Post new arrivals – migrant and refugee background learners who have been in an Australian school for between 2 and 5 years.

The National Symposium on Assessing English as an Additional Language/Dialect in the Australian Context was held at the University of NSW in late February 2009. A panel of speakers addressed the issue of ESL/D speakers in schools—commonalities and differences. The panel was asked to consider these questions:

What assessment issues are common to all types of ESL/D learners in schools?
What issues are specific to different groups?

Debra Ives, of VATME (the Victorian counterpart to ATESOL (NSW)) addressed these questions, with a specific focus on post new arrivals – migrant and refugee background learners who have been in an Australian school for between 2 and 5 years.

Commonalities

The most striking and obvious commonality between newly arrived migrant/refugee background English language learners and other EAL/D learners in schools is that they are still actively acquiring the Standard Australian English necessary to access the mainstream curriculum fully and independently. In particular, a significant distance or “gap” exists between these students’ mastery of academic English and their ability to meet the language demands of their age appropriate mainstream curriculum. In this key respect, they are still English language learners.

Differences

The most distinctive features of the post new arrival group are:

i) these students are primarily educated in mainstream classrooms by generalist or content teachers; and

ii) many of these students are no longer identified as English language learners by policy makers, education authorities, principals and teachers. It is also important to emphasise that this grouping includes high numbers of Australian-born children who speak a language or dialect other than Standard Australian English as the main language of their homes. By way of example, in Victoria, the Australian-born ESL cohort represents 69 percent of the students who attract ESL funding (DEECD, 2008: 11).

...continued page 7
Welcome to the winter edition of ATESOL (NSW)’s newsletter.

In this newsletter we have valuable contributions from many places. For their generous assistance with this issue I’d like to thank all our authors, Debra Ives (VATME), Bernadette Barker (QATESOL), Kath Brandon (EA), Grant Quarry (Australian Teacher Magazine), Jill Sillar, Robert Jackson and Sue Bremner.

For sending me lots of great information for our e-bulletins which are sent out between newsletters, many thanks are due to Connie Mudge. If you didn’t hear about the DET job in China, receive last minute notification about other ESL jobs in Sydney or missed the opportunity to win free double passes to the award-winning production, “My Name Is Rachel Corrie”, you are probably not on our e-bulletin mailing list. If you are a member (or your institution is a member) and you would like to be on the e-bulletin mailing list please let me know at helenfong9@gmail.com.

Your contributions and suggestions are always welcome.

Helen Fong
Executive Officer/Newsletter Editor
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It is an honour and a privilege to be asked to take on the role as ATESOL (NSW) President again in 2009. On behalf of the association I would like to pay tribute to the outstanding work done by our outgoing President, Connie Mudge, and to thank her and all of the ATESOL councillors who have served our profession so well and assured the viability and endurance of our organisation over the past two years.

At the recent ATESOL AGM, it was a great pleasure to welcome back Judith Mee as our guest speaker. As many of you will know, Judith is a long-serving ATESOL NSW and ACTA Councillor and she has been tireless in her commitment to TESOL education in this country. Judith can be proud of her achievements and the initiatives and programs she has pioneered and sustained over the years. As she steps down from the ATESOL Council in 2009 she takes with her the sincere gratitude and well-wishes of all of our members.

I would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate Pat Spring on the Life Membership awarded to her at the AGM. Photos from the evening are included in this issue.

ATESOL’s Professional Development program for the year is already well under way. The ‘Conference on the Move’ regional PD days held so far at Coffs Harbour and Armidale have attracted good turnouts and we look forward to continuing and expanding this program in the coming months. Our thanks go to the co-ordinating ATESOL Councillors, presenters and local event organisers who have helped to ensure the success of the initiative.

Our communications strategy has been enhanced by regular e-bulletins to members over the past twelve months. We have also launched an ATESOL NSW Facebook group which will hopefully facilitate resource-sharing and open forums on TESOL topics amongst practitioners. In conjunction with our website (www.atesolnsw.org) the Facebook page will provide updated information about conferences, PD events and other opportunities, so please feel free to log on and sign up.

On the national front, ATESOL NSW is represented by a full contingent of delegates to the Australian Council of TESOL Associations (ACTA) which is a Very Good Thing. Indeed in this time of wholesale curriculum reform. The Interim National Curriculum Board (NCB) has recently passed on the baton to the Sydney-based Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA), and this is the agency which will now take on all responsibility for developing and implementing the national curriculum.

ACARA is currently seeking expressions of interest for senior project officers for the next phase of the national curriculum juggernaut (June 2009-January 2010), entailing a two-step process for development of curriculum documents:

- Step 1 – development of scope and sequence
- Step 2 – completion of ‘detail’ of curriculum.

The specified curriculum areas are:

- English curriculum
- mathematics curriculum
- science curriculum
- geography curriculum
- languages curriculum
- the Arts curriculum
- equity and cross-curriculum perspectives.

Of particular interest to our profession is the reintroduction of grammar teaching as a mandatory component of the English curriculum. An article from *The Australian* newspaper (‘National English curriculum to include grammar guide’, 8 May 2009) has been reprinted below for your information.

**Robert Jackson**

**National English curriculum to include grammar guide**

**Justine Ferrari, Education writer**  
**May 08, 2009 The Australian**

The national English curriculum will include a grammar guide setting out a systematic course of study to be taught in schools and the concepts students should learn.

Submissions received on the English curriculum framing paper overwhelmingly supported teaching grammar, but the teaching profession disagrees on the type of grammar that should be taught in schools and how it should be taught.

In a bid to settle any grammar war before it begins, the national curriculum board intends to declare from the start that school students should learn traditional grammar that is integrated into the English course as part of the study of language.

The board has commissioned a report on the nature of grammar to be included in the curriculum, including a list of what should be taught at each stage of school.

The paper will be considered by the Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority, which will take control of the national curriculum.

Interim National Curriculum Board chairman Barry McGaw, who is expected to remain head of the new ACARA, said yesterday that the draft grammar guide would set out a scope and sequence for teaching grammar.

“We don’t want to just nod in the direction of grammar, and that it should be taught and at the word and sentence level, we need to say what that means,” he said.

“The draft paper says this is when to teach active and passive voice, this is when to teach prepositions and conjunctions. It might even stop people saying “between you and I”.

A consultation report on the English curriculum released by the NCB yesterday summarising the submissions received says 96 per cent ‘strongly and enthusiastically endorsed’ the teaching of grammar.

However, many submissions called on the curriculum to avoid advocating one kind of grammar over another, and others called for a blending of ‘functional’ and traditional grammar to be taught.

The English teaching profession has previously been divided in the so-called reading wars, on whether phonics or whole language is the way to teach reading, and English wars, over the place of print literature and the canon of ‘worthy literature’ in the classroom.

A similar fight looms over grammar, with elements of the profession favouring more analytical forms over traditional grammar, which is often dismissed as Latinate and therefore not strictly an English grammar.

The three main forms of grammar are traditional, systemic functional grammar and transformational or generative grammar.

An education consultant and expert in the teaching of grammar and writing, Peter Knapp, said transformational and systemic functional grammar were academic tools for analysing texts at a more sophisticated level and not the tools to teach children how to write.

Dr Knapp, who has written books on teaching writing and developed the highly respected international assessments in literacy for the University of NSW, said traditional grammar was most suitable because it tells students what the words are and what they do.

Dr Knapp said NSW had tried to teach functional grammar to primary students in the early 1990s but it was abandoned after two years because it was too difficult for students and teachers to understand.

Traditional grammar was developed in 100 BC by Greek grammarian Dionysius based on the eight parts of speech. It describes the types of words used, such as nouns and verbs, and what those words do.

Systemic functional grammar was devised by Sydney University academic Michael Halliday in the 1960s, who used it to describe how language was used in everyday life. It has been influential in the development of critical literacy and the analysis of language for propaganda, and how different styles of language can position readers.

Transformational grammar was developed by linguist Noam Chomsky, who saw it as a psychological function that was ‘hard-wired’ into the human psyche. His theory holds that no matter how complex the sentence, it can be traced back to deep structures that cannot be changed. A sentence cannot, for example, say ‘Hit the ball the boy’, only ‘the boy hit the ball’.

ATEDOL Newsletter • Vol 35 No 2 • June 2009
The English consultation report says opinion was divided as to whether one specific kind of grammar should be mandated, with most respondents believing it should, but few nominating which kind.

