Six Days in a Refugee Camp

From our correspondent on the Thai Burmese border

Headmaster Oo Min reassures me: “You can’t get lost in the camp. There is a fence all around”. I am not convinced – every bamboo house, every muddy street and alley way looks the same. There are no street names or signs, no maps to follow. I don’t speak any of the local languages and most of my personal resources and skills are irrelevant here. I realise this is culture shock.

I am in refugee Camp X, one of the smallest camps on the Thai Burma border. It is about an hour and a half drive from the nearest small town through mountains and valleys along a potholed road. Though almost 16,000 people live here, Camp X does not appear on a map.

It is the size of Muswellbrook in NSW, built almost entirely of bamboo. Houses, schools, churches, mosque, hospital, community centres are all built of bamboo with roofs of plaited leaves, occasionally supported by tin sheets. The most permanent structure apart from the Camp Commander’s office is the imposing gate at the entrance of the Camp. It has a large sign in Thai and also includes the English words ‘temporary shelter’. But Camp X has been here since 1999, home to refugees and migrants who represent the complex mix of ethnic groups in Burma, each with its own language, script and culture: Burmese, Kachins, Chins, Mons, Shan and Karen from neighbouring Karen State, the dominant group.

Camp X, like most refugee camps around the world, is run along military lines. Thai soldiers patrol the camp and monitor arrivals and departures but day-to-day governance is carried out by a camp committee of residents, leaders responsible for their particular section. I sign in with my passport and report to the Commander on departure. I am told it is most unusual for foreigners to be allowed to stay in camp. I have special permission because I am to mentor teachers and my headmaster is to be responsible for my conduct and safety. The whole process is very forbidding.

I live in Section 1 in the compound of a post 10 school (equivalent to NSW Year 11–12). I sleep upstairs cocooned in a blue mosquito net on the floor in a classroom reached by a bamboo ladder. I wash by throwing cold water with a scoop over myself from a bucket in the corner of the communal wash house. I’m grateful that there is a wash house, even if it’s a short walk up a muddy slope; I don’t have to wash like many others in the open at the public tap.

It is rainy season. Sometimes it sprinkles, other times it pours down in torrents drumming on the tin sheets, creating huge puddles, gushing streams, muddy swamps or ankle deep bogs. There are no permanent roads, just dirt tracks and mud everywhere. Each day I wend my way to class from one school to another along a narrow track dodging people carrying loads, navigating streams, balancing along makeshift bamboo bridges, choosing between walking through a swamp or risk falling into a bog. At night I trek to the toilet wearing head torch, rain poncho and gumboots and hope no one sees me! I am often wet and can’t keep clean. There is a spatter of mud over all my clothes. I am amazed at how clean the students are at my schools.

...continued page 8
Welcome to the Summer edition of the ATESOL NSW Newsletter

At this time of year many of us have been busy with exam marking, report writing and finishing up our teaching programs for 2010. It’s a time for reflection and evaluation – and it won’t be long before we’re making resolutions for next year, promising ourselves all sorts of improvements at home and at work. The personal and professional choices we are able to make reflect the freedom we enjoy as citizens of a democratic nation, a freedom that is often taken for granted. Our lead article about life in a refugee camp is a reminder about the effects of an absence of choice, as well as the value of education and the strength of the human spirit. As educators in Australia we too have a valuable role to play, advocating for our EAL/D students and their families and ensuring that their needs continue to be met. Membership of a professional association such as ATESOL NSW can strengthen this role, providing educators with a more powerful voice both locally and nationally.

This edition also features the 2010 English Australia Conference Report from Kath Brandon. Kath describes how conference delegates from within the ELICOS industry came from Australia, New Zealand, the UK and the USA to learn with and from each other, especially within the realms of e-learning. Thank you to Kath, and to everyone who has contributed to the newsletter in 2010 and also to those who have presented at our Professional Development events this year. ATESOL NSW is planning a full program of events for 2011, beginning with the AGM on Saturday 12 March, and we would love to hear from those who wish to share their expertise. I wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a peaceful and productive 2011.
Welcome to our final newsletter for 2010! I hope that the school year has treated you well and that your professional skills and achievements in ESL are, to quote a phrase, ‘moving forward’.

Our Professional Development program for 2010 concluded with a series of grammar workshops through August and September tailored specifically to different teaching contexts. These sessions were well-attended and well-received as always, and clearly reiterate the perceived importance of explicit grammatical instruction in the teaching of learners of English as an Additional Language or Dialect (EAL/D). Our HSC English (ESL) Revision Day was held at Shore School in the September school holidays and again provided value for money for the large numbers of students and teachers who attended.

Speaking of grammar – and the new acronym (‘EAL/D learners’) – the proposed Australian Curriculum has been at the very forefront of the work of the association, and particularly of our national body, the Australian Council of TESOL Associations (ACTA), during 2010. Though the rush to implementation has been waylaid somewhat, rightly so, in order to ensure that what we get given is at least as good as what we’ve already got (see the joint memorandum from the NSW Board of Studies, NSW DET, Catholic Education Commission and the Association of Independent Schools inside this issue), there is most certainly in principle support across the board for the implementation of a national curriculum somewhere down the track. ‘It won’t happen overnight, but it will happen’, so to speak.

One of the positive initiatives undertaken in 2010 by ACARA (the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority which has carriage for the development and implementation of the Australian Curriculum K–12) has been the establishment of an EAL/D Advisory Group comprising ESL education representatives from all sectors and from across the states and territories. To report on the work of this body and other relevant issues, ATESOL NSW is pleased to host a presentation by Hanya Stefaniuk, Manager of DET Multicultural Programs Unit, on ‘ESL and the Australian Curriculum’ on Saturday 12 March 2011 to follow our Annual General Meeting. The AGM is scheduled to start at 9.30 am and Hanya’s presentation will run from 10.30 am to 12 noon. For more information please see the flyer inside this issue.

