dialogue surrounding teaching and learning which I have mentioned and which had long been embedded overseas were only just being promoted here so I felt very excited about these new directions in NSW education.

What lessons did you learn along the way?

The main lesson I have learned from my experiences is to be outward looking; to see what is happening in ESL, and in education generally, around the world and to take the best and adapt these ideas to our own situation. This is so easy to do on the internet. We have access to research findings, teaching case studies, connected communities of ESL teachers and learners around the world who are sharing their ideas on the web.

Teaching is an exciting place to be right now. We should be asking how we can best appropriate education strategies such as differentiated and personalised learning for our ESL students, how we can better use technology in the classroom such as interactive whiteboards to access some of the world’s best resources and how we can expand our ideas about teaching ESL.

How have you found teaching stage 6 ESL students?

I have been teaching Year 12 ESL students since the days well before Contemporary and ESL English and, sadly, this is the first year I have not had an HSC class. I have always found teaching stage 6 ESL students extremely rewarding. However, I believe we are receiving many more students these days with far greater language need than in the past and they are often arriving just before the start of the preliminary HSC. These students are receiving support through their ESL English course but are we equipping them sufficiently to cope with the demands of English across their other stage 6 subjects? Are they floundering in Physics, Business Studies or Legal Studies? I think we may need to re-evaluate our strategies to ensure that our language teaching focus in stage 6 is relevant to their needs at this point in their school lives. Relevance, after all, is key to quality learning.

Can you recommend any websites for ESL teachers?

Yes, I know of some good sites. If you like, I will write them up for the next newsletter.

That would be great. Thank you very much. I look forward to reading about them.

Anne McIntyre

Anne is currently teaching at Tara Anglican School for Girls at Parramatta. She presented on English for Study at HSC English (ESL) Revision Day in October 2007.
Three High School Teachers

my future husband also came to Japan, to teach at a university and it was not long after that we married. Later when he was ordained into the Japanese church and was given the oversight of a church, I began a little English school. Our children were born in Japan. We wound up staying for 23 years.

Why did you return to Australia?
When our children were almost of high school age, the Mission Society thought it was time we came back. We returned in 1996.

Do you have any special insights into the process of migration and learning a different culture as a result of your experience?
Yes. It was a painful experience to return and be re-acculturated. Our friends had moved on and we needed to make new friends. Our children found it very hard. Our youngest refused to acknowledge that we were leaving Japan even at the special soccer party that had been put on for him. Initially he refused to go to school in Australia. Seeing how our children struggled with acclimatising to their new home in Australia made me much more sensitive to the experience of other young people coming here from other countries.

Our children have been back to Japan several times. It wasn’t until they were adults that they could see that we had made the right decision in bringing them back here so that they could later choose for themselves where they wanted to live.

What work did you do when you returned?
At first I got a job at Cumberland High School. I taught Japanese and gradually started teaching ESL. I attended a lot of in-service training in ESL. Later I was appointed as ESL teacher at Tara Anglican School for Girls, initially for K–12 and now 7–12.

What challenges do ESL teachers face?
When I was in Japan, I was teaching a homogenous group. I spoke the language and knew the cultural nuances and expectations. For example, showing anger is totally unacceptable in Japan. Here, ESL teachers teach a much more diverse group. It is harder because every culture has different sensitivities. Most of my students are Chinese but there are cultural differences depending on where the students come from – Hong Kong, Taiwan, different parts of mainland China. Some students have come from Mongolia. I also have had Korean students, who are different again.

Having a Chinese ethnic heritage myself, I agree with your observations about the cultural differences between Chinese students from different places. Do you think ESL teachers face any other challenges currently?
I have been back 10 years. Initially I think that there was a desire to give more recognition to the contribution of ESL to a child’s education. That may be changing, and ESL teachers may have to be strong advocates again for the importance of ESL in their students’ education.

What advice would you give to a new ESL teacher?
It can be quite difficult for new teachers as it is harder for them to gain permanent positions, to have security of tenure. Perhaps they have to turn this into a positive. Young teachers are enthusiastic. They can build on this enthusiasm to gain experience and learn more. Get as much diversity as you can. Go to different schools. Work with older teachers.