‘One extensive submission argued that a functional approach is an appropriate model of language for the curriculum; another submission argued that a blend of traditional and functional grammar would be suitable; and another argued in favour of traditional grammar on the grounds that this would lessen the demand for professional development because of the likelihood that more teachers would be familiar with this type of grammar,’ it says.

Other submissions called for a ‘visual grammar’ to provide a language for discussing how visual texts work, such as images, films and multimodal texts that are studied in English.

Teachers were also opposed to the idea of grammar being taught as an isolated skill and then tested as a separate subject in national literacy tests, as occurs at present.

Professor McGaw said the board was yet to determine what other types of grammar might be included in the curriculum, but traditional grammar would be the main form taught.

‘I don’t know what functional grammar is, frankly,’ he said. ‘People certainly need to be able to deal with complex texts and to understand something about the functions of texts.’

‘But in grammar, they need to know the way to use words, and about the agreement between the noun and the verb and the objective and nominative case.’

Submissions from the profession also called for grammar to be taught as and when students needed to know particular aspects, not as an isolated skill.

Professor McGaw said grammar would not be taught totally in isolation from writing, but it did need to be explicitly and systematically taught, not at random as occurred at present.

Introducing ATESOL Councillor Gil Pennington

I am currently working for the NSW Department of Education and Training as a Multicultural/ESL consultant, supporting teachers working in primary schools in the South Western Sydney Region. I’ve been in the job for nearly two years now and love the variety of the work, which includes running professional learning for teachers new to ESL teaching, supporting schools involved in action research projects, and collaborating with my colleagues in the region to enhance educational outcomes for all LBOTE students.

My interest in second language teaching began in Canberra when I returned to work after the birth of my two children. Before then I had been a mainstream primary teacher, firstly in England, and then in Sydney when I moved here in 1984. In order to teach ESL in the ACT I had to acquire some more qualifications and so enrolled at the University of Canberra, eventually graduating with an MA in TESOL. Part of this degree included a project on storytelling in the second language classroom, an on-going passion of mine and now the subject of my doctoral studies at the University of Sydney.

In 2004 I left the classroom and worked in the ACT Department of Education, running the LUAC (Language for Understanding Across the Curriculum) program within all ACT schools. I was also president of ATESOL ACT in 2006 and most of 2007. It is a pleasure to be able to represent ESL teachers on the council of ATESOL (NSW).

Professional Development 2009

Unless otherwise indicated, all professional development workshops are held at the Professional Teachers’ Council, NSW Conference Centre, Cnr Norton & Marion Sts, Leichhardt, in the grounds of Leichhardt Public School. On-site parking is limited; attendees need to allow sufficient time to park in adjoining streets. Light refreshments are provided at each workshop.

Term 3

Saturday 22 August, 9.30am – 1.00pm
Pronunciation Workshop
In this session, AMES teachers Glenice Aiken and Marina Pearce will present an overview of a range of approaches, resources and materials teachers can adapt to their own teaching context when dealing with pronunciation and listening problems. The workshop will look at practical ways to integrate pronunciation and self assessment into ESL courses. Resource workbook included.
Cost: $30 members & students, $50 non-members
Venue: PTC NSW Conference Centre

K–3 Grammar Workshop*
Convenor: Kathy Rushton. In this workshop ESL educators provide varied strategies for teaching grammar.
Cost: $30 members & students, $50 non-members

4–8 Grammar Workshop*
Let Convenor, Kathy Rushton and her co-presenters provide fresh ideas for teaching grammar to students in Years 4–8.
Cost: $30 members & students, $50 non-members
* Details for these workshops to be confirmed, please email – helenfong@gmail.com if you would like to receive a flyer on these workshops when they become available.

Tuesday 6 October, 9.30am – 4.00pm
HSC English (ESL) Revision Day
For all students of HSC English (ESL) and their teachers
Venue: Smith Auditorium, Shore School, William St, North Sydney
Cost: $25 students, and $50 teachers

Term 4

English for Academic Purposes
Details of presenter and date to be confirmed.

Introducing ATESOL Councillor

Gil Pennington

K–3 Grammar Workshop*
For policy and educational purposes, EAL/D students seemingly merge into the general school population once they no longer present as struggling English language speakers. There is often little to remind schools and teachers that they should seriously consider what they can do to ensure that these students experience ongoing equitable access to high quality education. It would appear that this lack of urgency stems from:

i) a lack of understanding of the differences between the English used for personal and social purposes, and the spoken and written English needed to succeed academically; and

ii) the mistaken assumption that English is a transparent or neutral medium.

Policy makers, bureaucrats, principals and teachers frequently fail to recognise and account for the complex interface between language and learning and consequently, many generalist and content teachers are unable to identify the English language learning needs of their students. This is a problem that persists despite ready access to school level data that captures visa codes, home languages, countries of birth and so on. It also persists regardless of specific ESL funding to schools. At present, characteristics such as an Australian accent, which younger students acquire relatively quickly, can minimise consideration of these students’ English language learning needs. Additionally, long-term attention to EAL/D students is often delivered to satisfy social imperatives and there has been a steadily increasing focus on interventions designed to address the most salient and overwhelming welfare needs of students of Indigenous or humanitarian status. Significantly, such actions rarely explicitly address language.

Why does a mainstream teacher’s attention to language matter so much?

Pedagogy and assessment are two sides of the same coin. With or without the support of ESL specialist teachers, mainstream and content teachers teach EAL/D students for the majority of these students’ school hours. Their knowledge and assessments of these students are therefore what count most. However, if unfamiliar with the learning trajectories followed by students who are learning a language while learning through it, teachers may have unreasonable expectations of students’ rates of progress. This can see them identify EAL/D students’ failure to progress at year level norms as indicative of learning difficulties rather than as evidence that these students need ongoing, long term pedagogical support for their English language learning.

In Australia we value teacher judgments and these are generally based upon formative assessment and classroom observations. Fortunately, we have not (yet) moved to large scale standardised test scores as the privileged source of information about educational outcomes. Although NAPLAN results for students in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 are publicly reported, schools and teachers report to parents using a broader data set, notably, teacher observations in classrooms, records of students’ development of skills and knowledge over time, and in-class summative tests and activities. Teachers’ ability to “see” the English language demands of their curriculum and pedagogies therefore matters.

Teachers’ formative assessments are also crucial in fine-tuning their teaching. If teachers fail to consider the role of language in learning, they are unlikely to effectively shape content delivery or to target help appropriately for the ESL learner experiencing difficulties.

At a broader level, teachers’ awareness of language matters because both formative and summative assessments should embody and promote equity. This requires the removal of cultural and language assumptions that will bias assessments against ESL students’ knowledge and skills.

The National Curriculum and assessment

Australia is developing a national curriculum. We have been told that standardised national testing will be developed to evaluate student progress against this new curriculum. It is therefore crucial that curriculum documents explicitly address EAL/D learners’ needs.

To date, although “knowledge about English” is one of the three core elements within the proposed national English curriculum, the substance and detail of the English, History, Mathematics and Science Framing Papers assume that English is students’ mother tongue. No allowance is made, or consideration given to learners of English as an additional language or dialect in regard to either their specific needs, or to what they know and can offer. Similarly, the “literacy continuum” proposals provide no indication of how EAL/D learning might relate. While literacy refers to a specific set of practices, language underpins all aspects of learning and the proposal to develop “a literacy continuum”...
ESL/D LEARNERS IN SCHOOLS

as distinct from a language/English language/English language & literacy continuum obscures the complex relationships between listening, speaking, reading and writing capabilities and development. In so doing, it provides no basis for responding to EAL/D learning needs. Significantly, the development of a language continuum for each of the curriculum areas would benefit every student and not only EAL/D learners.

“The Shape of the National Curriculum: a Proposal for Discussion” states that an ‘alternative curriculum for students perceived to be disadvantaged does not treat them equitably’ (p. 2). However, the national curriculum framing papers are silent about substantive EAL/D concerns and thereby embody precisely what they profess to oppose. If we really intend to meet the needs of every Australian student, EAL/D perspectives must be integral to mainstream assessments, not separate or hidden and applied on some ad hoc basis to a small percentage of visibly struggling students.