We’ve also included herein an attractive postcard promoting our 2012 ACTA International Conference to be held in Cairns. Please seriously consider making the trip up to Far North Queensland yourself and bringing the whole tribe along too for a well-deserved holiday. We’re in the process of organising with local tour providers some exciting day trips for partners and families during the conference as well as discounted pre- and post-conference packages, so it really is a fantastic opportunity. The conference program is shaping up very nicely indeed, with a host of high-profile speakers already confirmed for the pre-conference Pronunciation Symposium and the announcement of Professors Robert Phillipson, Tove Skutnabb-Kangas and Suresh Canagarajah as our international keynotes for the conference proper.

Our ACTA conference website is up and running at www.astmanagement.com.au/ACTA12/ or via the links at the refurbished ATESOL NSW and ACTA websites – (www.atesolnsw.org.au and www.tesol.org.au respectively), and there you will find the Conference Sponsorship Prospectus, conference registration rates and details, accommodation and tour options, an Expression of Interest form and a wealth of other information. As well as the high-tech side of things we’ve gone a little bit ‘old school’ with the event postcard, and we’d really like you to mail it on to a friend or colleague who might be interested in joining us at our conference up in Cairns. Don’t forget the dates:

**From the President’s Desk**

Robert Jackson

**Six Days in a Refugee Camp**

*In memoriam Michael Clyne*

**Correspondence**

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ATESOL Newsletter • Vol 36 No 4 • December 2010
From the President’s Desk

2012 ACTA International Conference
TESOL as a Global Trade: Ethics, Equity and Ecology
and a pre-conference Pronunciation Symposium
Monday 2nd to Thursday 5th July 2012 at Cairns Convention Centre hosted by ATESOL NSW

Finally, on behalf of the council I’d like to extend sincere thanks to everyone who has supported ATESOL NSW in 2010, and particularly the organisers and presenters of our professional development workshops and other events throughout the year and all those who have contributed to this Newsletter. Very best wishes to all of our members for a peaceful and prosperous holiday season!

In memoriam Michael Clyne

I was saddened this morning to read the Australian Linguistics Society’s news about Michael Clyne’s passing! Australian sociolinguistics has lost its doyen, and we have all lost a strong advocate for a multilingual, multicultural, diverse and tolerant society. Michael has been a role model, mentor and friend to me and most other Australian sociolinguists over many years. One of our main concerns here on Language on the Move, monolingualism as a linguistic ideology, the so-called “monolingual mindset,” first emerged in his work.

I won’t attempt to provide an overview of this amazing work over five decades; a quick summary can be found at Monash University’s Arts Faculty. I want to write about how Michael’s work influenced my own work. I first read his 1981 book Deutsch als Muttersprache in Australien: Zur Ökologie einer Einwanderersprache (German as a mother tongue in Australia: the ecology of a migrant language) as an undergraduate student in Germany and it was one of the books and encounters that first sparked my interest in Australia that eventually brought me to this country.

I first met Michael in person when he visited Hamburg University to deliver a guest lecture in the late 1990s. At that time I was about to embark on a fieldtrip to Australia and I still remember Michael’s warmth and generosity with which he received my naïve and over-enthusiastic news that I had just received a scholarship to do research on bilingualism in Australia! Many senior academics would have been condescending in such an encounter but he was warm, inspiring, full of advice and generous enough to actually take a serious interest in my budding research.

And that’s how he followed my Australian career and that of many other migrant scholars over the years. Pursuing an academic career in a second language and in a country different from where you obtained your degrees is a difficult challenge, even if an increasingly common one, and Michael is one of the few colleagues not in that situation who understood that.

He generously helped me with advice, recommendations and introductions in a very quiet and low-key manner. Thank you and Danke! It is in no small part due to his personal efforts that there is now a whole new generation of Australian sociolinguists from diverse backgrounds. The Michael Clyne prize for the best postgraduate thesis in immigrant bilingualism and language contact, which he generously funded, is a wonderful example of his legacy.

I also admire Michael Clyne for his advocacy. Michael did not only study bilingualism and intercultural communication for their own sake but as a contribution to a better Australia. It was his mission to promote bilingualism and bilingual education. He spoke out against the divisive political rhetoric and anti-immigrant stances that re-emerged during the Howard years. It was a compassion born of personal experience. I remember him telling the anecdote of his immigrant father changing the German family name “Klein” to “Clyne” to make it Anglo-sounding and to escape the anti-German feeling prevalent in Australia in the first half of the 20th century.

We have lost a wonderful scholar, advocate, mentor and friend. Vale Michael Clyne!

Source: www.languageonthemove.com/multilingual-academics/in-memoriam-michael-clyne
Posted on October 30, 2010 by Ingrid Piller
Professor Clyne was a keynote presenter at the 13th ACTA/ATESOL NSW National Conference held in Sydney in 2002. His paper was entitled ‘Language and freedom or imprisonment?’
Board of Studies NSW
Association of Independent Schools
Catholic Education Commission
Department of Education and Training

Memorandum to Principals and Stakeholders – November 2010

The Australian Curriculum

Dear Principal/Stakeholder

We are writing to update you on the status of work on the Australian Curriculum and to clarify the steps required before any implementation of the new curriculum can be undertaken in NSW schools.