What advice would you give a teacher who is new to teaching Stage 6 English (ESL)?
With senior kids, I like to give them a lot of responsibility. I treat them as adults. I set tasks and expect them to be done. Work is its own reward. It seems to work quite well. If I treat them as adults, that is what I get.

What books would you recommend for an ESL teacher’s professional library?
Swan, Michael & Smith, Bernard, Learner English: a teacher’s guide to interference and other problems, Cambridge University Press, (1987), 2002, Second Edition, with Audio CD of spoken samples. This is excellent for familiarisation with different languages and their groups and the difficulties facing the speakers of those languages when they are learning English.

Excel Series of English Texts: Essential Skills, English Workbooks, Years 7–10, Pascal Press
Excel Series of Basic Skills: Skillbuilder, Comprehension and Written Expression, Years 3–7, Pascal Press
Excel Series of Basic Skills: Skillbuilder, Reading & Comprehension, Years 1–2, Pascal Press

These are useful for teaching various text types and gives exercises that can help the ESL learner come to terms with the Mainstream class room.

Interviews by Helen Fong.
ELICOS Update - November 2007

ELICOS (English Language Intensive Courses for Overseas Students) is the name given to programs for international students studying English in Australia. Other countries may refer to it as EFL.

ELICOS Statistics
The students keep on coming! The most recent nation-wide stats from the Department of Education, Science & Training (DEST) have the intake for English language students on student visas up 36% from the same time last year, and there’s no sign of a downturn although we are getting slightly fewer students on student visas from Japan and Taiwan. Numbers from China and India are strongest, and Saudi Arabia has now replaced Hong Kong on the list of Top Ten source countries for ELICOS students. Working Holiday visas continue to be a popular alternative option for students from Korea, Japan, Taiwan, France and Italy.

ELICOS Teacher Shortage
Because of the boom in numbers of ELICOS students Australia is currently experiencing a shortage of appropriately qualified and experienced teachers and many colleges are finding it difficult to staff their regular programs let alone find relief teachers for sick staff or staff attending professional development. Directors of Studies across the country have commented on the trickle of resumes now crossing their desks compared with the flood of previous years. If you are considering joining or returning to teaching in this sector, send your resume to the Director of Studies at ELICOS colleges you’d like to work in. You can find a list of accredited colleges at www.englishaustralia.com.au. The English Australia website also now has a dedicated online employment opportunities section where colleges can advertise positions vacant and those looking for jobs can find out what is available.

Reviewed Standards for NEAS Accreditation
NEAS Australia, the independent body that provides the national accreditation scheme for ELICOS colleges, is revising its standards for accreditation. NEAS has sought stakeholder input for the draft standards and criteria, which should be finalised in the new year.

New Look Conference for 2008
English Australia is changing the focus for its 2008 conference, to be held 18–20 September in Canberra. With the theme of “Engaging With the Many Dimensions of ELICOS: learning, teaching, supporting, marketing, leading”, the conference maintains its strong support for teachers’ professional development while providing PD opportunities for other staff working in ELICOS, including management, marketing, student services and administrative staff as well as government stakeholders and promotional bodies. It will be a great opportunity for people across the field to learn with and from each other.

Kath Brandon, EA Project Officer
kathbrandon@englishaustralia.com.au

English Australia Conference 2008
Engaging with the Many Dimensions of ELICOS: learning, teaching, supporting, marketing, leading

18–20 September 2008 at the Realm Hotel, Canberra ACT
Each year English Australia organises a conference for teachers of English to international students. The conference brings together ELT professionals from across Australia as well as from other countries in the region.

For information go to – www.eaconference.com.au

Kath Brandon, EA Project Officer
kathbrandon@englishaustralia.com.au
The workshop was convened by Elizabeth Hotop with the assistance of Marolyn Ninness. Five experienced TAFE teachers shared lessons and approaches to teaching students with a range of abilities. Cristina Murru described how she taught EAP (English for Academic Purposes) to prepare her students for the rigorous requirements of tertiary level study. A demanding regime of timed writing tests and diary writing is leavened with moments of fun. (Think chicken dance!)