Increase in standardised testing

The possibility also exists that we are heading towards an increased use of large scale standardised testing in this country. In an address to the Curriculum Corporation Conference in November 2008, Education Minister Julia Gillard linked the need for “rigorous assessment” to transparency and accountability. She stated that ‘in order to lift performance and direct new resources to where they will make most difference, we need a new level of rigour and openness in the collection and publication of information about student outcomes’. This trend requires our attention.

In the Minister’s written response to ACTA’s concerns about what were then proposed and are now enacted federal funding arrangements for newly arrived migrant and refugee school-age students—viz., the termination of the New Arrivals Program—the intent to ‘lift performance and direct new resources’ was framed as follows:

“We are working with education authorities around Australia to develop better measures that will help governments focus resources where they are needed, so that all students who need extra assistance receive it. This includes disaggregated reporting on ESL and an ongoing commitment to reporting.”

The National Curriculum and associated assessment programs are works in progress and EAL/D educators need to be actively involved in guiding this process. There are signs that the TESOL field should take heed as attempts to increase policy, bureaucratic and pedagogical attention to English language learners through increased accountability measures have not served these students well in other educational jurisdictions. Florida-based TESOL educator Candace Harper, has been following recent developments in Australia and she draws on the U.S. experience to sound the warning that we should “beware that Trojan horse” (Personal Communication, 15 February 2009).

References


Debra Ives is an experienced preschool and primary teacher who has always been driven by a desire to ensure that all students experience equitable access to a high quality education. In 2008, Debra completed a PhD that investigated the differing ways in which generalist primary teachers perceive and respond to the educational needs of ESL learners in their classrooms. She now draws on this scholarly knowledge and her teaching experience in the advocacy work associated with her current roles as Secretary of ACTA and Vice President and Newsletter Editor of VATME.

(Editor’s note: For an update on developments in the National Curriculum since this paper was presented see page 14–15.)
A small but enthusiastic group attended the AGM. The talk by guest speaker, Judith Mee, was a highlight. An enjoyable evening with good conversation and delicious food was had by all.

Pat Spring, a past ATESOL (NSW) councillor was awarded Honorary Life Membership of ATESOL (NSW) in recognition of her long years of service to ESL education and ATESOL.

Retiring President, Connie Mudge, formally thanked retiring councillor Jim Richardson for his service to ATESOL despite family health issues in 2008.

Founding ATESOL (NSW) President Dorothy Hoddinot presided over the election of councillors for 2009. The names of councillors for 2009 appear on Page 2 of this issue. Nominations for executive positions saw the return of several familiar faces: Robert Jackson (President), Susan Bremner (Vice-president), Connie Mudge (Treasurer) and Kathy Rushton (Secretary).

A new face to the management team is Bess Wassman (Vice-president).

Lesley Fitzpatrick introduced guest speaker Judith Mee. Judith's topic was the question most frequently asked of ATESOL: “How do you become an ESOL Teacher?” With some visual aids, Judith addressed this seemingly innocuous question, using her own career to illustrate her points. The question Judith was really addressing was “How do you become a good ESOL Teacher?” Judith showed us the role that education, chance, training, opportunity, mentoring, wide experience, volunteer involvement in a professional teachers’ association and serendipity could play in shaping a teacher, giving us many chuckles along the way. (We hope that we will be able to provide this talk in an edition of the ATESOL Newsletter.)

Helen Fong
ELICOS Update - June 2009

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 is offered by government and private institutions around Australia.

NEAS ELT Management Conference

NEAS Australia, the independent body that provides the national accreditation scheme for ELICOS colleges, ran its thirteenth annual conference for ELT management in May, attended by more than 200 people from ELICOS colleges and related organisations around Australia. Applied linguist David Graddol delivered the opening and closing plenary presentations, outlining his predictions for the use of English globally. David reminded delegates that most of their students will be using English to communicate with other people who did not share a first language (despite the growth of China and India as world economic powers) and that ‘English as a lingua franca’ has its own specific characteristics. There are clear implications for curriculum design and teacher training. Professor Lesleyanne Hawthorne from Melbourne University and marketer Rob Lawrence outlined issues in the growth of the global competition for international students, warning that many other language study destinations are working hard to increase their share. It was interesting to note the increased (since last year) reference by international speakers to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEF) and the continued interest of Australian educators in the CEF.

Other sessions at the conference included focuses on international proficiency testing, management skills and sector updates. The Director of a New Zealand college shared his organisation’s approach to carbon-neutral teaching. The conference program can be viewed in full at www.neas.org.au and presentations will be posted shortly.

EAP Teachers Needed

Although the growth of student numbers has slowed (see following paragraph) there is still a great demand for skilled, knowledgeable and experienced teachers. If you are considering joining or returning to teaching ELICOS, especially EAP, send your resume to the Director of Studies at ELICOS colleges you’d like to work in. You can find a list of EA member colleges at www.englishaustralia.com.au. The English Australia website also has a dedicated online ‘employment opportunities’ section where colleges can advertise vacant ELICOS positions and those looking for jobs can find out what is available. Jobs regularly available include teaching, training, curriculum development, marketing and management of programs teaching international students in Australia and also overseas. This link is available on the English Australia homepage.

ELICOS Statistics

ELICOS commencements in the first three months of 2009 have slowed compared with the strong growth experienced in 2008, however overall growth is still around 9% and colleges are ‘cautiously optimistic’ about the rest of the year: Although fewer students are coming from South Korea and India we are getting more students from Brazil, Thailand, Saudi Arabia, Colombia and Vietnam. A large number of students on student visas are in ELICOS to prepare them for VET or higher education courses, hence the demand for EAP teachers.

Katherine Brandon
Professional Development & Support Officer
English Australia
kathbrandon@englishaustralia.com.au

English Australia is the peak body and professional association of institutions offering ELICOS.
Another successful Conference on the Move took place in sunny Armidale on the 16 May. This is fairly new for the ATESOL NSW Board, as our inaugural Conference on the Move was launched on March 14 in Coffs Harbour. With the dedication of Judith Mee (Sydney-based), and Jan Johnson from Armidale High School, who headed up the local organising committee, our second regional conference was a runaway success.

Over 30 people attended, including some international students from the University of New England, and people from as far away as Taree, Narrabri and, of course, Sydney. The evaluations were unanimously positive, with teachers pleased with the high calibre of the presentations, the opportunity to network, to be able to leave with some new ideas to try and research to follow up on.

The local organizing committee put together a program that seemed to suit all - from teachers of primary students up to adult learners. We began with Hazel Green’s moving Welcome to Country, acknowledging the traditional owners of the land, followed by an overview of ESL session. Susan Feez helped us plot a path through all that is ESL. Susan now works at UNE (Dr Susan Feez is a lecturer in the School of Education) but has had a rich career so far in most aspects of ESL teaching, in all sectors. Susan also writes books to support teachers of literacy.

Susan’s session provided a rich backdrop for the presentation of Associate Professor Mary Macken-Horarik, also from UNE. Mary took a closer look at the way teachers have supported students with high ESL needs in the secondary school setting. The session was lively and spirited, with all teachers reveling in the successful texts produced by the ESL learners. Mary has also produced rigorous, accessible materials for educators. Just as an aside, her work has made a significant impact on my approach to the teaching of writing. Both Susan and Mary were available for a follow-up workshop, where we had to apply what we learned in the sessions to our own contexts. The morning concluded with a panel session, where teachers had an opportunity to ask questions about their particular ESL context.

The afternoon included a practical session designed to meet the needs of low-literacy level students of all ages (or pre-literate, as in the case with some). Sara Bioletti is a new-ish Armidale resident, and divides her working time between a primary school and TAFE.

The local committee had thought of every detail, from the flowers in the lunch room, to signage, to the afternoon sugar-hit. It was so inspiring to be out in the region, see the dedication put into play on a Saturday, and hear teachers from different schools busily organising when to meet up again.

The food was perfect and plentiful. Many resources were available for everyone to peruse or buy, thanks to Bridge Books. They generously provided display copies and catalogues of relevant publications for participants.

On a final note, a huge vote of thanks to Armidale High School, who provided a wonderful venue, and to principal Anne Mately, who welcomed us all so warmly on the day.

Sue Bremner
AN AWARD TO HONOUR THE WORK OF PENNY MCKAY

The Applied Linguistics Association of Australia (ALAA) and the Australian Council of TESOL Associations (ACTA) have proudly launched an appeal for donations to support The Penny McKay Award for Promising Doctoral Research in School-Based Language Development and Curriculum.