In early December 2010 the Ministers for Education, including the NSW Minister, Hon. Verity Firth, are due to consider for adoption the Australian Curriculum for the learning areas of English, Mathematics, Science and History, from Kindergarten to Year 10. Irrespective of the Ministers’ decision, you will be aware that the NSW Minister has already indicated that it will not be possible for the new curriculum to be implemented in NSW in 2011. In addition, the NSW Government has emphasised that while NSW is committed to a national curriculum, it cannot approve a curriculum for NSW schools until it is assured that it meets at least the standards of the current NSW curriculum.

In the lead up to the Ministers’ meeting, the NSW Minister has sought advice from the NSW Board of Studies (the Board) on the appropriateness of the current drafts of the Australian Curriculum for NSW schools. The Board will utilise its normal consultative process involving representatives of teachers, principals and parents to develop this advice.

Under the NSW Education Act, a NSW syllabus can only be approved by the Minister on the recommendation of the Board, and in accord with criteria set out in the Act. This process will follow Ministers’ endorsement of a common Australian Curriculum.

Subject to the endorsement by the Board and the approval of the Minister, the Australian Curriculum will constitute a key component of new curriculum documents for NSW schools in each of the relevant learning areas. The Board’s work will be undertaken through the normal Board syllabus development process entailing engagement with the NSW teaching profession, parents and other experts. This development process will:

- Ensure maintenance of the clarity of teaching and learning expectations that exists in the current NSW curriculum and which NSW teachers expect to be maintained
- allow the Board to work with teachers to address concerns arising from differences in the presentation of the Australian Curriculum
- allow the Australian Curriculum to be presented in Stages rather than Years
- facilitate integration of aspects of learning from across Content Strands within subjects
- clarify the content where this is required, especially with regard to teaching sequences
- address how quality outcomes can be achieved for students through the NSW Board of Studies Life Skills courses
• ensure that quality outcomes are achievable within the existing NSW indicative time requirements for Years 7 to 10, and within the existing NSW Key Learning Area structure, as set out in the Education Act

• allow a common and agreed Australian Curriculum to be presented to NSW teachers on an appropriate timeframe.

These developments will be consistent with the objective of achieving common curriculum content nationally, representing an essential learning entitlement of all Australian students. All of the Board’s work will be conducted in close consultation with the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (‘ACARA’) and with other states and territories, to ensure fidelity of the complementary NSW materials with the Australian Curriculum in each learning area.

Some dimensions of the Australian Curriculum currently being developed by ACARA are not being considered for implementation by NSW at this stage. These include the Achievement Standards and General Capabilities. ACARA intends to continue working on the development and validation of these materials and NSW will participate fully in this ongoing work.

If the Australian Curriculum for English, Mathematics, Science and History K-10 is endorsed by Ministers in December 2010, the Board’s syllabus development will begin early in 2011. An implementation schedule will be developed in full consultation with NSW teacher and principal representatives across all sectors with a view to substantial implementation by 2013.

We would like to thank the many teachers, principals and parents that have contributed work on this matter so far.

Further advice on the Australian Curriculum in NSW schools will be provided to principals in early 2011.

Yours sincerely

Tom Aleounarias
President
Board of Studies, NSW

Michael Coutts-Trotter
Director-General
Department of Education and Training
Managing Director, TAFE

Brian Croke
Executive Director
Catholic Education Commission

Dr Geoff Newcombe
Executive Director
Association of Independent Schools
Position Statement on the Acquisition of Academic Proficiency in English at the Postsecondary Level

Executive Summary

Because of the importance of securing an adequate foundation in academic English before commencing postsecondary coursework and the inherent variability in the rate of language development, it is essential that students, their financial sponsors, and the institutions they attend understand the need to be flexible with respect to the amount of time and financial support allotted for language study. Setting strict time and/or financial limits on the length of English studies, or pressure to exit students from such studies prematurely, are counterproductive and will undermine opportunities for academic success.

Statement

As a result of the global spread of English as a language of commerce and scientific communication, more and more individuals worldwide are choosing to pursue postsecondary educations in English. For students whose previous schooling has been in languages other than English, this often means that they will need to take courses in academic English prior to starting their formal postsecondary studies. While it is natural for students, their financial sponsors, and the institutions they attend to want students to begin studies towards their degree as soon as possible, it is important for all parties to understand the benefits that can be gained from foundation courses in academic English and to have realistic expectations about the length of time necessary to develop the language proficiency needed for academic success.

Language acquisition occurs over time, with learners moving through developmental stages and gradually growing in proficiency. As proficiency develops, students find themselves capable of mediating increasingly complex as well as specialized oral and written literacy tasks. The difference between secondary and postsecondary academic work is great, however. Successful participation in academic and professional discourse communities such as business, science, engineering, and medicine requires a strong foundation of very advanced language and common core academic skills. To participate successfully at the postsecondary level, learners require additional knowledge and expertise in content, specialized vocabulary, grammar, discourse structure, and pragmatics. Incoming students must also negotiate a new range of sociocultural situations such as faculty office hours, team work, public presentations, and frequently, independent living. If students have not yet developed advanced proficiency in the language and
I am in Camp X for six days mentoring teachers and researching material for a text book to teach English. Most students at my school live in a student-managed dormitory funded by a private donor. They undertake all the chores. There are cooking, cleaning and gardening teams. Eh See Po sleeps in an alcove near my bed. He is also the security guard and has taken it upon himself to be my constant companion. He is on cooking rotation and sets his alarm for 4.30 am. Why so early? Because he has to build a fire with charcoal and coconut husks while others leave for the market to buy food then cook breakfast for the 35 students. The cook house is another bamboo hut with an open hearth, bamboo tables and benches. The food that appears is usually rice and vegetables with fish paste and sometimes an omelet. It is unbelievably delicious and varied. I am nonplussed by the equipment and can’t even offer to help.