Jeannine Garnett spoke of using computers to motivate students at the other end of the English language ability spectrum. Some of her mature age students find the simplest functions on a computer to be very challenging but all appreciate developing skills in this ubiquitous technology which is commonplace for their children. Computer aided instruction is no panacea, but as well as being an effective teaching tool, provides variety, gives a sense of connection to the wider world and promotes interaction between students, as stronger students become mentors in assisting their less skilled classmates.

Rosa Ochoa inspired many with her use of blogging and podcasting to extend her students’ skills and their exposure to a range of Australian voices and experiences. By connecting her students, not only with each other and their teacher but with other students throughout the world through blogging and podcasting, she provides opportunities for them to engage in rich, authentic communication.

Kerry Heubel drew from her experience in drama to show the importance of teaching students an understanding of the mechanics of human sound production so that they can distinguish the sounds they need to make and speak with sufficient clarity and volume to communicate.

Jonny Wells shared his version of an old favourite, the Celebrity game, to develop skills in asking questions and to get students up and moving, as a change from static, desk based activities. A list of questions is first generated in the class and written on the board. Each student has a photo of a celebrity fixed to his/her back. The class has a good time with each student asking questions in an attempt to guess his/her identity. It is not necessary for the teacher to choose celebrities that are known to all but Jonny has found that everyone knows the Queen, Mickey Mouse and Harry Potter.

This workshop demonstrated that there is unmet demand for professional development for adult ESOL teachers. ATESOL NSW intends to provide additional professional development activities next year. Your feedback and suggestions for future workshops are welcome. Please email Elizabeth Hotop, Marolyn Ninness or Helen Fong with your suggestions. (Contact details are on page 2.)
The book synopsis states that the changing demographics of higher education means that many academic supervisors find themselves challenged by the task of guiding non-native speaker students to complete their thesis or dissertation in English. For most native speakers of English, penning academic texts and research can be a challenge as it requires a high standard of writing skills, organization, and knowledge in research and methodology. This challenge is compounded and becomes even more complex for international students or those Higher Degree Research (HDR) students from non–English speaking backgrounds as they have to contend with other social and linguistic issues such as finding accommodation, loneliness, language barrier and most of all, the necessity to function in the unfamiliar cross-cultural context.

The book Thesis and Dissertation Writing in a Second Language: a handbook for supervisors focuses on the genre of thesis and dissertation writing, the research and supervision process as well as on its social and cultural context. The introduction discusses and raises awareness of supervisors who are faced with the changing demographic profile of their students in this era of globalized education. Supervisors are now required to guide their HDR students through their research and at the same time be sensitive to issues such as students’ expectations, cross cultural communication and students’ ability to negotiate and collaborate in an unfamiliar context.

Each unit in the book covers the following aspects:

- Aspects of language use particular to thesis and dissertation writing;
- Typical chapter structures and organization;
- Social and cultural expectations particular to writing a thesis or dissertation;
- What is expected of students in this kind of writing and at this level of study;
- Expectations of students and supervisors in the supervision and thesis writing process;
- Disciplinary differences in thesis writing

- What examiners expect of thesis and dissertation writing in English-medium universities;
- Insights into barriers faced by non-native speaking students studying for a research degree.

Among the main areas covered in the book, issues that are also discussed include plagiarism or textual borrowing, miscommunication and rhetorical devices (page 11). Chapter 1: Introduction, clearly spells out attitude to knowledge and different levels of study – discussing the change students experience in their studies – progressing from English secondary school education which engages in ‘conserving’ knowledge to the tertiary studies whereby students shift to ‘critiquing’ and ‘extending knowledge. (See pages 7–12)

The linguistic value of the book is apparent in its tables illustrating stance and engagement strategies (p 149) – making claims and hedging. The book also highlights discourse markers such as attitude markers, metadiscourse and the linear and direct writing style inherent in academic writing. Unpacking the generic structure of the texts is one of the most useful aspects of this book. Samples of texts such as typical moves in thesis introductions and its strategic importance are included. The authors guide their readers though the chapters on writing the introduction, the background chapters, methodology chapter, the result chapters, discussion and conclusions, abstract and acknowledgements. Extracts from various disciplines such as engineering are also represented. In addition, the book also provides resources for thesis and dissertation writing in book and online formats to encourage readers to explore further.