This collaborative initiative seeks to honour and advance Penny McKay’s contribution to education. The award will consist of a certificate and cash sum. It will be given annually to a doctoral candidate in an Australian university whose research will benefit the teaching, learning and/or assessment in Australian schools of English as a second/additional language, Standard Australian English as an additional variety, English as a foreign language, languages other than English or Indigenous languages. The precise criteria for the award will be determined by a joint committee of the two associations but will rest broadly on a description of the research project and referee support. The recipient will be expected to submit a paper and attend the conference at which the award is presented.

Funds to support the award are sought from individuals and institutions in Australia and overseas. These funds will be invested securely in a manner agreed by both associations according to the normal procedures governing such funds. The amount of the award will be determined according to the funds raised and reputable financial advice.

Background

Penny McKay PhD (Univ. Qld), MA (Arizona State), B.Ed. (SA, CAE).

As a teacher, consultant, researcher, keynote speaker and professional activist, Penny McKay has been a leader in language education in Australia and internationally. Working collaboratively with educators and researchers in schools, she pioneered an approach to assessing learners’ development in English as an additional language. She was committed to four fundamental principles. First, assessment frameworks should be tied to empirical, classroom-based observations of English language learners of different ages and backgrounds. Second, those frameworks should respect and respond to classroom teachers’ understandings of and insights into their learners. Third, frameworks must be designed to support learners’ language development and to inform teachers in their teaching. These principles are dynamic and generative. They have set a national and an international benchmark for the assessment of second/other language learning by children.
AN AWARD TO HONOUR THE WORK OF PENNY MCKAY

and adults, and can be applied to educational assessment more generally.

Some of Penny’s Publications

- Planning and Teaching Creatively in a Required Curriculum, TESOL, 2006.
- Five Minute Activities for Young Learners (with Jenni Guse), Cambridge University Press, 2007.
- Essential Strategies for Teaching English to Young Learners (with Lynne Cameron), Oxford University Press, forthcoming.

Some Reflections

"All of us approach teaching in different ways. For me, teaching has been, from the beginning, an iterative activity in which I’ve worked with students and educators to search for, try out and disseminate effective teaching practices. I have always sought to observe, ask questions, and find patterns in how English and other languages are learned and taught. My life as a language consultant and researcher has been a stimulating journey of workshops, drafts and feedback seminars with students and colleagues. My colleagues’ questions about what is happening and being trialled in their classrooms has made an invaluable contribution to my work. We have become successful as language educators by working collaboratively and sharing our knowledge and skills like this."

Penny McKay 15th February 2009

“How was wonderful. . . We’d get into the classroom and we’d say, ‘And then this should happen and this should happen’. But she’d keep asking us, ‘What does happen?’ ‘What is happening there?’ ‘What is development?’”

A co-researcher describing Penny’s approach to classroom research, in an interview with Helen Moore, 30 January, 1997.

How to Donate

Cheque or money order payable to: Applied Linguistics Association of Australia – Penny McKay Award.
Send to Dr Honglin Chen, Treasurer ALAA, Faculty of Education, University of Wollongong, NSW 2522 Australia.
Bank transfer to: National Australia Bank
BSB No: 084-502
Account Name: Applied Linguistics Association of Australia – Penny McKay Award
Account No: 831 816 721
Don’t forget to include the following information with the donation so a receipt can be sent to you:
Name:
Mailing address:
Amount donated:
ATESOL (NSW) has donated $500 to this award. Please give generously to honour Penny and to support this invaluable collaborative endeavour.

ONLINE ESL TEACHER TRAINING

Heinle, a part of Cengage, now offers ESL teacher training online. (Cengage is a company that delivers customized learning solutions for universities, instructors, students, libraries, government agencies, corporations, and professionals worldwide.) Courses are taught online with lectures written by leading specialists in the field of ESL/ELT. They provide information that teachers can put to immediate use. The courses are suitable for novice teachers, experienced teaching professionals, and program coordinators and administrators.

Course Overview

- 6-week courses, two lessons per week
- Practical assignments for each lesson
- Moderated discussion board
- 5-question quiz per lesson
- Pre- and post-program assessment
- Certificate of completion

A Selection of Courses available

- An Introduction to Corpora in English Language Teaching by Michael McCarthy, Anne O’Keeffe, and Steve Walsh
- An Introduction to Language Assessment in the K–12 Classroom by Natalie Kuhlman
- An Introduction to Task-based Teaching by David Nunan
- An Introduction to Teaching English to Young Learners by Annie Hughes
- An Introduction to Teaching ESL/EFL by Tom Scovel
- Assessing Language Ability in Young Adults and Adults by Andrew Cohen

Cost: $65 USD per course

For further information and enrolment information go to: http://eltadvantage.ed2go.com/eltadvantage/
The national TESOL association, ACTA, has been involved in preliminary work on the National Curriculum since a national curriculum was first mooted by the previous federal government. In March 2007 I represented ACTA at a meeting of executive representatives and staff of professional teachers’ associations which are involved in teaching English-ETA (English Teachers’ Association), PETA (Primary English Teachers’ Association), and ALEA (Australian Literacy Educators’ Association). We had gathered to discuss the approach teachers of English should take toward the proposed national curriculum. How many representatives should we expect or demand at a committee to work on a national curriculum? At that stage, our group was hoping that English teachers should be permitted at least one representative. Who should represent us? Should it be someone from ETA? Or PETA? Of course, it was not expected that ACTA, being a small association, could represent the interests of ESL/EAL students directly. In early 2007 it was still possible for one person at the meeting of English teachers to argue that we should resist the move to a national curriculum, that we should fight for state autonomy!

The National Curriculum Board juggernaut has moved swiftly since early 2007, releasing its National Curriculum Shaping Papers in May. The consultation process has been more inclusive than many expected, and ACTA found that it had many opportunities to represent the needs of ESL/EAL students directly. I have not had any further involvement in development of the National Curriculum, but I’ve followed with great interest the work of other members of TESOL organizations, fellow members of ACTA. Hearing about their work reminds me how hard, consistently and patiently, lobbyists (our TESOL representatives) must work to achieve any outcomes at all for our ESL/EAL students. It is a good time to look at what our dedicated TESOL practitioners have achieved and to reflect on how important it has been for TESOL practitioners to have been able to contribute directly to the process rather than through an “English” intermediary, however well-meaning. For an insider’s view on the lobbying process and information on how her contribution and that of other ACTA representatives have informed the Shaping Papers, I am indebted to Debra Ives, Vice-president of VATME (Victorian Association of TESOL and Multicultural Education).

ACTA was concerned that National Curriculum writers should explicitly consider the distinctive educational needs of students who are still actively acquiring the English of school. As well as preparing written submissions, ACTA was represented at consultations in different parts of the country by members of state TESOL organizations including ATESOL councilors Kathy Rushton and Sue Bremner: At a meeting of an equity and diversity workshop at a NCB forum in Melbourne in early 2009, Debra Ives found that “most of the stakeholders in my equity and diversity workshop could not hear a discussion about language learning needs. There was a strong tendency to slip into generalized notions of ethnicity and culture and the position taken was that ESL students are just one of many diverse groups of learners. Explicit discussion about equity principles in respect to their distinctive learning pathways was therefore not deemed necessary.”

Debra spoke to Rod Randall, General Manager of the NCB to ask why ESL students did not appear to be on the NCB’s agenda. She recalled,

“Rod Randall noted that it is recognized that there is a period of time in which ESL students cannot access the mainstream curriculum. He stated that these learners sit outside the brief of the NCB as do the strategies that are needed to bridge any students who cannot access the mainstream curriculum from where they are now to the point were they can work at the salient level of the mainstream curriculum. It is recognized that the states and territories have their own ways of doing this and that will remain their responsibility. It is therefore expected that they will continue to use existing ESL or EAL/D curricula.”

So the state education departments retain responsibility for developing curricula which meet the needs of ESL/EAL/D students. The contribution of ACTA representatives may be regarded as subtle by people who are not TESOL practitioners but the implications are clear to ESL teachers. ESL students are explicitly acknowledged in the following statement in the Shape of the Australian Curriculum under Curriculum content: Knowledge, understanding and skills.

