On 20th May 2011, the Australian Minister for Education and Citizenship, Chris Bowen announced a significant change in the English language test options for international student visa applicants.

In addition to the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) used currently, the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), the Pearson Test of English Academic (PTE Academic) and the Cambridge English: Advanced (CAE) from Cambridge ESOL will be used for applicants from all countries. However, IELTS will continue as the test required for the growth category of skilled migrants sponsored by employers. Already some have welcomed the additional test options because they will speed up the assessment process.

This change has been described by Bernard Lane (The Australian, 20/05/2011) as having weakened the IELTS English language test monopoly in the Australian visa business. Lane further comments that the recent controversy surrounding the selection of previous international students for skilled migrant permanent residency will now be less of an issue.

...continued page 6
Welcome to the winter edition of the newsletter. The shortest day is now behind us and although the temperatures will remain low for a few weeks yet, we can at least be sure that the hours of daylight are steadily increasing!

Our focus article for this edition explores the changes in the English language test options for international student visa applicants. These changes will impact on many TESOL practitioners and we would love to hear from anyone who has used these tests with their students.

We also look at the use of technology as a vehicle to support language acquisition and development within the primary school. This time we visit Wiley Park Public School in Sydney’s south-west, where the use of Blogs in the classroom has enriched the second language program, as well as engaging and motivating staff and students alike.

Refugee Week was observed across Australia from June 19 – 25 and I am sure many of us have participated in celebrations both in our workplace and local community. It is to be hoped that reports of such celebrations make their way into the local and national media, where they can reflect the positive contribution that refugees make to Australian life. We are including some information which may help teachers to dispel some of the negativity surrounding this subject. Please send us any pictures of your own students taken during Refugee Week 2011!
ATESOL NSW members are encouraged to take note of several significant national consultation and implementation initiatives currently underway which have direct implications for EAL/D learners and their teachers.

ACARA General Capabilities

ACARA is currently conducting consultation on the full set of General Capabilities materials for the Australian Curriculum. There are seven General Capabilities: Literacy, Numeracy, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Competence, Critical and Creative Thinking, Personal and Social Competence, Ethical Behaviour and Intercultural Understanding.

An introduction to the General Capabilities was published in December 2010. The new overview of the seven General Capabilities and draft conceptual statements and continua for each one can be viewed on the Consultation section of the Australian Curriculum website at www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/Consultation.

The consultation deadline is Sunday 7 August. Teachers can provide individual feedback by completing the online survey or by using the feedback button for each section of the General Capabilities materials. Alternatively, send through your comments and recommendations to me to be included in the ACTA submission.

National Foundation Skills Strategy for Adults

Representatives from several of the state and territory TESOL associations attended consultations and focus groups meetings in April and May relating to the DEEWR National Foundation Skills Strategy for adults, which is scheduled for implementation in January 2012. More information about the NFSS is available on the DEEWR website at www.deewr.gov.au/Skills/Overview/Policy/Pages/NFSSforAdults.aspx.

An ACTA working party has been convened to provide direct input to DEEWR on the specific needs of adult EAL/D learners in relation to the NFSS. If you would like to participate on this working group, or if you have any feedback or suggestions, please contact me.

National Professional Standards for Teachers

The launch of IATSL’s National Professional Standards for Teachers website in May was followed by calls for pilot project and materials development proposals to trial and validate the standards. Throughout July, a series of ‘Leading Curriculum Change’ stakeholder forums will be held in capital cities around Australia. Representatives from all state and territory TESOL associations will attend these forums. The AITSL standards can be viewed at www.aitsl.edu.au/national-professional-standards-for-teachers/national-professional-standard-for-teachers-landing.html.

ACARA EAL/D F–10 Materials

Work on the EAL/D support materials for the F-10 Australian Curriculum is nearly complete. These materials have been prepared for mainstream teachers and comprise an EAL/D overview, language learning progression and annotations to content descriptions for each curriculum area. The materials are due to be published on the Australian Curriculum website in August. EAL/D student work samples will follow.