(The only confusing feature for me is the use of the terms ‘thesis’ and ‘dissertation’ which are used differently in the USA. However a note on page 21 has clarified this for me in regard to the usage and the definitions.)

Despite its academic genre, the book was written with such clarity that it is accessible to readers of all persuasions – be it academic supervisors, ESL/EFL teachers or HDR students who are interested in reading and learning about what is expected of their academic performance in English. This and its...
user friendly format provide a good foreground for readers and highlight the fact that non-native HDR students need both academic and strategic support from their supervisors to achieve what they set out to accomplish in their academic pursuit.

The book *Thesis and Dissertation Writing in a Second Language: a handbook for supervisors* is an excellent read and a fantastic resource and it should not be read exclusively by academic advisors but by future HDR students of all professional backgrounds.

For teachers of ESL the book also has its relevance in raising awareness about characteristics of our learners, their preferred learning styles, their plight, self esteem (as illustrated by the comment from Nagata 1988:18 quoted on page 31 “I used to suffer from my own double perception of myself – the mature socially functioning person in my native language and the incompetent non – communicator in the target language”) and their linguistic needs. ESL teachers can also benefit from revisiting and refreshing their understanding of the cross cultural issues, adult learning principles, pragmatics and genre writing. The book is also an excellent and fantastic guide for those who are considering or aspiring to pursue the Higher Degree Research (HDR) for a PhD.

I have found the book to be relevant and useful not only for supervisors but also for ESL teachers and Higher Degree Research (HDR) students alike.
English Language educators concerned over lack of consultation for new citizenship test

The Australian Council of TESOL Associations (ACTA) is concerned that the government’s decision to launch a new citizenship test has been rushed through without community consultation or advice from English Language experts.

The Government has provided no evidence that the current citizenship test which involves an English language interview covering questions on Australia’s laws, responsibilities, governance and history is ineffective. ACTA believes the proposed computer-based written test will unfairly discriminate against certain migrant groups. It notes the following deficiencies in the proposed test and its accompanying resource booklet:

• There has been no community consultation regarding the content of the resource booklet and test, nor consultation with educators who have English as a Second Language (ESL) expertise to ensure the language demands of the test are reasonable. As a result the resource booklet is extremely lengthy and written in language that is unnecessarily complex for early learners of English. This text demands much more than a functional use of English, which has been the stated purpose of the test.

• The resource book is published in English only, however a deep understanding of abstract concepts such as values is more easily understood in a person’s mother tongue. Moreover, it defies the government’s claim to inclusivity, if only those with advanced language skills or the money to pay for sufficient tutelage can reasonably expect to pass.

• Much of the information included in this booklet is of a higher level than that taught currently in junior secondary schools around the country. It seems illogical to expect those with different cultures who do not have the benefit of years of immersion or language acquisition to remember and recall information which Australian born citizens themselves are unable to demonstrate, both on paper and in society.

• Citizenship cannot be measured through a multiple choice question test, which can conceivably be passed through memory recall and prior coaching. This provides no indication that the examinee has subscribed to the values detailed within the test nor retained the factual information learned for anytime beyond the test. Indeed it cannot even be said to provide an accurate test of the candidate’s English language ability.

• While countries such as USA and Britain have a similar test this clearly has not resulted in a higher rate of peaceful integration of immigrants to these countries.

• Australia has long benefited from immigrants, many of whom were not able to pass a test in English, to advance her society, and today after many years of contribution to Australia would struggle to meet the language demands of this test. These same migrants have not been shown to lack patriotism or to disrespect values seen to be ‘Australian’.

• The majority of those wishing to take such a test will be refugee and humanitarian entrants many of whom have backgrounds of disrupted or no schooling, torture or trauma. As such they will take considerably longer to prepare for a test. Yet, these are the very people who would be likely to commit wholeheartedly to their new country and its ideals.

• The proposed test is in written form only which will be harder for candidates than the current practice of an oral interview, where speakers may rely upon gesture and there are opportunities to ask for clarification to assist them in conveying their understanding.

ACTA strenuously advises that the resource booklet be redeveloped in conjunction with respected representatives from the Indigenous community and ESL experts.