The national curriculum will try to maximise the opportunities for all students to realise their potential. This will be enhanced through material and professional learning support provided to teachers to help them recognise and build on the learning that each child brings to school. For students for whom English is not their first language, for example, this support should include material and advice that best helps them to master the language demands of school subjects.
ACTA representatives also helped refine the section on “Intercultural understanding” which was called cultural sensitivity in the Feb 2009 draft.

**Intercultural understanding** enables students to respect and appreciate their own and others’ cultures, and to work and communicate with those from different cultures and backgrounds. It includes appreciation of the special place of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures; respect for Australia’s multicultural composition; communicating and working in harmony with others within and across cultures, especially in relation to cultures and countries of the Asia-Pacific; and appreciation of difference and diversity.

One significant achievement of our ACTA lobbyists is that the national curriculum documents acknowledge that the official language of instruction in Australia is Standard Australian English. This can be seen in 3.1 and 4.1

### 3.1 Aims of the English Curriculum

The national English curriculum aims to develop, students’ knowledge of language and literature and to consolidate and expand their literacy skills. More specifically it aims to support students to:

- understand how Standard Australian English works in its spoken and written forms and in combination with other non-linguistic forms of communication
- learn Standard Australian English to help sustain and advance social cohesion in our linguistically and culturally complex country
- respect the varieties of English and their influence on Standard Australian English

### 4.1 English

In this paper, English refers to Standard Australian English, the variety of spoken and written English language in Australia used in more formal settings. While it is always dynamic and evolving, it is recognised as the ‘common language’ of Australians.

The extract below is the section of the shaping paper for the National English curriculum which makes direct reference to ESL/EAL students.

### 6.1 Equity and opportunity

…Ensuring that every student develops the knowledge, skills and understanding in English that enables them to actively participate in the broader community will require consideration of how to best meet the needs of every student.

Present-day Australia is a nation in which over 60 Indigenous languages are spoken, along with over 100 ‘community’ or migrant languages. These students bring into Australian schools different cultural conceptions of language and a variety of languages that differ dramatically in their oral and written conventions, in their ideas about what language is, how it works, how it is written, and how it contributes to the identities, experiences, and growing capabilities of individuals and to the cohesion of communities.

Students who are learning English as an additional language or dialect (EAL/D) make up about one-quarter of the Australian school population. This includes children of recent or settled migrants, refugees, rural, remote and urban Aboriginal students, and increasingly, international students. These students may have little or no English at all. These students may be illiterate in their first language, speak a dialect of English or speak everyday English but lack proficiency in the language of schooling. The national English curriculum must acknowledge their diverse backgrounds and life experiences, and how their language experiences provide a building block to develop their skills in Standard Australian English.…

ACTA believed that a statement such as the one above would appear in the shaping papers for all other subjects-maths, science, history but unfortunately, this is not the case.

Debra Ives says, “There is no mention of EAL/D scales in the section around achievement standards – this is disappointing because the delegation (Professor Chris Davison, Helen Moore, Dr Michael Michell, Misty Adoniou) that met with Rob Randall in Sydney on March 9 believed that this had been taken on board. There is however an action in relation to assessment in the English consultation report see 4.11 and a separate achievement standards paper is due out any day now.”


A vote of thanks is due to ACTA and our colleagues in the TESOL profession who have represented the needs of ESL/EAL students with great determination in development of the National Curriculum and who have achieved valuable outcomes.

Helen Fong
Sadness can be a debilitating emotion, particularly for young people from refugee backgrounds. It can impair a student’s ability to learn, as well as deter them from integrating into wider society.

Milperra State High School in Brisbane is taking a unique approach to dealing with such sadness. A ground-breaking arts and music therapy initiative is giving refugee students the chance to express their grief in a safe and socially acceptable way.

As Adele Rice explains, music and arts therapy has been used in other educational settings in Australia, such as special education. “But it hadn’t been used before in trying to resolve issues around grief and loss in refugee adolescents,” she says.

The principal of the public school for newly arrived immigrant and refugee students became concerned several years ago that some students from war-affected regions, particularly in Africa, had unresolved issues around grief. She also noticed some of those young people lacked resilience skills and would resort to aggressive or impulsive behaviour or were unable to concentrate in class.

“They could have had issues related to post-traumatic stress. Some of those symptoms impact on their learning or are barriers to their learning,” she says.

Around the same time, Jane Griffin, a former ESL teacher at Milperra State High School, was volunteering as an art teacher while she completed a fine arts degree. She felt she was unprepared to deal with some of the emotional issues manifested in students’ work. “I found the students were drawing things I didn’t really know how to respond to, because they were drawing scenes from wars,” Griffin says.

She decided to undertake a Master of Mental Health in arts therapy at the University of Queensland (UQ) and approached Rice about creating an arts and music therapy program. In 2005, the Home of Expressive Arts in Learning (HEAL) program was launched after they received a grant from UQ to determine whether such therapy would benefit refugee students. “It did have a positive effect. It can be done one-on-one or in small groups very effectively,” Rice says.

Working with a therapist, students use figurines, paint, musical instruments and other artistic mediums to work through some of their emotional issues and build resilience skills. “Our role isn’t to actually teach anything or push anything onto the kids. It’s to help them understand where they’ve been and where they’re heading,” Griffin says.

The HEAL centre received funding to erect a demountable building the size of a large classroom and two offices. It now includes a HEAL coordinator and a qualified art therapist and music therapist.

Teachers can send students to the centre’s “relaxing” area if they become upset or are difficult to manage behaviourally in class, Griffin says.

“It’s incredibly successful. The feedback we get from teachers is very pleasing. They see a real difference from the kids, in terms of their behaviour and attitude,” she says.

Despite its success, the HEAL centre struggles for funding and is looking for more sustainable funding this year. Griffin is hopeful the initiative will be adopted by other schools to help students experiencing difficulties to get the most out of their schooling.

“They have a lot to offer, sometimes it’s just a matter of helping,” she says.

For permission to reproduce this article which first appeared in the May 2009 edition of “Australian Teacher Magazine” we thank “Australian Teacher Magazine”.

STUDENTS BENEFIT FROM HEALING HAND
Teaching and Learning Languages: A Guide is a new resource that has recently been provided to all Australian schools, as well as to many individuals and groups involved in languages education. The Guide, by Angela Scarino and Anthony Liddicoat, is designed to promote reflection on language education, including languages programs, and the roles and pedagogical approaches of language teachers. It can be used by school leaders, policy makers, curriculum consultants and the wider community as a tool to support the ongoing development, evaluation and renewal of languages programs in schools.

The Guide recognises that language learning needs to take into account the importance of language and culture to people's everyday lives. It therefore promotes languages teaching with consideration given to two complementary goals: students' development of their sociocultural, experiential identities on the one hand, and on the other, their communicative repertoires in the target language.

The Guide builds on national collaborative research and development work undertaken with funding from the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations. This research was completed under the auspices of the National Statement for Languages Education in Australian Schools and the National Plan for Languages and Education in Australian Schools 2005-2008, developed by the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA).

It also draws upon the results of two major professional learning projects, the Intercultural Language Teaching and Learning in Practice Project (ILTLP) and the Professional Standards Project (web-based materials that provide online, practical examples of how the principles and ideas covered can be incorporated into languages education to improve student learning).

Some of the concepts and features of contemporary languages teaching and learning captured in the Guide are as follows:

**The notion of ‘stance’**

Teachers need to continuously analyse their ‘stance’: the personal and professional positions or ideologies, such as political or cultural perspectives, they apply to both their work as teachers and their own learning. These fundamental perspectives shape their teaching programs, pedagogical approaches, and assessment practices. The Guide aims to develop teachers' teaching identities and self-understanding, and their awareness of how their personal perspectives affect students' learning. This knowledge and awareness is an essential step in embracing pedagogical growth.

**Languages education to develop intercultural capability**

Languages teachers must have a sophisticated understanding of the increasing complexity of the context and purpose of language and language use, and the way in which their teaching must evolve as a result. Teachers must recognise that today's learners are increasingly exposed to diverse languages and cultures, and that to engage competently across global social, cultural and professional networks they need to develop intercultural capability, which is the capacity to negotiate and mediate understanding across diverse linguistic and sociocultural contexts.