The ACARA EAL/D materials will be hyperlinked to each of the Australian Curriculum documents and to existing state and territory EAL/D frameworks and support materials. More information about the materials can be viewed at the Diversity of Learners page at www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/English/Diversity-of-learners.
Senior Secondary EAL/D Course

A second draft of the ACARA suite of four senior secondary English courses will soon be released for consultation. The EAL/D course has undergone major revisions following initial consultation feedback and is now being envisaged as a language-focused course rather than one that sits within the English curriculum area. While no scope has been provided for such a specialist English language course in F-10, the senior course has been designed to support EAL/D students across all curriculum areas through explicit teaching of the structure, linguistic features and sociolinguistic and sociocultural aspects of Standard Australian English.

All NSW secondary ESL teachers are urged to read and respond to the new draft of the senior secondary EAL/D course when it is published on the Australian Curriculum website and to encourage your colleagues to provide their feedback as well. Watch this space: http://consultation.australiancurriculum.edu.au/SeniorYears

HSC English (ESL) Revision Day

ATESOL NSW’s 2011 Revision Day for the HSC English (ESL) examination will be held on Monday 26 September at the Sydney Masonic Centre at 66 Goulburn Street, Sydney (just a short walk from Museum or Central railway station). Sessions on the day will address all electives and all aspects of the exam and will be presented by highly experienced teachers and markers of the HSC English (ESL) course.

A flyer is enclosed in this issue. This annual highlight is open to all Year 12 English (ESL) students and their teachers and is the best value HSC revision course around!

2012 ACTA International Conference

Preparations are well in hand for the third ACTA International Conference to be held at Cairns Convention Centre from 2–5 July 2012. This four-day event hosted by ATESOL NSW incorporates a pre-conference pronunciation symposium and will feature keynote presentations from leading national and international researchers in the fields of TESOL and multicultural education, including Professor Suresh Canagarajah, Professor Robert Phillipson, Dr Tove Skutnabb-Kangas, Professor Tracey Derwing and Professor Jane Simpson. Book the dates in your diary now and bring the whole family along!

For more information about our professional development activities and the upcoming international conference, visit the ATESOL NSW website at www.atesolnsw.org

Robert Jackson

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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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 2011 Council members on page 2 of this issue.

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

Robert Jackson
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.

Changes to Student Visa Regulations
The Department of Immigration and Citizenship has announced that as well as the existing IELTS option, three additional English language test options for student visa applicants will be accepted later this year. The Pearson Test of English (Academic), Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), and Cambridge Advanced English are the new tests that have been accepted (see lead article, pages 1 and 6).

NEAS ELT Management Conference
The National ELT Accreditation Scheme (NEAS), the independent body responsible for accrediting all ELICOS providers, held its annual ELT Management Conference at the Swissotel in Sydney in May. Teachers, managers, independent experts and representatives of peak bodies and government organisations joined Rob Lawrence, Simon Marginson and Adrian Doff as speakers in a program that covered regulatory requirements; performance management & professional development; curriculum development; using technology; marketing; and much more.

Action Research in ELICOS
Following a successful pilot program in 2010, eight teachers from ELICOS colleges in Perth, Melbourne and Sydney were selected to participate in this year’s English Australia/Cambridge ESOL Action Research in ELICOS program. The teachers attended an introductory workshop with Professor Anne Burns in early April to learn more about what’s involved in action research and to focus on their areas of interest, which include investigating Arabic students’ reading skills; raising learners’ awareness of pronunciation; using assessment rubric as an explicit teaching tool; developing independent learning skills and using blogs in assessment.

Information about action research and about the 2011 program can be found at the English Australia website, www.englishaustralia.com.au.

English Australia Conference – Registration now open
Registration for the 2011 English Australia Conference is open and the Earlybird rate closes on 31 July.