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INTRODUCTION

You have chosen to live in Australia and to make a contribution to its future by seeking to become an Australian citizen. Becoming a citizen gives you the opportunity to call yourself an Australian. It is the final and most important step in the migration journey.

Australian citizenship is a common bond for all Australians, whether by birth or by choice. Becoming an Australian citizen is about joining a distinct national community. With that comes responsibilities and privileges and the opportunity to participate fully in Australian life.

An ancient land and a young nation, Australia has welcomed settlers and new citizens from more than 200 countries. Few countries have managed to combine ethnic and cultural diversity with national unity as successfully as Australia.

When citizenship is conferred, new citizens are asked to pledge loyalty to Australia and its people, to share their democratic beliefs, to respect their rights and liberties and to uphold and obey Australia’s laws.

Australia is a liberal democracy in the Western political tradition. The civic values of Australia include respect for the equal worth, dignity and freedom of every individual, religious tolerance and the equality of men and women. Australian citizenship is about living out these values in everyday life and in local communities.

Modern citizenship also rests on sentiments of nationhood and enduring attachment to what Australians hold in common. With this in mind, and with support from government, new citizens are expected to have a basic knowledge of English. They are also expected to know something of Australia’s history and heritage, our land and its people, and of the unique national culture which has evolved in Australia over time.

This knowledge will help new citizens to embrace education, employment and other opportunities in Australia. It also helps to foster a cohesive and integrated society with a sense of shared destiny and, should the need arise, shared sacrifice for the common good.

Australian citizenship provides for an overriding commitment to Australia. The different experiences we bring, our diverse backgrounds and cultures, can all serve to enrich that shared commitment.

Australian citizenship is a privilege that offers enormous rewards to all who strive to uphold its obligations. The Australian Government welcomes your desire to join our national community. We want new citizens to participate fully in our national life so that each individual can make the most of his or her abilities and help to build an even stronger and more united Australia.

This book will help you prepare to become an Australian citizen.

For further information about citizenship go to: www.citizenship.gov.au
African Refugees Debate

Newly appointed Minister for Immigration and Citizenship, Senator Chris Evans, and his Parliamentary Secretary for Multicultural Affairs and Settlement Services, Laurie Ferguson MP inherit an ongoing debate about African refugees to which the former minister, Kevin Andrews contributed. Both Senator Evans and Mr Ferguson have wide experience as shadow ministers of a number of portfolios. Mr Ferguson has previously served as Shadow Minister for Multicultural Affairs, Urban Development and Consumer Affairs as well as Immigration. African refugees and their supporters are keenly interested in the next stage of the debate.

When he was Minister for Immigration and Citizenship, Kevin Andrews created national and international controversy with a series of media interviews in which he publicly criticised the failure of African refugees to integrate in Australia. His website contained transcripts of interviews, extracts of which are included below. He outlined the three things which the Government took into account in determining the Refugee and Humanitarian Programme.

“The first is that we seek to assist those in greatest need, in doing that we consult widely and part of that consultation, an important part of that consultation, is with the United Nations High Commission for Refugees.

The second thing we take into account is how successfully current migrants are settling in Australia. And that involves us looking at the services which are being provided and to look and see whether there are changed needs, from time to time, of the migrant groups that we’re dealing with...The third element is that community confidence in the programme is essential...”

Asked for evidence that most Sudanese, and other African, immigrants or refugees are not settling in to Melbourne and Australia, Mr Andrews responded,

“Well can I give you a summary ...
• Concerns about the establishment of race based gangs.
• Reports of altercations between African groups in nightclubs and at community functions.
• Disagreements amongst prominent African community organisations over accusations that some are receiving favoured treatment in accessing community services
• Tensions have arisen between some African families, involving conflict and assault.
• Concern among some community leaders as to the increase in crime among African youth.
• Reports of a developing trend of young African males congregating in parks at night, often to consume alcohol.”