My school is an English medium school with an academic focus with subjects like mathematics, social studies, science and languages: English, Karen, Burmese and Thai. But the teachers are poorly paid, have minimal training and there is no equipment for teaching science. There is a library with some books and amazingly, five laptops though no internet access. These are powered by car batteries.

The students are preparing for further study with great ambition and determination though few have any clear picture of what their future options might be. No matter. Next week there are term tests and students study by candle light until late chanting their lessons. We have only two rooms each. One has a single globe, not light enough for reading.

I sit on the veranda by candlelight and chat to students eager to practice their English. One arrives with a map of the world taken from his classroom and the address of his cousin in Brisbane. He asks me to show him where it is. He measures the distance from the Thai border and shakes his head in astonishment. I am asked to explain Australia’s political system. They tell me about their villages in Burma. These villages are very poor: “Oh no, we don’t have candles! Candles are too expensive! We just use an oil lamp when we can get oil”.

The word ‘refugee’ has many meanings but nowhere more confused than here. Some of these students would be classified as refugees according to the United Nation conventions — victims of systematic, politically motivated persecution — but many would not. Some have relatives or connections in the camp and so come from Burma to get an education. Headmaster Oo Min tells me that approximately 40 per cent of residents in Camp X are under 25.

The stories I hear are often heartbreakingly similar: villages torched by the Burmese army, parents killed, young people kidnapped by the army, families separated, homes and schools rebuilt only to be destroyed and communities scattered again, as they recount these stories in fragmented English, the students’ eyes tell me they have seen things that I can’t even imagine.

Many of them are in the camp not waiting for resettlement in the West; instead they are following their dream of an education and hoping for a time when they can return and contribute to their communities. Lu Lu tells me her story one afternoon.

I left my village when I was fourteen because I wanted to learn and there was no school nearby. I walked with some people for two days to the border at Y town. Then I came to the camp and went to secondary school. My parents worry about me. They don’t sleep for a year. I am strong but when my parents worry, I feel weak. I have been here for seven years. I go home in summer holidays if I have 40 Baht ($A1.30) for the bus but because I have no papers it is very dangerous if the Thai police catch me. My parents work very hard to pay for my uniform. I want to study hard and go to do the back pack medic course in Mae Sot so I can go back to my village because we don’t have any medics for the people.

I hear different versions of this story and am amazed by the incredible determination that drives these young people. Migrant or refugee, education is a holy grail, the source of hope for the future and no sacrifice is too great.
Six days in a refugee camp

On my walk between schools, I see how ingenious people are at normalising life. There are small shops everywhere selling food, a home-made hydro power plant over a stream to harness power which is used to charge the car batteries that power lights, a man with a cart making sweet rotis (a flat bread) to sell, tiny children playing shop with discarded sweet wrappers filled with dirt, and teenagers competing to see who can knock off a pile of rubber bands from a stick with a sling shot.

But there are also the sights which underline the extreme poverty and misery of many: the extremely crowded streets, the smoky air from charcoal fires, the painfully thin young mothers with children naked or clothed in rags. I am shocked by sights unknown in the west: a man with two thumbs, an amputee with homemade crutches, a young child with the blond hair of malnutrition, rotten teeth, and everywhere gaping, betel-stained mouths.

The afternoon before I leave, I am interviewed by the Camp Commander and give an account of my activities through an interpreter. I praise the schools and teachers. They are doing the best they can. With vague promises to return, I say goodbye to the students. I am grateful for the experience, touched by the welcome of my students and the dedication of the teachers but rather ashamed by how pleased I am to leave the challenges of coping with life in Camp X. I have a new understanding of the power to make choices that come with freedom.

MEMBER NEWS

ARE YOU INTERESTED IN JOINING COUNCIL?

ATESOL NSW members are welcome to attend any of our Council meetings.

Meeting dates for 2011 are on the following Tuesdays from 5.30 – 6.30pm

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ATESOL NSW Annual General Meeting – Saturday 12 March 2011

All meetings take place at the Professional Teachers’ Council NSW Conference Centre, 101-105 Norton St, Leichhardt, located in the grounds of Leichhardt Public School on the corner of Norton and Marion Streets Leichhardt, NSW.

Light refreshments are provided during the meeting.

Please contact Shreela Pradhan at the PTC NSW office on (02) 9564 3322 or shreela.pradhan@ptc.nsw.edu.au to advise that you will be attending.

You are also welcome to discuss Council membership with any of the ATESOL NSW Councillors.

See contact details for 2010 Council members on page 2.

For additional information about ATESOL NSW go to: www.atesolnsw.org
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.

ELICOS student numbers
Those of you working in ELICOS will have noticed a downturn in international student numbers. Figures from the Department of Education for September indicate that ELICOS has more than 20 per cent fewer student visa holders enrolled in courses than for the same time last year. English Australia is working collaboratively with other international education peak bodies and government departments to ensure all is being done to make Australia a safe, accessible country with high quality programs and services.

New ‘Bookshelf’ editor for EA Journal
The EA Journal has a new editor for its ‘Bookshelf’ section. Connie de Silva, an academic and educational editor and ELT teacher from Melbourne, takes over from Denise Norton, who is now living and working in Japan. Reviews for the EA Journal are commissioned, so please contact Connie at cdes@netspace.net.au if you’d like to review the latest ELT print and online educational resources.

English Australia wishes all of you a safe and happy holiday season.

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

English Australia is the national peak body and professional association of institutions offering ELICOS. For more information on ELICOS, including details of professional development workshops, go to www.englishaustralia.com.au.

New Chair for English Australia
At the English Australia AGM held the day before the conference members elected David Matthews unopposed as the new Chair of English Australia, taking over from Seamus Fagan who resigned after 17 years on the EA Council, the last six as chair. David has been involved in international education since the early ‘90s and is currently Director of Curtin English Language Centre in Perth.