The English Australia Conference will be held in Adelaide from 22 – 24 September and organisers are planning a program that will benefit all those who work in ELICOS: teachers, teacher trainers, managers, marketers and student support staff. Plenary speakers include Elana Shohamy (assessment), Mike McCarthy (grammar) and Andy Hockley (academic management).

Go to www.eaconference.com.au for details on how to submit your abstract online. Conference registration will open shortly.

ELICOS student numbers
ELICOS numbers continue to decline in 2011 with -18% decline for the year-to-date figures compared with 2010, and declining numbers from all traditional source countries. All other international education sectors also showed declining numbers apart from higher education, which is maintaining small growth. English Australia is working collaboratively with other international education peak bodies and government departments to develop strategies that will address this decline and ensure all is being done to promote Australia as a safe, accessible country with high quality English language programs and services.

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 ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEST OPTIONS FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENT VISAS

...continued from page 1

The Minister’s press release:

Posted May 20, 2011

The Minister for Immigration and Citizenship, Chris Bowen MP, today announced three additional English language test options for student visa applicants to address the current shortage of test places.

The Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) will be expanded for use by applicants from all countries, and the Pearson Test of English Academic (PTE Academic) and the Cambridge English: Advanced (CAE) from Cambridge ESOL will shortly be added to the existing English language tests for student visa purposes specified in the Migration Regulations 1994. The Government anticipates these new tests will be accepted for student visa applications later this year.

“We have given careful consideration when selecting these three English language test providers to ensure that high standards of integrity are maintained and that test score results are appropriately safeguarded,” Mr Bowen said.

“The integrity of English language testing is important because the language test results are a key component in visa application requirements.

“These additional English language test options will help to create competition in the English language testing market, while creating more test places for student visa applicants.

“They will also provide candidates with greater choice and enable them to more quickly obtain test results needed for visa applications.”

Currently, the main English language test accepted by the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) for Australian visa purposes is the International English Language Testing System (IELTS). The Government has had a good working relationship with IELTS and we expect that to continue into the future.

The Government will closely monitor and review the implementation of the new tests to determine whether these should be introduced for other visa programs at a later date.

Further information will soon be available on DIAC’s website – www.immi.gov.au

Practitioners will be familiar with IELTS, TOEFL and CAE but may not be as well informed about the Pearson Test of English (Academic and General). Although information is available on the Pearson website http://pearsonpte.com, the following summary provides an introduction to the PTE:

Main differences between Pearson and IELTS

While the same skills are tested (writing, listening, reading and speaking), the tasks are shorter and often integrated (i.e. they may involve more than one skill at a time). For example, the candidate might be required
NEW ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEST OPTIONS FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENT VISAS

to listen to or read a short text and provide a written or oral summary (Academic). There are also some 'old school' inclusions, such as reading aloud and dictations.

Availability of PTE

During the launch period, PTE Academic will be available in 37 territories including China, India, the US, Japan, South Korea, Australia, the UK, Hong Kong, Taiwan and Canada.

Registration and cost

Candidates will be able to register online and schedule a test using a flexible 'choose and book' system.

The test will cost between $150US and $210US depending on where the test is taken. The cost in all Australian centres will be $210US.

Scores will be available online and via email within five business days of the test being taken.

Main differences between Pearson Academic and General

The Academic is one test for everyone (like IELTS) CEF (Common European Framework) B1 – C2 (Intermediate to Proficiency), whereas the General test is taken at each level of the CEF (A1 – C2) (more like the Cambridge main suite exams)

The Academic test is done on the computer and marked by the computer, whereas the General is in the traditional test format (a written paper and a speaking interview).

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PTE ACADEMIC

The Test is taken on the computer in one session (3 hours) and measures all four language areas: Listening, Reading, Speaking and Writing. Tasks are from a bank of items and 20 are randomly selected for each test. The test measures ability to 'analyze, interpret, recount and evaluate English as it is used in an academic setting'.