**The nature of language**

Languages are tied to users' culture and identity. The learning and teaching of languages is a linguistic, social and cultural process. In learning to use an additional language, learners need to be exposed to language in a way that goes beyond it being seen as a code. They need to be exposed to language as a social practice. In this context, learners participate in shared meaning-making and come to understand the reciprocal process of mutual interpretation in communication. Language, culture, and identity are intertwined, and all language users and learners will bring their own culture and identity to their communicative interactions. Teachers and learners must therefore be aware of how language use involves the bridging or negotiation of meaning: by learning another language, students enter into an additional linguistic and cultural system, that is, another system of viewing, understanding and negotiating the world.

**The diversity of learners and their life-worlds**

Sociocultural perspectives of learning see learning not in terms of fixed ability, but in capability, or students' potential. The diverse experiences, social perspectives, and values of learners affect how they experience and engage with the world. As a result, learners' life-worlds, the sum of these experiences, are central to how and why they learn. Teachers need to understand the social and cultural diversity of their students, and how students' culturally shaped identity, or intraculturality, influences learning. To help students develop as language learners and users, notions of meaning, experience, culture, and language need to be addressed in terms of these evolving identities.
Improving languages education

Changing pedagogies

Pedagogical approaches to language teaching are constantly changing and evolving, and teachers need to take into account social and technological developments. Communication technologies can facilitate global interactions between language users, providing opportunities for language use and participation in the target language’s communities. It is essential that language learners be provided with frequent and varied opportunities for interaction, and that these opportunities are meaningful and ongoing. Promoting purposeful interaction extends students’ learning and requires them to use language in ways that move beyond the superficial. Through language use in interaction learners develop the capability to engage in instances of increasingly complex meaning-making and interpretation.

Developing programs for learning languages

Language programs need to be flexible in order to take into account the diverse life-worlds of learners, and should encourage genuine learning. Teachers should consider the context of learning when developing a language program, and should take into account the linguistic and cultural backgrounds of learners. Their planning should include both short-term and longer-term learning goals. Spontaneity is a prominent feature of the language learning classroom, and requires that teachers be prepared for divergences from planned learning sequences. In developing language programs teachers need to interweave content and plan connections and interactions, make use of engaging, contemporary resources and technologies, and apply diverse assessment and evaluation methods to obtain evidence of students’ learning.

Ultimately, the Guide promotes the development of a learning culture for teaching and learning languages that involves understanding teachers and students and the identities and experiences that inform their approaches, as well as promoting intercultural interaction, exchange and sensitivity.

Angela Scarino is Associate Professor and Director, Research Centre for Languages and Cultures, University of South Australia


In 2003, 23 year old Rachel Corrie left her American hometown and went to Palestine as a part of peaceful demonstrations in the Gaza Strip against the demolition of civilian homes by the Israeli Defence Forces. In March that year she was killed by an IDF bulldozer. My Name is Rachel Corrie is the story of one individual’s journey in the global struggle for sense and justice. Through Rachel’s extraordinary journals, emails and writings we are offered a deeply personal insight into the core of another human being.

The Seymour Centre presents a return Sydney season of this powerful and controversial play celebrating a young woman’s moral strength and passionate mind.

For further information go to: www.seymourcentre.com.au
Developing Literacy Through Science in Middle School

Sudheshini Ekanayake and Jill Yates

Student Description

A major issue faced by many ESL Science teachers is that the Queensland 8-10 Science syllabus presumes all students are proficient in English and have achieved certain scientific content objectives by a certain stage. It does not successfully cater for students from a refugee or low academic background who would not have been exposed to most science concepts in the Australian education system, and whose assessment needs may differ to those of other students.

The class that this work program is directed at consists of such students, of both genders, ranging in age from 13 to 15 years old. They display weak literacy and numeracy skills and limited oral and written expression despite having strong basic interpersonal skills. They are unlikely to become interested in scientific careers, but through this science program will obtain the language, general knowledge and skills that are transferable to other subject areas and also their daily lives.

Rationale

The rationale behind our choice of program for these low literacy, low academic background students was divided into three areas. There was a need to cover certain scientific content, language and skills.

a. Content

Considering the background of these students, it was unlikely that they would become involved in scientific careers, at least not in the immediate future. Therefore the scientific concepts chosen were those needed to develop independent and responsible citizens in three areas: family life, work life and community life. Concepts chosen included: a knowledge of human body systems, nutrition, diseases, safety in the home and at work, etc.

b. Language

With their strong interpersonal skills, but limited oral and written expression, (i.e. limited BICS - Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills), together with low numeracy skills, these students needed language that would help them to function successfully in the three areas, family life, work life and community life. Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) was not considered to be a high priority for these students considering their immediate future pathway. Therefore, the formal language of science was only introduced where necessary to teach a particular concept.

c. Skills

To become independent responsible citizens in a society it was important that these students were able to:

• follow instructions
• use equipment safely
• handle and manipulate equipment
• organise themselves and their work
• work successfully in a team
• think logically about a problem.

The Work Program

The work program is arranged in a tabular format to include the unit plan, language, skills, resources and assessment items for each term. Ideally each topic is started by assessing prior knowledge. When doing so, I found that activities such as brainstorms and Pictionary engaged students more than inquiry based introductions, as they had not yet developed the skills to be autonomous learners.

Term 1 covers a critical topic – safety rules in the workplace. Students start by using subject-specific vocabulary (such as "chemicals") to complete oral activities on equipment names, what to do in emergency situations and identifying inappropriate behaviour in the lab. Once orally confident, students are encouraged to write their verbal sentences as statements. This progresses into describing objects, with practical activities to investigate vocabulary for classification, composition, function, size, texture and shape of objects. The ultimate goal is for students, by answering questions orally and then following a written model, to write a paragraph describing each object – a skill transferable to a variety of daily scenarios.

The second half of Term 1 focuses on using measuring equipment (such as tape measures, pH indicators and balances) in the context of planting potatoes. Students grow their own potato plants as part of the summative assessment, and in the process are taught life skills such as how to manipulate equipment and write data in a report booklet. Lessons also cover fair tests, fertiliser use, reading ingredient labels and following instructions (using imperative verbs).

With practical group activities, students work best when given roles to encourage collaborative learning (e.g. timekeeper, recorder), along with a list of phrases that each role-player is allowed to use. Usually each student repeats their role for at least two experiments. This takes
Developing Literacy Through Science in Middle School

practice, but with time students become familiar with the kind of social language needed not only in science, but in any situation requiring group collaboration.

In Term 2, the aim is to develop an understanding of living organisms, including ourselves, and living a healthy lifestyle. Topics range from the use of bacteria in making yoghurt, to forming a balanced diet. Lessons elaborate on language obtained in Term 1 (e.g. classification) and involve deconstruction of descriptive texts, interpretation of tables and drawing graphs. The summative assessment includes a multiple-choice mid-term exam and a lifestyle planner as a project.

The topic in Term 3 is disease - chosen because many ESL students have difficulty describing their illnesses and yet are often the spokespeople for other members of the family. It is divided into 2-3 week sections where students investigate a different body system in each section, along with the vocabulary and syntax required in describing disease symptoms and asking for medication. As such, the sections are repetitive for emphasis, and students are assessed in an oral final exam.

The final term of the program, Term 4, covers quite a variety of behavioural and environmental topics required for settlement in Australian culture, including personal hygiene, recycling, electrical safety and water conservation. Also taught is the interpretation of scientific concepts in the media to develop an educated opinion. The term focuses on encouraging students to become responsible members of Australian society. If by this stage students are independent enough, there is the option for them to choose from a list of summative assessment tasks depending on their abilities. For example, students preferring kinaesthetic activities might decide to complete a recycling project, whereas visual learners could create an environmental poster.

In summary, the work program is in draft form, with material still being developed. Overall, classes responded best to visuals (such as flowcharts and concept maps), kinaesthetic activities (such as creating their own lifestyle planners) and oral activities (such as role-playing games).