Asked to respond to a claim that there were insufficient support services for refugees, particularly young Sudanese men to integrate into the community, Mr Andrews responded,

“Well we spend about 300, I think it’s $300 million a year currently, somewhere between $250–300 million a year currently. We’re putting another $210 million over the next four years into the settlement programmes, specifically as a response to this issue. Specifically to, the reality is that we are dealing with a different group of people. For example, the average schooling age, if you compare those who came to Australia in 2005–06 to just 2002–03:
• average schooling was 4.3 years compared to 7 years in 2002–03;
• 40% had spent time in a refugee camp compared to 15% in 2002–03;
• 11% rated their reading ability as good or very good, compared to 27% in 2002–03;
• 80% required an interpreter compared to 64% in 2002–03; and
• 67% were aged under 25 compared to 58% just 3 years previous to that.

So there is quite a change, changed nature of the group of entrants that have come particularly over the last couple of years.”

Forum of Refugee Council of Australia

The debate on African refugees continued on 19 November when the Refugee Council of Australia held a timely forum titled, “Australia’s Refugee Resettlement Programme: Where is the debate headed?”

The first speaker was Ajang Biar, a Sudanese community leader based in Sydney who described the consistent occurrence of complaints about African refugees. He had been involved in discussions with Tamworth Council and its community after Council voted in December 2006 not to accept five refugee families into the community for a one year trial. He said, “Part of Tamworth’s concern was that Africans will take land. The mayor said, “We don’t have water.” Ajang Biar countered, “In two weeks time, there will be 30,000 people here for a music festival. Where will the people get water if there is no water for five families?”

In response to Minister Andrews’ statement that African refugees are having difficulty integrating,
African Refugees Debate

Aieng Biar said, “If you give services, we will integrate. We have two girls in the army. Fighting in Iraq, African girls fighting. When they come back are you going to call them diggers? Or refugees? We have doctors and engineers. We are Australian.”

Several members of his community had wanted to mount a demonstration but Aieng Biar counselled against demonstrating, as the community would only be blamed if any problems occurred at the demonstration. One positive which had come out of the negative comments about African refugees was the discovery that there are many members of the mainstream community who did not share these views and came forward to express their support. “A lot of communities have stated they do not support Kevin Andrew’s statement,” he said. “Let us stand with them.”

Dr Melika Sheikh-Eldin, Manager, IHSS Settlement Partnerships, AMES Victoria spoke next. Dr Sheikh-Eldin is a former refugee from Africa. She reminded the audience that the difficulties now experienced by the African refugees were similar to those experienced by former groups of refugees from the 1920s onwards, and that Africa consists of 52 counties with diverse cultures. African refugees have come from areas of chronic civil unrest but have not been the source of more troubles than other groups. She believed that any failure was a failure of government policy. For her, assisting integration meant among other things, “being nurtured for one’s contribution to society; opportunity and access (not handouts); mentorship to achieve goals rather than being left alone to fight.”

Women experienced particular difficulties as, separated from their extended families who could assist with childcare, they could not work but had to stay at home. To improve the situation for refugees there needed to be, “a comprehensive programme for integration, positive discrimination by employers, structured mentoring, cooperation between African groups, and involvement in community activities.”

The third speaker was Kevin Liston, Director, Australian Refugee Association, Adelaide. He said that Australia’s public policy on refugee settlement did not belong to government or to individual ministers and that the programme needed to be seen in a global context. “Civil wars and persecution will be with us always.”

Worldwide around 9 million refugees have been counted. There are 20 million displaced persons and 20,000 asylum seekers and people involved in human trafficking. There are 100,000 places available worldwide for resettlement.

“In one way, Australia’s response has been great,” he said. “Per capita of population we resettle more than any country. In numbers we are second.”

(Australia resettled 13,000 refugees in 2006–7. The country taking the largest number of refugees was the USA, taking in 70,000.) Mr Liston considered that Australia’s settlement services for refugees was among the best in the world though this contrasted greatly with our treatment of asylum seekers.

He referred to media highlighting of problems of integration and community acceptance. This was a double-edged sword—bringing forward information about problems experienced by refugees also drew attention to inadequacies in government programmes. The way forward for refugee advocates was in “creating the narrative, telling the story is important. What starts as ‘rescuing’ changes to ‘nation building’. There is a need for communities of former refugees, people who are willing to speak up.