Information about computer scoring of spoken English is available: http://pearsonpte.com/PTEAcademic/Institutions/Pages/FAQTestScores.aspx

PTE GENERAL

"Pearson Test of English General (PTE General) is designed to reward positive achievement in English language learning."

PTE General consists of two parts: a written paper and a spoken test. The written paper tests listening, reading comprehension and writing skills and is marked by external examiners in the UK. The spoken test is assessed by trained local examiners and is sent to the UK for moderation.

For further details:
http://pearsonpte.com/PTEGeneral/Pages/home.aspx
http://pearsonpte.com/PTEAcademic/ResourcesForTeachers/Pages/teacherresources.aspx

Katie Chandler & Elizabeth Hotop (ESOL teachers, TAFENSW Sydney Institute, Ultimo)

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<th>Test Time (spoken test)</th>
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This report describes the use of technology as a vehicle to support language acquisition and development within the primary school.

Wiley Park PS, located in south western Sydney, caters for a large culturally and linguistically diverse community. Ninety seven percent of the school population is from language backgrounds other than English. Language acquisition and literacy development is a driving focus for the school.

The recent increase in the uptake of blogs by teachers is a response to the identification of blogs as an authentic way to promote second language acquisition and motivate both students and teachers. Many students, teachers and parents have been discussing the usefulness of blogs to work together in support all students’ learning.

The excitement and learning resulting from our blogs has definitely put ‘blogging’ on the map at Wiley Park. It is the key phrase on the tip of everyone’s tongue within the community.

Advantages of blogs: What our students and teachers report

Before unpacking the learning benefits within the classroom, it is important to show how blogs have increased communication across the school.

Blogs have provided an additional means of communication within the school, making knowledge public and accessible. Gone are the days when teachers were unaware of teaching and learning in other classrooms. Blogs have made the school a more open learning space with teachers and students sharing their learning experiences together and being inspired and motivated by each others’ experiences.

They have become an additional way of communicating with parents and actively involving them in classroom activities. This has meant that students have consolidated their learning through conversations about their work with their relatives in Australia and overseas. Parents have more direction in supporting their children’s learning within the home, as they witness what the teachers do and compliment these lessons through links with the child’s real world. This has allowed us to show authentic respect to parents as their children’s first teachers. A student in Year 2 acknowledged the benefits in having her family see her work over the internet:

I show the blog to my mum at home. And my mum writes on the blog and she knows what I’m learning about.

– Eman, 7 years old, 2M

Our community partners have also been involved in the dialogue online. For example, the education officer from Taronga Park Zoo and lecturers from our partnership university have left comments about the students’ work and asked the students questions. At school, the students have been involved in lessons around identity privacy, plagiarism and credibility of sources. Not only have they learnt how these issues affect them, they have also been taught ways to prevent any negative consequences.

Blogging helps children express their feelings over the internet. It’s really safe because the only people who see it are your teachers and the people who created blogED.

– Gabriel, 11 years old, 5CS.
Wiley Park Public School's experiences using blogEd

Teachers have found an additional benefit in using blogs. They have included links to various learning sites which the students can access via their blog. Some of our students have even added comments to the blog suggesting suitable sites in order to share resources with other children. Vincent is one of these students. He is an EALD (English as an Additional Language or Dialect) learner who became really engaged in lessons after the introduction of the class blog according to his Year 2 teacher. When his class started their blog last year, he made suggestions about suitable websites he had accessed, evaluating them according to the ‘audience’ of the class blog (other students within his year and class). When interviewed about the impact blogs have had on his learning, he stated enthusiastically:

They [The children] can put up questions and chat about it. You can learn more stuff about what the other kids know. They [The children] can have cool websites for maths and English games linked to the blog. – Vincent, 9 years old, 3B

Another student who regularly accesses the blog at home with her mother also commented on the useful links on the blog:

When my mum asks me questions, and I sometimes don’t know them, I ask my teacher on the blog. She answers me to help me learn. I sometimes use the websites that my teacher has on her blog to play games and learn.