### Year 9 ESL Modified Science Work Program – 2008

#### Term 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TITLE</th>
<th>UNIT PLAN</th>
<th>LANGUAGE</th>
<th>SKILLS</th>
<th>RESOURCES</th>
<th>ASSESSMENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Science Skills (2 weeks) | • Safety rules  
• Describing objects (composition, size, shape, colour, texture, flexibility)  
• Comparing objects  
• Labelling measuring equipment and describing functions | • Oral skills (functions)  
• Present continuous  
• Comparing classified objects (and so is, but)  
• Functions (this is called, it is used to measure)  
• Vocabulary (incl. length vs. height)  
• Asking/answering questions | • Thinking logically  
• Using science equipment safely | • Worksheets | FORMATIVE  
• Homework  
SUMMATIVE  
• Weekly quizzes  
• Mid-term practical exam on measurement  
• Potted plant project |
### Measurement in the Garden (7 weeks)

**UNIT PLAN**
- Safety in the garden
- Recognising common plants
- Planning fair tests for fertiliser use
- Planting potatoes (fertilisers, acidity, photosynthesis)
- Measuring height of plants, mass, temperature and pH of soil, mass of potatoes, volume of water and length of leaves
- Converting length, mass and volume units
- Reading tables and labels (e.g. medicine bottles)
- Reading and adapting cooking recipes
- Drawing line graphs showing plant growth

**LANGUAGE**
- Asking/answering questions
- Writing experimental reports
- Grammar (imperative verbs, present tense)

**SKILLS**
- Using rulers, weighing scales, pH scales and graduated containers correctly
- Recording results
- Measuring and converting quantities
- Planting potatoes efficiently
- Using acidic, alkaline and neutral fertilisers responsibly
- Averaging
- Differentiating between length and height

**RESOURCES**
- Worksheets

**ASSESSMENT**
- Formative
  - Homework
- Summative
  - Weekly quizzes
  - Mid-term practical exam on measurement
  - Potted plant project
## Developing Literacy Through Science in Middle School

### Year 9 ESL Modified Science Work Program – 2008
### Term 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TITLE</th>
<th>UNIT PLAN</th>
<th>LANGUAGE</th>
<th>SKILLS</th>
<th>RESOURCES</th>
<th>ASSESSMENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **5 Kingdoms** (3 weeks) | • The 5 kingdoms  
• Bacteria – importance in food, medicine and research, role in disease  
• Bacteria vs. Viruses  
• Making yoghurt  
• Why milk goes sour  
• Fungi – importance in food, role in disease (infections) and medicine (antibiotics)  
• Baking bread  
• Food chains | • Classifying  
• Contrasting  
• Infinitive verbs  
• Imperative verbs  
• Grammar grid  
• Text deconstruction (Descriptive Report Genre) (verb agreement, exemplifying, comparing/contrasting)  
• Writing science reports  
• Partial Paragraphs | • Using a key  
• Reading procedures  
• Making yoghurt  
• Using lab equipment  
• Using a microscope  
• Baking bread  
• Drawing flowcharts  
• Measuring quantities | • Worksheets  
• Experiment: Science For Everyone p69 – ‘Are there living things in cows’ milk?’  
• Experiment: 101 Cool Science Experiments p138 – ‘Yeast feast’  
• Video: The Five Kingdom Classification VHS 574.FIV  
• Online Game: Classifying Critters www.hhmi.org/coolscience/critters  
• Animation: How Big Are Bacteria? www.cellsalive.com/howbig.htm | **FORMATIVE**  
• Homework  
**SUMMATIVE**  
• Mid-term exam (multiple choice)  
• Lifestyle planner  
• Weekly quizzes |

| Food Studies (6 weeks) | • Defining chemical energy (sun = source of all energy)  
• Interpreting food pyramid  
• Sources, functions, RDI and digestion of fibre, carbohydrates, starch, proteins, fats and vitamins & minerals  
• Identifying the above in substances in the lab  
• Fruits and vegetables – importance, vitamins obtained, cooking methods  
• Flavouring, preservatives, additives  
• The importance of exercise  
• Energy flow in the body  
• Major muscle groups  
• Forming a balanced diet | • Defining  
• Comparing (most, least, more than, less than)  
• Vocabulary  
• Present tense (generalisation)  
• Cloze activities  
• Pronunciation  
• Oral skills – jigsaw activity with expert groups  
• Writing science reports | • Writing definitions  
• Taking notes  
• Reading tables and graphs  
• Reading and interpreting labels on groceries  
• Arranging the food pyramid  
• Creating a lifestyle planner (food + exercise)  
• Predicting  
• Inferring  
• Using flash cards to recall sources of vitamins  
• Using equipment | • Worksheets  
• Experiment: 101 Cool Science Experiments p146 – ‘Iron for breakfast’  
• Online Game: Food Pyramid Game http://www.readtofeed.org/for_kids/fun_and_games/food_pyramid/ |
## Developing Literacy Through Science in Middle School

### Year 9 ESL Modified Science Work Program – 2008

**Term 3**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>TITLE</th>
<th>UNIT PLAN</th>
<th>LANGUAGE</th>
<th>SKILLS</th>
<th>RESOURCES</th>
<th>ASSESSMENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Diseases – Respiration** (2 weeks) | • Comparison of respiration and photosynthesis  
• Labelling the human respiratory system  
• Discussing how breathing occurs, function of mucus  
• Common respiratory diseases and symptoms: cold, influenza, lung cancer, emphysema, allergies  
• Medication for above, side effects | • Comparing  
• Using sequence words (firstly, secondly)  
• Unscrambling procedures  
• Oral skills – describing symptoms, asking for medication  
• Modal verbs (could, should, may be)  
• Present continuous  
• Vocabulary (sneezing, coughing) | • Labelling diagrams  
• Writing descriptions  
• Expanding notes  
• Oral descriptions  
• Asking questions | • Worksheets  
• Experiment: 101 Cool Science Experiments p152 – ‘Balloon Lung’ | **FORMATIVE**  
• Homework  
**SUMMATIVE**  
• Weekly quizzes  
• Oral exam  
• Four topic tests (short answer, multiple choice) |
| **Diseases – Digestion and Excretion** (3 weeks) | • Labelling the human digestive and excretory systems  
• Discussing digestion and excretion  
• Common diseases and symptoms: food poisoning, heartburn, acidity, ulcers, bowel cancers, tapeworms, kidney and liver failure  
• Medication for above, side effects | • Using sequence words (firstly, secondly)  
• Unscrambling procedures  
• Oral skills – describing symptoms, asking for medication  
• Modal verbs (could, should, may be)  
• Present continuous  
• Vocabulary (cramping, burping, vomiting, burning) | • Labelling diagrams  
• Writing descriptions  
• Expanding notes  
• Oral descriptions  
• Asking questions | • Worksheets |
Developing Literacy Through Science in Middle School

Year 9 ESL Modified Science Work Program – 2008
Term 3 continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TITLE</th>
<th>UNIT PLAN</th>
<th>LANGUAGE</th>
<th>SKILLS</th>
<th>RESOURCES</th>
<th>ASSESSMENT</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Diseases – Circulation</td>
<td>• Labelling the human circulatory system</td>
<td>• Using sequence words (firstly, secondly)</td>
<td>• Measuring pulse</td>
<td>• Worksheets</td>
<td>FORMATIVE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2 weeks)</td>
<td>• Measuring pulse</td>
<td>• Unscrambling procedures</td>
<td>• Labelling diagrams</td>
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<td>• Homework</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Discussing circulation</td>
<td>• Oral skills – describing symptoms, asking for medication</td>
<td>• Writing descriptions</td>
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<td>SUMMATIVE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Blood types</td>
<td>• Modal verbs (could, should, may be)</td>
<td>• Expanding notes</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Weekly quizzes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Common diseases and symptoms: high cholesterol (sat/unsat fats), anaemia, heart disease, strokes</td>
<td>• Present continuous</td>
<td>• Oral descriptions</td>
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<td>• Oral exam</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Medication for above, side effects</td>
<td>• Vocabulary (aching, bleeding, drowsiness)</td>
<td>• Asking questions</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Four topic tests</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(short answer, multiple choice)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Diseases – Reproduction</td>
<td>• Labelling the human reproduction system</td>
<td>• Using sequence words (firstly, secondly)</td>
<td>• Labelling diagrams</td>
<td>• Worksheets</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>(2 weeks)</td>
<td>• Changes during puberty</td>
<td>• Unscrambling procedures</td>
<td>• Writing descriptions</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Hygiene (especially in public toilets)</td>
<td>• Oral skills – describing symptoms, asking for medication</td>
<td>• Expanding notes</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Understanding the menstrual cycle</td>
<td>• Modal verbs (could, should, may be)</td>
<td>• Oral descriptions</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Contraception types</td>
<td>• Present continuous</td>
<td>• Asking questions</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Common diseases and symptoms: hormonal imbalance, endometriosis, HIV, prostrate cancer, HPV, UT infections</td>
<td>• Vocabulary (bleeding, stinging, aching, itching)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Medication for above, side effects</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Developing Literacy Through Science in Middle School