To Mr Liston, 2008 is the watershed year. “We need to lose our mendicant position. We are not a charity. The environment movement has been able to put the environment issue into the mainstream. We need to do the same. We need to create self-funding mechanisms, to be independent of donations.”

He listed some issues for the sector.
• Possible loss of funds through overall cost cutting by the incoming government;
• Should funds be increased for additional resettlement or should additional funds be applied to increasing the quality of service provision?
• Sector development. “People working should not have to have precarious lives because they work for the marginalized.”
• Many people working with refugees are hindered in their criticism of government because their organisations have signed service agreements with government.

Mr Liston concluded by saying, “We need to learn from the way that Kevin Rudd runs the show, as a leader, as a person who is able to hold all together, to create a united force working together. Our sector can learn from this disciplined approach.”

Anyone who wishes to contribute to the debate and influence government policy, may contact Senator Evans and Mr Ferguson. The website is: www.minister.immi.gov.au/. The contact address is House of Representatives, Parliament House, Canberra 2600.

Helen Fong
Online Professional Reading

Several journals are published online. The University of Sydney publishes University of Sydney Papers in TESOL. The following abstracts are drawn from the most current issue. The complete articles are available at wwwfaculty.edfac.usyd.edu.au/projects/usp_in_tesol/

Losing and finding coherence in academic writing

JEREMY JONES
The University of Canberra
Mainstream academic writing classes at Australian universities typically attract a very diverse enrolment. Students are of different ages and cultural, linguistic and educational backgrounds. In the case presented here, there is a further complexity. Most students have a history of poor performance, even failure, in their subjects, clearly as a result of their poor command of the written language and in particular the great difficulties they have with the genres of academic writing. A single overwhelming challenge confronts the majority of these students: an inability to construct a coherent argument in response to a given question. An analysis of samples of students’ writing reveals two interesting results: that native and non-native English-speaking students were sometimes indistinguishable in their quality of writing, and both groups tended to suffer from a loss of coherence in argument. This paper probes the nature of non-coherence in these students’ writing, suggests reasons for it and proposes some remedies.

Beyond the text:
A textography of Chinese College English writing

BRIAN PALTRIDGE
The University of Sydney
The study described in this paper is a textography of the writing component of Chinese College English tests. In China, College English refers to compulsory English classes that non-English majors are required to undertake as part of their degree. At the end of their studies many students need to pass a nationally administered College English Test in order to graduate from their degrees. These are also important tests for gaining employment in China. This paper examines the writing component of the two main Chinese College English Tests, College English Test 4 (CET 4) and College English Test 6 (CET 6). The study was carried out in order to gain an understanding of the expectations and requirements of this section of the test so that these could be accounted for in College English writing classes. Insights were gained into the assessment of Chinese College English writing that would not have been gained by looking at the test, examples of students’ texts, or curriculum statements alone.

Exploring media literacy research in Australian ESL contexts: A review paper

PAUL GRUBA
The University of Melbourne
Potentially, media literacy theory can provide a productive framework in which to examine the role of media in second language contexts. The aim of this article is to introduce TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) researchers to media literacy research, using television as a focal medium. After the key concepts of media literacy are explained, three areas are set out for further exploration: media studies, cognitive processes and pedagogy. Investigations grounded in the context of media studies examine production techniques, analyze texts and study audience reception. Cognitive approaches to media research focus on individual interactions with media texts, comprehension tasks and strategy use. Pedagogical media research looks at effective classroom usage, or highlights how the use of media affects professional development, curriculum planning and assessment.

English language, academic support and academic outcomes: A discussion paper

DAVID HIRSH
The University of Sydney
This paper explores key issues associated with the admission of international students into university programs of study. It comes at a time when tertiary institutions in Australia and elsewhere are seeking to ‘get it right’ with English language admission requirements, and provide cost-effective support to students at need. The dual concerns of attracting the best possible student cohort while attending to the need, often critical, to maintain satisfactory student numbers, have largely overshadowed the reality on the ground of matching students with appropriate programs of study, and ensuring that those capable of succeeding are given the opportunity to. This paper looks to the literature as a starting point for identifying the important concerns, and then suggesting possible responses.
January 2008