– Rheanne, 8 years old, 2M.

Our Blogging Journey

Some early adopters of blogging programs, such as Edublogs, started the interest within the school amongst the staff. Once these teachers migrated to blogEd, news spread about the benefits of using the Department of Education and Training’s (DET) blogging program. Linking the blogs to the portal and kidspace has made the publishing tool easily accessible to both students and teachers alike. Teachers felt reassured about privacy and plagiarism since the DET has strict protocol pertaining to these issues.

It did not take long before there was a general request from staff for professional learning in setting up blogs. Teachers who had experimented with both Edublogs and blogEd ran a very practical based ‘blogEd 101’ in the computer laboratories at school during one staff development day. Links to quality EALD pedagogy ensured that teachers did not lose sight of the reasons behind using blogs. Mariani’s quadrants introduced the session to remind teachers that a blog can create high challenge for students however their needs to be appropriate scaffolding incorporated into lesson planning to ensure support is also offered for our EALD learners to succeed and participate to their potential. (Mariana, L., 1997)
From this point there was a mushrooming of blogs across the school with class blogs, student blogs and blogs for specific reasons eg the choir blog being developed and used for a variety of purposes. Teachers have pursued additional learning in IT such as using MovieMaker, Photostory and Web 2.0 tools to support learning so they can load photos and videos of class experiences and tap into other resources.

The use of Web 2.0 tools has lead to authentic student learning opportunities around editing and publishing. Although editing was already a feature of many teaching and learning programs in the school, it has been emphasized through the incorporation of blogs into planning since by nature they are very ‘public’. The students now have real purpose for thorough editing since their audience can be global. This is highlighted in an interview with a class teacher involved in setting up student blogs for her whole class using blog ED.

BlogEd has been a wonderful tool that has given my students opportunity to explore the importance of self editing their work. I send back all submissions with errors to the children for amendment before they are allowed to publish it. Doing this in such a public forum has really shown the students the importance of proof reading and error correction, a vital skill children need to be successful learners. – Maree Sartor, Year 5 class teacher

Wiley Park Public School's experiences using blogEd

Blogs and Language Learning

In 2009 the Successful Language Learners Project commenced in Wiley Park Public School. One of the aims of the program was to develop Whole Class Language Learning Plans to support students’ language development through the different KLAs.

Technology integration was an element of the Plans at our school. The emphasis on the right technology, at the right time, to work within the right context made the integration authentic rather than ad hoc and a tokenistic use of IT tools. The targeted language was expected to be recast in specific cultural and situational contexts that linked strongly to the ‘real world’. Before students were expected to use this language independently through technology projects, communicative activities were organised and included in the Language Learning Plans to provide opportunities for targeted language to be recycled by the students. The idea behind this recycling is to allow students to practise and internalize the language.

Various assessment procedures such as Whole School EALD Scales Assessment, NAPLAN Data, SLL Assessment Bank Data (held biannually) and teacher observations have suggested that the authentic integration of technology in lessons has had a positive effect on students’ learning. Engagement is high, language and lesson content can be explored thoroughly and reflections on the work via conversations over the blog consolidate the learning for all students, especially our EALD learners.

Another advantage of blogs which was explored through librarian Gill Maugle's Blog Rap was the ability to link with other schools around NSW. These schools came from different education systems (e.g. DET and Private Sector) and different settings (e.g. rural, city, regional, suburban). Our EALD students benefited from this interaction as they witnessed work other schools had submitted, using critical literacy skills to analyse the meaning making process involved in such a project. We hope to publish more about Gill’s work in the next Newsletter.