New ‘Bookshelf’ editor for EA Journal
The EA Journal has a new editor for its ‘Bookshelf’ section. Connie de Silva, an academic and educational editor and ELT teacher from Melbourne, takes over from Denise Norton, who is now living and working in Japan. Reviews for the EA Journal are commissioned, so please contact Connie at cdes@netspace.net.au if you’d like to review the latest ELT print and online educational resources.

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More than 450 delegates attended the 2010 English Australia Conference, the 23rd such event organised by English Australia. Teachers, teacher trainers, managers, marketers, student support staff, students, academics, representatives of regulatory, peak and government bodies as well as suppliers of information and services to the ELICOS industry came mainly from Australia, New Zealand, the UK and the USA to learn with and from each other.

A program, conference presentations and photos are available at www.englishaustralia.com.au.

Contexts of ELICOS
The conference was opened by the Hon. Bruce Baird, who chaired the recent government review of the Education Services to Overseas Students (ESOS) Act. Mr Baird spoke about the importance of international education to Australia’s economy as well as business and the community, and recommended that the tourism and international education industries work together more closely in the future to ‘provide better experiences [for students] and enhance our international reputation’. He then outlined how the updated ESOS Act would:

- strengthen the gateway to ESOS, with better enforcement and complaints mechanisms
- simplify the role of regulatory bodies and student protection mechanisms
- provide a smarter approach to regulation by better managing risk and ensuring students are better informed in their decisions to study in Australia.

With the international education industry experiencing a ‘perfect storm’ of factors resulting in a downturn in student numbers, many conference sessions and presentations focused on maintaining standards and providing up-to-the-minute information as well as identifying challenges and sharing strategies for managing in the current context. Key sessions included:

- updates on government policy and the regulatory environment (Austrade, AEI/DEEWR, NEAS)
- ELICOS Forums where industry leaders, marketers (with Austrade) and academic leaders had opportunities to get together with their peers and identify ways forward
- an outline of current agent perceptions of Australia
- examples of how colleges are using outcomes from the English Australia ELT student barometer research project to improve ELICOS delivery and student satisfaction levels
- a workshop on the new Good Practice Standards for English Language Proficiency for International Students in Australian Universities.

Teaching and learning – inside the classroom
As always, what happens in and around the classroom is central to the conference and there were many presentations that addressed the ‘big picture’ of learning and teaching and highlighted current issues and approaches in ELICOS.

Professor Jun Liu predicted the future of English language teaching, reminding us to make sure we’re in a position to take advantage of new opportunities. Jun started this presentation at the NEAS ELT Management Conference in May this year and we were delighted to welcome him back to Australia. Associate Professor Janet Zadina from Tulane University School of Medicine, New Orleans, outlined how our brains change as we learn, reminding us of just what an amazing organ the human brain is. Cambridge University Professor of English and Applied Linguistics John Hawkins provided details of the Cambridge English Profiles project to identify criteria features of spoken and written English at different levels of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR).

E-learning was a key theme this year. The pre-conference workshop, sponsored by Pearson Australia, featured conference plenary speaker Gavin Dudeney,
award-winning e-learning author and Co-Director of The Consultants-E, an organisation offering a range of online courses on e-learning. Gavin and Mark Pegrum from the University of Western Australia described the ‘digital native’ generation and the ways young people study, learn and engage with media and learning materials, and provided participants with hands-on experience with new technologies and collection of practical teaching ideas they could immediately incorporate into their classrooms. Gavin also gave a plenary address on digital literacies, and a number of conference sessions dealt with helping teachers engage with technology and with different ways technology and digital media can be used in the classroom.

A colloquium was held to present the outcomes of projects undertaken for the pilot English Australia / Cambridge ESOL Action Research in ELICOS program implemented this year and led by Professor Anne Burns, now of the University of New South Wales and Acton University, UK. The six teacher-researchers outlined their main findings and answered questions on their projects, which covered different approaches to motivation; extensive reading at different levels; the role of questions in the development of speaking skills; and the use of digital dictionaries.

A ‘Great Debate’ was implemented this year. A panel of ELT experts, including Jun Liu and Anne Burns, convened by Ana Bratkovic from NEAS, outlined their views on whether the CELTA was adequate preparation for a teacher new to ELICOS – and the audience agreed it was, but as a starting point only!

English Australia was also very pleased to welcome Dr Hee-Kyung Lee, representing the Korean Association of Teachers of English (KATE). Dr Lee presented a paper on the relationship between L1 and L2 writing performance, taking L2 topic difficulty into consideration.

Other sessions focused on EAP, pronunciation, assessment, classroom management and aspects of language. We were challenged to consider our approaches to teaching English as an international language, and our concepts of the ‘Asian learner’.

The complete ELICOS experience – outside the classroom

The opening plenary speaker was Steve Simpson, who shared his concept of ‘unwritten ground rules’ (UGRs) that may operate in an organisational culture, providing food for thought and a handy catchphrase for the remainder of the conference!

There were presentations on encouraging student inclusion and implementing and supporting accommodation services. For marketers, sessions covered issues such as preparing a marketing plan and working with agents.

Humour and inspiration were brought to the conference in the final plenary session by comedian Anh Do, who shared his experiences with delegates.
Social & Networking Opportunities – Recognition and Celebration

Gold Coast Mayor Ron Clarke welcomed delegates to the Welcome Reception, sponsored by ETS TOEFL®, which provided delegates with the opportunity to catch up with colleagues from across the industry.