18–19 Alabama, Mississippi TESOL “Learn A Language: Embrace the World”
MSU Riley Center, Meridian, Mississippi, USA
Email: marmartin@bellsouth.net.
Website: www.amtesol.org/events.htm

24–26 Thailand TESOL “English Language Teaching: Progress in Practice and Policy”
Sofitel Raja Orchid, Khon Khaen, Thailand.
Website: www.thaitesol2.org/

February 2008

8–10 English Language Teachers Association of India, Third International and 39th Annual ELTAI Conference, “Learning to Teach: A Life-long Journey”
Satyabhama University, Chennai, India
Email: eltai_india@yahoo.co.in
Website: www.eltai.org

9–12 Reading Recovery Council of North America, Inc.
National K–6 Literacy Conference,
Greater Columbus Convention Center,
400 North High St, Columbus, Ohio, USA
Email jwhite@readingrecovery.org.
Website: www.readingrecovery.org/conferences

16 TESOL/ Applied Linguistics Graduate Students
East Carolina University, Greenville,
North Carolina, USA
Email: talgs@ecu.edu.
Website: http://core.ecu.edu/engl/talgs/conference/conference.htm

23–24 4th CamTESOL Conference on English Language Teaching, “Building Bridges to the World”
National Institute of Education, Norodom Blvd, corner Suramarit Street, Phnom Penh, Cambodia
Tel: 855 23 2121 13. Fax: 855 23 426608
Email: info@camtesol.org.
Website: www.camtesol.org

March 2008

7–8 Tennessee TESOL “Language and Music: The Perfect Blend,”
Downtown Marriott Hotel/Convention Center
Memphis, Tennessee USA
Website: www.tntesol.org

7–9 TESOL Spain “Global English – Local Perspectives”
Universidad Europea de Madrid,
Villaviciosa de Odón, Spain
Email: convention2008@tesol-spain.org
Website: http://tesol-spain.org/convention2008/

14–15 Ming Chuan University, “English Education for Internationalization and Intercultural Understanding in 2008: Innovations and Challenges”
Ming Chuan University, Gweishan,
Taoyuan County, Taiwan ROC
Website: www.ae.mcu.edu.tw/dae/conference/index.htm

June 2008

5–7 Purdue University, The Seventh Symposium on Second Language Writing, “Foreign Language Writing Instruction: Principles and Practices”
Purdue University, West Lafayette, Indiana, USA
Email tony@purdue.edu
Website: www.sslw2008.org/

26–28 FEELTA/NATE, “Building Bridges with Languages and Cultures”
Far Eastern National University Vladivostok, Russia
Proposal Deadline: 31 January 2008
Email: feeltacon@dvgu.ru
Website: http://feelta.wl.dvgu.ru/upcoming.htm

27–28 MATE-TESOL Haiti, “Sharing Learning and Teaching Experiences in a Fast-Growing World”
Haitian-American Institute Conference Room
Proposal Deadline: 31 December 2007
Port-au-Prince, Haiti
Email: jeanfranois_vilmenay@yahoo.com
ATESOL (NSW) is a professional Teachers Association formed in 1970. It has a membership of education system: from early childhood to tertiary, adult, community and ELICOS. It also caters for colleagues in the related areas of Aboriginal and Maori education, bilingualism, linguistics, community and foreign language teaching.

ATESOL (NSW) Inc is affiliated with The Australian Council for TESOL Associations (ACTA) and TESOL International. It aims to strengthen the effective teaching and learning of English while respecting individuals’ language rights.

ATESOL offers:
- positive support for teachers
- practical classroom assistance
- regular seminars and workshops
- reduced registration rates to ACTA/ATESOL Summer Schools
- reciprocated membership of the UTS library
- regular newsletters
- relevant publications
- up-to-date information about TESOL opportunities
- special interest groups (SIGs)

Contributions to the newsletter
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Deadlines for 2008
15 February 16 May
15 August 21 November

Advertising rates for 2008 – space only (including GST)
- Full page
  182mm x 270mm $250
  4 issues $750
- Half-page horizontal
  182mm x 135mm $100
  4 issues $325
- Quarter-page vertical
  88.5mm x 135mm $65
  4 issues $180
- Inserts $300