Bibliography

Mariana, L., (1997) ‘Teacher Support and Teacher Challenge in Promoting Learner Autonomy’ Perspectives 23 (2) Italy
Developing Literacy using Visual Arts

In this issue of K–6 Corner I want to share a series of lessons I recently observed that effectively used visual arts to build literacy skills.

Context
These lessons were conducted in a Year Four class. The class was working within the theme of space and the writing focus for the term was information reports. There was a specific language focus on using a range of action verbs and building noun groups to add detail and information.

Visual Arts
Students first created prints of space using talcum powder, black paint and a silk screen. The effect created was that of stars in space and on many, white streaks that could be interpreted as comets, star clusters, nebulae, etc. Once their backgrounds had dried, students cut circles from coloured paper and art scraps to make planets to put on their background. Each artwork was very unique and allowed students to create their own interpretation of a view from space.

Linking Literacy
Once students had created their artwork, they were asked to give it a title. This required them to think about what was represented in their picture and any feelings or emotions it evoked. They were then taught about haiku poems and encouraged to think about words that could be used to describe a feeling or action that was occurring in their artwork. In small groups, students came up with different words or phrases, building noun groups or selecting specific action verbs to add detail. These phrases were recorded on a chart at the front of the class for future reference.

Once each student had individually written their poem, they were photographed with their artwork. These photographs were used to create a Photo Story of the class’s work. Each student recorded themselves reading their poem and discussing features of their art. They discussed their word choices and how these words helped convey specific meanings, emotions or actions.

While students were not specifically writing information reports, the series of lessons helped develop their ability to describe and build noun groups in a meaningful and engaging context. They were able to practise adding description and detail to their writing in a creative way. Afterwards, students were able to refer to these words and noun groups when writing their information reports about a planet of their choice. The lesson promoted a greater understanding of the effect language choices have on the reader or audience. It allowed students to explore this concept through both talking about their language choices and writing a different text type.
MYTH SHEET 1

MYTH: Asylum seekers who arrive by boat are illegal.
DID YOU KNOW: It is legal to seek asylum in Australia, even if you arrive on a boat without a visa. Seeking asylum is a legal right guaranteed under Australian and international law, and it is against the law for governments to punish asylum seekers no matter how they get here.

MYTH: Asylum seekers who arrive by boat are queue jumpers.
DID YOU KNOW: Asylum seekers are not breaking the rules, even if they arrive by boat. For 99 per cent of people who need protection, seeking asylum in another country is their only choice. Resettlement through the UN (‘the queue’) is only available for a very small group, and the resettlement program exists to work with the asylum system, not to replace it.

MYTH: If all they want is protection, they could stay in Indonesia or Malaysia.
DID YOU KNOW: Most asylum seekers do stay in countries like Iran, Pakistan Indonesia and Malaysia. But these places do not protect asylum seekers or refugees, so some are forced to flee further afield. Even then, most asylum seekers head for Europe and America. There is no country between Afghanistan and Australia that has signed the Refugee Convention.

MYTH: Asylum seekers are just after a better job.
DID YOU KNOW: Nearly all asylum seekers who arrive by boat are found to be refugees fleeing persecution, war and violence. The definition of a refugee is internationally-agreed and a low economic status is not grounds for being recognised as a refugee.

MYTH: If asylum seekers can afford to get here, they don’t need protection.
DID YOU KNOW: It costs between $5,000 and $20,000 to seek asylum in Australia. Many asylum seekers are not wealthy, but borrow money from relatives and/or sell land and possessions to make the journey to safety.

MYTH: Asylum seekers should get help from the UN in their country.
DID YOU KNOW: It is often very difficult, and even impossible, for asylum seekers to get help from the UN. Often they don’t even know the UN exists, or it is too dangerous to go to the city where the UN office is. Even if they are able to contact the UN and get UN refugee status, there may be little the UN can do to assist them – you cannot seek asylum from within your own country.
MYTH: Asylum seekers destroy their identity documents to get refugee status.