English Australia Council members Anne Holmes, Margot Tucker, Marion Bagot and Lawrence Burness, who were standing down, were recognised with a certificate of appreciation presented by new EA Chair David Matthews. Outgoing EA Chair Seamus Fagan was presented with a certificate of appreciation and an Aboriginal bark painting in recognition of his outstanding 17 years’ involvement with the English Australia Council, the last six of these as Chair.

The Gala Conference Dinner was held in the Princeton Room in the beautiful grounds of Bond University. This year, six English Australia awards were presented (see box), including a special award presented this year to a true pioneer and shining star of ELICOS. The English Australia Lifetime Achievement Award for Outstanding Service to the ELICOS Industry was presented to Christine Bundesen, Director of the Institute of Continuing and TESOL Education, University of Queensland (ICTE-UQ) by the outgoing Chair of EA, Seamus Fagan. Christine accepted the award with humility and humour, and thanked those who had worked beside her to help build ELICOS from its early days as a cottage industry to today’s highly regarded major sector of international education. It was an evening of fun and celebration for the ELICOS industry, with the excitement of the awards presentations matched only by the enthusiasm of the guests on the dance floor!

Delegates also had the opportunity to network and share the challenges and successes in their roles with their peers at the two Networking Breakfasts – one for Directors of Studies and the other for Administration/Marketing/Student Support Staff.

Support

The Chair of English Australia, David Matthews, the EA Council and EA’s executive director Sue Blundell are very grateful for the support from conference sponsors who included platinum sponsors IELTS and Cambridge English; gold sponsors Pearson Australia & Pearson PTE Academic; silver sponsor ETS TOEFL® and bronze sponsors Bond University, eBECAS and Oxford University Press. EA is also grateful for the support of Queensland Education & Training International.

2011 Conference

Join us in Adelaide from 22 – 24 September 2011 to continue the learning and exchange. Contact the conference organisers info@eaconference.com.au if you would like to receive regular conference updates.

English Australia Awards winners

English Australia Lifetime Achievement Award for Outstanding Service to ELICOS
Christine Bundesen, Institute of Continuing and TESOL Education, University of Queensland

English Australia/John Gallagher Memorial Bursary

English Australia/Pearson Australia Award for Contribution to Professional ELICOS Practice
Peter Copeman, University of Canberra, ACT

English Australia/ETS TOEFL® Award for Innovation in ELICOS
Embassy CES

English Australia/IELTS Award for Contribution to Quality in ELICOS through Academic Leadership
Paulo Vieira, Bond University English Language Institute Qld

English Australia/Cambridge ESOL Award for Action Research in ELICOS
Laura McCrossan, Milner International College, Perth WA

Please note that details of all the awards and winners are available on the EA website – www.englishaustralia.com.au.
AIS Primary Conference

Every year, the Association of Independent Schools NSW organises a conference catering for the needs and interests of the primary teachers in the independent schools’ sector. In this article, former ATESOL NSW Vice-President Sue Bremner reflects on a few of the workshop presentations.

The conference was a wonderful combination of classroom teachers, experts in History, Science, English and Mathematics-teaching, along with private consultants such as Dr Julia Atkin and representatives from the NSW Board of Studies. Their brief was to help in “Paving the Way for the Australian Curriculum”. Hosted by Abbotsleigh Junior School (whose students were so welcoming, as were all the staff), and ably coordinated by my colleague, consultant Tiffany Roos, the conference was an overwhelming success for the 200 plus educators who attended. The following is just a taste. My intention is to give ESL-focused ideas for readers, with websites you can use for your own investigations.

Megan Perry, the manager of Community Services at the State Library of NSW, was entertaining and inspiring. She directed us to all the resources that can help bring history to life for learners. Visit the websites – www.sl.edu.au and http://trove.nla.gov.au for resources including podcasts, pictures, manuscripts and video grabs.

Megan starts to tantalise students with a reasonable facsimile of the real thing (e.g. a copy of a manuscript of a letter, diary account, or page from a logbook, splattered with Megan’s coffee stains and maybe slightly burnt edges) and purports that the realia is just like the letter that was written by an early explorer to his patron, or an Antarctic explorer, a soldier from World War I or manuscripts kept from the Gold Rush. Giving the students this “hands-on” approach to introducing a history lesson would be a bonus in any history class. Have a look at the sites when planning a unit of work. I found the Maps section quite fascinating, as one moves from era to era.

Two teachers from Al Sadiq College in Yagoona were so enthused during the conference, but did this enthusiasm last? They have since presented to their whole staff, as the conference offerings had relevance to everyone in the school. Leah Tenaka (above) has implemented some of the ideas she got from two teacher-presenters with her Year 2 students. One, called “I see, I think, I wonder” was used in Maths class using everyday realia (even junk!) before the introduction of 3-D shapes. She demonstrated the strategy, using her coffee cup, with me.

Diana Ibrahim has used a number of the interactive strategies from the workshop presented by Josh Ravekl including Google Lit trips (www.googlelittrips.com/GoogleLit/Getting_Started.htm), a must-visit site that will really transport your ESL readers.

I also attended a session presented by ATESOL NSW Board member, lecturer from University of Sydney, and e-lit: PETA author, Kathy Rushton. We looked at how a good literary text provides the basis for students to write like a writer. The inspiration for the session was the book Kathy wrote with Joanne Rossbridge, Conversations about Texts, and her e-update 010 Teaching Grammar in the Context of Narrative. Teachers are guided through the steps in showing students how to use well-crafted written language as a model for the students’
AIS Primary Conference


Kathy’s session can be downloaded as a pdf from – www.aisnsw.edu.au/PD/Portals/10/Conferences/PrimaryConf2010/3B%20AISConf.2Sept2010.pdf

Nadia Wheatley’s session demonstrated how teachers could bring alive local history, and used her experiences with Going Bush (published by Allen and Unwin), which she wrote with Ken Searle, as a basis. Visit the site www.allenandunwin.com.au or, better still, buy the book.