## Year 9 ESL Modified Science Work Program – 2008

**Term 4**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TITLE</th>
<th>UNIT PLAN</th>
<th>LANGUAGE</th>
<th>SKILLS</th>
<th>RESOURCES</th>
<th>ASSESSMENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Living Responsibly</td>
<td>(3 weeks)</td>
<td>• Personal hygiene</td>
<td>• Making responsible decisions</td>
<td>• Experiment: Washing Up (Effect of detergents on grease)</td>
<td>FORMATIVE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Consequences of bad hygiene: bacteria, infections, sores, illnesses</td>
<td>• Taking notes</td>
<td>• Experiments: <em>Science For Everyone</em> p18 – ‘Which is the better insulator of heat: glass or copper?’ p19 – ‘Is plastic foam a good insulator?’ p37 – ‘Does electricity flow through all materials?’ p39 – ‘How does a fuse work?’</td>
<td>• Homework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Interpreting scientific concepts in the media</td>
<td>• Answering questions</td>
<td>• Experiment: <em>The Know How Book of Experiments</em> p23 – ‘Slipping and gripping’</td>
<td>SUMMATIVE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Insulators and conductors – choosing appropriate materials (nickel, copper; tin, plastic, glass...)</td>
<td>• Forming an opinion</td>
<td>• Experiments: <em>Science For Everyone</em> p44 – ‘Will gas burn without air?’</td>
<td>• Weekly quizzes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Electrical safety</td>
<td>• Internet research and word processing</td>
<td>• Excursion to “Reverse Garbage” warehouse in West End</td>
<td>• End of term exam (short answer; multiple choice)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Safety in the home (trip switches, earth wires, multi-plugs)</td>
<td>• Interpreting text</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Preferred Assessment (individual or groups):</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Conductors, e.g. water</td>
<td>• Reading labels</td>
<td></td>
<td>– Oral presentation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Safety outdoors</td>
<td>• Using electrical equipment safely</td>
<td></td>
<td>– Environment poster</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Putting out electric fires</td>
<td>• Pinpointing hazards</td>
<td></td>
<td>– Pamphlet</td>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>– Recycled project</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Preserving the Environment  | (6 weeks)                                                                 | • Preserving the environment (importance, harmful practices, overpopulation, global resource distribution, pollution) | • Vocabularies (conserving, overpopulation, pollution, recycling)      | • Video: *Futurama - Global Warming* http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NS6UFhzm5c | FORMATIVE                                                                 |
|                            |                                                                            | • Conserving water (reservoirs in SE QLD, weather conditions, water cycle, positive practices)                   | • Cause and effect                                                     | • Animation: *EPA – The Greenhouse Effect* http://www.epa.gov/climatechange/kids/greenhouse.htm | SUMMATIVE                                                                 |
|                            |                                                                            | • Recycling – reducing waste                                            | • Cloze activities                                                      | • Experiment: *Psychadelic Water (Convection currents)*                  | • Weekly quizzes                                                          |
|                            |                                                                            | • Effect of temperature on particles (cold vs. hot water)               | • Unscreaming sentences                                                | • Handouts: *Waterforever initiative, Recycling* (Brisbane CCC)            | • End of term exam (short answer; multiple choice)                        |
|                            |                                                                            | • Greenhouse effect                                                     | • Pronunciation                                                        | • Experiments: *Science For Everyone* p44 – ‘Will gas burn without air?’ | • Preferred Assessment (individual or groups):                              |
|                            |                                                                            |                                                                         | • Argument with modal verbs (should, must)                             | • Excursion to “Reverse Garbage” warehouse in West End                    | – Oral presentation                                                        |
|                            |                                                                            |                                                                         | • Oral skills – surveys                                                |                                                                           | – Environment poster                                                      |
|                            |                                                                            |                                                                         | • Future tense                                                         |                                                                           | – Pamphlet                                                                 |
|                            |                                                                            |                                                                         |                                                                        |                                                                           | – Recycled project                                                       |
Developing Literacy Through Science in Middle School

Course Resources

Books
- Write It Right Project – Food and Digestion (1993), Disadvantaged Schools Program, Met East Region.
- Primary Science Sourcebook – Year 6 (1982), Dept of Education Queensland.

Videos
- The Five Kingdom Classification. Video Education Australia.

Describing Objects

1. The sentences below have been jumbled up. Write them correctly.

1. This / a funnel. / is
2. it / is / conical. / Its / made of / shape / is / and / plastic.
3. does / not / graduations. / It / have
4. used for / It / separating mixtures. / is
5. tall. / about / is / 15cm / It
6. chalk. / This / a piece / is / of
7. Its / shape / cylindrical. / is / and / made of / it / gypsum / is
8. smooth / is / and / rigid. / It
9. about / long. / It / 8cm / is
10. It / used for / on the blackboard. / is / writing

2. Draw lines to match the adjective describing shape with the picture showing that shape.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Shape</th>
<th>Drawing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cylindrical</td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Cylindrical" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conical</td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Conical" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rectangular</td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Rectangular" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long and thin</td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Long and thin" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spherical</td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Spherical" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pyramidal</td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Pyramidal" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cubic</td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Cubic" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Triangular</td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Triangular" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Circular</td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Circular" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wavy</td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Wavy" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Square</td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Square" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Odd-shaped</td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Odd-shaped" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oval-shaped</td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Oval-shaped" /></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Developing Literacy Through Science in Middle School

Experiment: Heating Up Water

Aim: To see which container will allow water to heat up the fastest.

Apparatus:
- Four different containers (glass, foam, metal, metal painted black)
- Measuring cylinder
- Thermometer

Method:
1. Get into groups of three: a reporter, recorder and timer.
2. Take four different containers for your group.
3. Use a measuring cylinder to pour exactly 50ml of water into each of the containers.
4. Take the containers outside into the sunlight and put a thermometer into each container. Measure the temperature at the start.
5. Record the temperature in each container every minute for 10 minutes.
6. Fill out the table in the results for each container.
7. Draw a graph of your results below.

Results:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Temperature (°C)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Time (min)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glass Beaker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foam Cup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metal Tin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metal Tin (black)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At start</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Reading a Recipe – 1

A verb is a word showing an action. When we give instructions, we use imperative verbs such as ‘put’ and ‘find’. In Science reports and recipes in cookbooks, we use these verbs in the Method section to tell us what to do.

1. What is a verb?
2. When do we use imperative verbs?
3. Which section of a recipe contains imperative verbs?
4. The recipe below explains how to fry an egg, but the sentences are jumbled up. Write the sentences correctly. The first one has been done for you.

1. the frying pan / Heat / for 1 minute.
   Heat the frying pan for 1 minute.
2. a dab /Melt / of butter / in the pan.
3. spread. / the butter / gently / the pan / to let / Twirl
4. the egg / into the frying pan. / carefully / Crack
5. over the egg. / some salt / Sprinkle / and pepper
6. for 2 minutes. / the egg cook / Let
7. the egg over. / Using a spatula, / gently / flip
8. remove / from the heat. / for 1 more minute / the egg / the pan / and then / Cook
9. off / the heat. / Turn
10. Serve / buttered / on a plate / the egg / with / toast.

5. Read the recipe above again and underline the imperative verb in each sentence.

Editor’s note:

We thank Sudheshini Ekanayake and Jill Yates for sharing this article which first appeared in the June 2008 newsletter of QATESOL (our Queensland counterpart). While there may be differences in the NSW curriculum this work program presents many great ideas for teaching English through science.

Sudheshini, B.Sc., Grad. Dip. Ed., Grad. Cert. TESOL tutored mainstream students in Maths and Science from 2001 until her teaching career began. She has been teaching Maths, Science, SOSE and Computer Literacy in the ESL Unit at MacGregor State High school (an IEC) since April 2007. While in this Unit, she has developed Science and Computer Literacy work programs targeting refugee students with limited skills and language competencies. In her career thus far, she has presented two professional development workshops to Maths and Science ESL teachers from around Queensland.

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