DID YOU KNOW: When escaping oppressive governments or sudden violence, it is often impossible to bring or get a passport, or these documents are lost or stolen during the long journey to safety. In some cases, people are told that they have a better chance of protection if they destroy their documents but governments can and should assess asylum claims and protect refugees, even without identity documents.

MYTH: Australia accepts its fair share of refugees.

DID YOU KNOW: Australia protects around 14,000 refugees each year. When compared with other countries we only rank 68th in refugees per capita.

Source: World Refugee Week Teacher’s Pack 2011

Useful websites

The United Nations High Commission for Refugees provides statistics, reports and case studies on refugees and asylum seekers around the world. www.unhcr.org

Amnesty International provides up-to-date blogs, country reports, news articles, policy analysis and further human rights education resources on refugees in Australian and around the world, as well as ways to take action to help this issue. www.amnesty.org.au/refugees

The Refugee Council of Australia offers loads of facts sheets, reports, position papers, overview of media coverage and some case studies. www.refugeecouncil.org.au

Rethink Refugees is a new project launched by Amnesty International Australia that promotes the facts and the real stories of refugees who arrive in Australia by boat. www.rethinkrefugees.com.au


The Department of Immigration and Citizenship provides fact sheets, statistics and information about the processes involved in Australia’s refugee determination system. www.immi.gov.au

All information uploaded from: www.sbs.com.au/shows/goback/listings/page/i/2/h/Schools/
Includes a guided tour of World Vision’s ‘Connecting Lives’ interactive exhibition.

**Rwandan Stories**

*A hands-on professional development session on using this new curriculum resource in the classroom.*

“The Rwandanstories resource could be used to great effect to develop student knowledge, understanding and empathy in regards to one of the geographical human-induced disasters of the 20th Century.”

Malcolm McInerny, AGTA Chair

The RwandanStories curriculum helps young people think rigorously through the values, ideas and actions that either lead to conflict or build peace.

Bringing together a remarkable collection of video, photography and journalism, it explores the origins, details and aftermath of the Rwandan genocide through the eyes of both victims and perpetrators.

It looks at the possibilities for people everywhere to promote reconciliation, rebuilding and tolerance.

Sally Morgan will introduce you to the classroom activities available and help you customise a suitable unit from the wide range of fully resourced lesson plans.

**Thursday**

11th August 2011

10.30-4.30pm

World Vision
Mezzanine, 134 William St
Potts Point

Cost $160 incl. lesson plans

Suitable for Year 9 and above
Social/Values education
Civics and Citizenship
Human Geography
Global/cross cultural studies

TO REGISTER OR FOR MORE INFORMATION
CONTACT SALLY MORGAN  e: sally@rwandanstories.org  m: 0431 202 209
Grammatically Speaking

T. Leo Schmitt explores English grammar and answers your grammar quandaries.

Hi Leo,
I hope you are well. What is this construct called? “There is/There are”

Why do we do there is versus there are? As in, there is an answer, but there are colours. I always thought it had to do with the predicate being singular or plural, but I was told that is not why we do that.

Thanks!
Kate

Hi Kate,

Thank you for the question. On the one hand it should be straightforward, yet as with much of language, there are interesting angles.

There is used to indicate existence or location. The there has been described as a “preparatory subject” coming before the subject itself, but see below for more discussion on that. Interestingly, a comparable construction exists in many languages and uses perhaps surprising grammatical structures in many of them. Thus we see French il y a (it there has), Spanish hay (it has), German es gibt (it gives), Arabic fi (in – no verb required) and Chinese 有 (has). In modern English, we generally follow the Subject-Verb-Object (SVO) pattern of creating declarative sentences. Thus we have “I saw the man behind the curtain,” where I is the subject of the verb saw, and the man is the object of the verb. This is the standard declarative pattern although questions and negatives often change the order.