Felicity Shields, who teaches in Kemps Creek, said, “The highlight of the AIS Primary Conference was the workshop conducted by Nadia Wheatley. What an inspiration! Particularly interesting was the process of writing Going Bush, where a group of children from diverse backgrounds experienced the Australian bush, mostly for the first time. The environment and nature is the perfect motivating learning environment. We as educators need to open our eyes to the world outside the classroom and Nadia has definitely shown us the way.”

Most of you would be very familiar with the book My Place by Nadia, and illustrated by Donna Rawlings. A recent e:lit publication EU01 My Place: Connecting literature, Language & Literacy revisits the book. This e: update provides teachers with information about how to use My Place in the classroom to support the implementation of the Australian curriculum for English. The teaching resources associated with the My Place package provide many ideas for primary and lower secondary English teachers to integrate learning across the three strands: Literature, Language and Literacy.


ATESOL NSW RENEWAL REMINDER

You are important to us –

If you have not yet renewed your membership for 2011, please do so now. You will find a membership renewal form on the back cover of this issue.

By renewing your ATESOL NSW membership you will continue to receive:

- Discounts on all professional development workshops
- Discounted conference registration fees
- Four informative newsletters annually
- Eight e-bulletins a year
- Two issues of TESOL in Context journal
- Good fellowship and collegial support.

All enquiries regarding ATESOL membership to Shreela Pradhan, PTC NSW
Phone: (02) 9564 3322 or Email: shreela.pradhan@ptc.nsw.edu.au
Reflections on the ACTA Conference

By Janet Freeman, ESL Multicultural consultant, K–6 Sydney Region 2010

It was a conscious understanding that grammar and language are essential to learning English as a second language that led me to choose Leonardo Veliz’s presentation, *Bringing cognitive linguistics into the ESL classroom*. Here is a very brief overview of the workshop.

The general premises of cognitive linguistics are that:

- meaning is pivotal (David Lee, 2001)
- meaning is embodied and embedded (Ellis and Robinson, 2008)
- meaning is often motivated through metaphor (Verspour, 2008).

Language and meaning are not separate entities; whenever we use language we make meaning but we are also making language to create meaning.

All language depends on the context and is grounded in experiences and culture which is why ESL learners have so much difficulty understanding metaphors and metonymy (figurative language). In addition we have so many words with multiple meanings in English that ESL learners cannot memorize them.

The message for ESL teachers is clear; grammar and metaphor need to be central to teaching English. There should be no distinction between grammar and lexis. ESL learners need to be aware of the central word and how additional senses and meanings of the word are related and yet may be literal or figurative. It is important to make students aware by teaching them through action and experience.

References

- Ellis and Robinson: *Handbook of cognitive linguistics and second language acquisition* Edited by Peter Robinson Aoyama Qakuin University, Japan and Nick C. Ellis University of Michigan, USA Routledge Taylor & Francis Group NEW YORK AND LONDON

MEDIA RELEASE – THE HON PETER GARRETT MP

Minister for School Education, Early Childhood and Youth

Helping Australians become Asia literate

Australian school students will get a better understanding of the Asian region, to prepare them for a globalised economy of the future with $6.28 million allocated to projects boosting Asia literacy in schools.

Minister for School Education, Peter Garrett, announced that 122 projects in 191 schools will receive $2.68 million under the second round of Becoming Asia Literate grants.

“These grants are a key part of the Government’s strategic investment into increasing Australian students’ knowledge of the languages and cultures of our Asian neighbours,” said Mr Garrett.

The Minister also announced that $3.60 million will be provided to ten organisations through the Strategic Collaboration and Partnership Fund Round 2, to help increase opportunities for students to become familiar with Asian languages and cultures.

“Several of these projects will help schools to establish virtual links with their sister schools in Asia, allowing teachers and students to explore alternative ways of learning about the cultures and languages of China, Indonesia, Japan and Korea.”

These grants are key elements of the $62.4 million National Asian Languages and Studies in Schools Program (NALSSP).

“As more of our trade takes place with Asian partners, Australian businesses will need employees who are able to engage confidently with our key regional neighbours,” said Mr Garrett.

A full list of successful projects and further information is available at www.deewr.gov.au/schooling/nalssp.
K–6 Corner
by Bess Wassman

Podcasting

This addition of K–6 Corner looks at podcasting and a few ways it can be used in the classroom. Technology is a part of our day-to-day lives and podcasting is a great way to provide students with the opportunity to explore and use different technology and communication tools.

What is podcasting?
A podcast is an audio file that is uploaded onto the internet and can be downloaded and listened to on computers and mp3 players. Using programs such as Audacity and GarageBand (Apple), students record themselves and turn their audio recordings into mp3 files. These files are then uploaded onto an internet site such as a class wiki, blog or school website. This allows students to share their work with classmates, members of the school community or even world-wide.

What do I need to start podcasting?
• computer
• microphone
• internet connection
• a program such as Audacity or GarageBand.

How can podcasting be used in the classroom?
Podcasting can be used in many ways to create engaging and meaningful learning experiences. It is a great way for students to think about their audience and how to effectively engage the listener. In literacy, students can use podcasting to showcase their writing. For example, after writing a narrative, students can podcast their story, complete with sound effects, and upload it so others can listen. Students could also give a recount of a class excursion or special event at the school.

Podcasts can also be used as a part of HSIE and science units. For example, after learning about advertising and persuasive language in a stage two unit about goods and services, students used their knowledge to create their own persuasive advertisements for a particular product they had designed. They first wrote and podcasted a radio ad. This was then compared with a poster ad that they had previously created. Here, students were able to apply and reflect upon what they had learned in the unit in a meaningful and engaging task.

In my experience, I have found that when students podcast their writing, it causes them to think carefully about the content and helps them edit their work, as they have to read and listen carefully to what they have written. Furthermore, sharing podcasts through class wikis or blogs also encourages students to provide feedback and to reflect on their own work.

Some useful websites
www.podkids.com.au/ — a great example of how a school successfully uses podcasts
www.det.wa.edu.au/education/cmis/eval/curriculum/ict/podcasts/ — provides helpful information and links about podcasting
ATESOL 2011 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Program

Saturday 12 March 2011

9.30 am  Council Yearly Reports
          Election of ATESOL NSW Office Bearers

10.30 am  Guest speaker, Hanya Stefaniuk, Manager of DET Multicultural Programs Unit, on
          ‘ESL and the Australian Curriculum’ (Refreshments from 10 am)

Venue:  Professional Teachers’ Council NSW Conference Centre
        101–105 Norton Street, Leichhardt (corner of Marion Street
        within the grounds of Leichhardt Primary School

RSVP:  To assist our catering planning, please RSVP to Shreela Pradhan
        at shreela.pradhan@ptc.nsw.edu.au by Friday 11 March 2011

Guest Speaker - Ms Hanya Stefaniuk

Ms Hanya Stefaniuk is currently Manager of Multicultural Programs for the NSW Department of Education and Training. Hanya has held a number of leadership positions and worked as a policy and curriculum officer with responsibilities for vocational education and training; equity programs and policy and Aboriginal education for NSW education. Hanya also guest lectures in curriculum theory and design and English as a second language research at a number of NSW universities.

Hanya is a member of several bodies including the NSW Immigration and Settlement Planning Committee, ACARA English as an Additional Language/Dialect Committee, the NSW Community Languages Schools Board and three National Assessment Program review committees. Hanya is chair of the cross-sectoral steering committee responsible for overseeing the implementation of the pilot literacy and numeracy project in low socio-economic communities known as the Successful Language Learners.

Hanya works closely with NSW government schools and regional staff in building teacher and leadership capacity in culturally appropriate and challenging pedagogies. Hanya’s research interests include conceptualisations of culture and ethnicity, effective second language pedagogy and assessment practices, relationship between student learning outcomes and leadership in culturally and linguistically diverse school communities.

Hanya is the co-recipient with three partner universities of six Australian Research Council grants, including recently being awarded a Linkages Project grant for investigations into rethinking multiculturalism and reassessing multicultural education.

Hanya’s educational leadership and expertise has been acknowledged by numerous awards, including being named Australian Corporate Communicator of the Year by the Public Relations Institute of Australia and being recognised by the United Nations for her work on education to counter racism and the Premier of NSW for work in settling refugees.

Nominate for Council

For Council nomination forms contact Shreela Pradhan, Ph: 02 9564 3322 or Email: shreela.pradhan@ptc.nsw.edu.au.
**January 2011**

**11-14** (8th Asia Pacific Conference on Speech, Language and Hearing – Christchurch, New Zealand)

The 8th conference of the Asia Pacific Society for the Study of Speech, Language and Hearing to be held in the garden city of Christchurch, New Zealand. The venue for the conference will be the University of Canterbury.

Website: www.cmds.canterbury.ac.nz/asiapacific.htm
Contact name: Professor Michael Robb

**February**

**16-18** (North America) National Association for Bilingual Education.

Largest gathering of parents, teachers, policy makers, administrators and professors dedicated to serving bilingual and English language learners in the United States, includes 21st Century Learning, US Federal Title I and Title III.

Contact: Celia Torres
Website: www.nabe.org

**March**

**3-4** (North America) 18th Annual University of Texas, Student Conference in Linguistics & TESOL (UTASCILT)

Arlington, Texas, US

Papers are invited from graduate students in all areas of linguistics, (including TESOL), and especially in our conference topic, experimental syntax, the focus of our keynote by Dr Grant Goodall.

Contact: Lori Pierce
Website: http://ling.uta.edu/~lingua/conference

**April**

**8-10** (Central and South America) URUTESOL


Email: urutesol@gmail.com.
Website: http://www.urutesol.org

**June**

**23-24** (Central & South America) MATE-TESOL Haiti

“Lessons Learned from Teaching: Challenges and Rewards,” Haitian-American Institute, Port-au-Prince, Haiti.

Email: alwarlock2000@yahoo.fr

**July**

**27-29** (Asia and Oceania) The 9th Asia TEFL International Conference

“Teaching English in a Changing Asia: Challenges and Directions”; Hotel Seoul KyoYuk MunHwa HoeKwan, Seoul, Korea.

Deadline for Proposal Submission: February 10, 2011
Notification of Acceptance: March 15, 2011.

Email: asiatefl2011chair@gmail.com
Website: http://www.asiatefl.org
ATESOL Newsletter • Vol 36 No 4 • December 2010

ATESOL (NSW) Inc is a professional Teachers Association formed in 1970. It has a membership 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:
• e-bulletin updates on events
• positive support for teachers
• practical classroom assistance
• regular seminars and workshops
• reduced registration rates to ACTA/ATESOL Conferences
• reduced rates to professional development activities
• affiliation with national and international associations
• regular newsletters
• relevant publications
• up-to-date information about TESOL opportunities
• special interest groups (SIGS)

Contributions to the newsletter
The Editor, ATESOL (NSW) Inc
PO Box 223, Leichhardt NSW 2040
Phone: 02 9564 3322
Fax: 02 9564 2342

Deadline for Issue 4 2010
Friday 19 November

Advertising rates for 2010 – space only (including GST)

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