However, we see exceptions to this SVO rule, such as with “Then came the day when those talking pictures came to town” or “With martial stalk hath he gone by our watch.” These are often holdovers from a time when English was much more flexible in its word order. There is can be seen as a similar holdover, yet its productivity has meant that it has thrived when other forms have declined or vanished. Traditionally, the main noun would come after the verb as in the examples above. Thus, we have “there lived a hobbit.” Many traditional grammarians approach this in this manner and ascribe the noun following a there is/there are construction to be the true subject of the verb. This continues to be a very fruitful way to look at the construction and continues to apply in many instances — especially formal ones — but as we all know, language is in a constant state of flux.

As I mentioned, other violations of the SVO pattern are becoming rarer. I would argue that because there is a growing pressure to frame language in this SVO pattern, people are beginning to use there is as something closer to a standard subject verb construction where there constitutes the true subject. The most compelling case for this is the move towards using there is with plural complements such as “There is two kinds of music: the good and the bad” or “There is lots of cats in Greece.” While grammatical traditionalists frown on this, it is clearly widespread.

A second argument is that there is can stand alone as a complete thought (within context of course). “There is no question two. Yes, there is.” While fragments are common in spoken language, this one exists in written language as well. This also gives credence to there being viewed increasingly as the subject of the verb.

A further argument is the question of agreement with multiple single objects. We know that in traditional grammar (and generally in practice) the subject X and Y is generally followed by a plural verb as in “A lion and a tiger are genetically close enough to reproduce.” However, it is not nearly as widely accepted that a there are construction is required with two singular nouns following, so saying “there are a fork and a knife on the table” or “there are a man and woman in the middle of the street” would sound strange while “there is a fork and a knife on the table” or “there is a man and woman in the middle of the street” would not. This whole trend may well be driven by phonology. It seems clear that the there is construction constructed “ungrammatically” with plural predicates is still more common in spoken language. Phonetically, English finds it much easier to have a sibilant (/s/ or /z/) sound after a liquid (/l/ or /r/) sound than the same liquid. Thus there’s rolls off the tongue much more easily than there’re. This may lead to a “frozen collocation” where speakers begin to conceptualise there is as a set phrase that is invariable.

All of these indicate that the there is construction is undergoing considerable change. For helping students preparing for formal situations, the traditional rule still holds considerable appeal and whether the noun following is is defined as the predicate, subject, or something else, that is where the student should look for grammatical agreement. However, it is worthwhile for teachers to understand that the there is construction seems to be in a process of change and it would not surprise me to see there are begin to die out as a separate form.

This article is taken from the May 2011 edition of TESOL Connections
The 5th Annual International Free Linguistics Conference will be held in the Eastern Avenue Auditorium Complex, on Eastern Avenue, The University of Sydney, Camperdown Campus on the 8 and 9 October, 2011.

The aim of this conference is to provide scholars, researchers, postgraduate and undergraduate students with current research issues from all fields of linguistics and TESOL an open and widely accessible forum.

The conference is free due to generous sponsorship from the University of Sydney.

The main feature that distinguishes this conference is its focus on freedom:
- freedom from linguistic subfield divisions;
- freedom from an established and rigid theme for presentations, and;
- freedom from fees.

Focus speakers include:
- Peter Collins, University of New South Wales
- William S. Greaves and Jim Benson, York University
- Andy Kirkpatrick, Griffith University
- Peter White, University of New South Wales

This year, FLC will also offer a special five day workshop on Intonation and Meaning in English led by William S. Greaves & Jim Benson.

The workshop will run from Sunday 10 to Friday 14 October 2011. There are limited places available for this course, so please register early – last day for registration is Saturday 1 October 2011.

A draft timetable for the conference will appear in September. Go to www.freelinguistics.org/2011

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**Mentors Wanted for Refugees and Skilled Migrants**

The College Skilled Migrant and Refugee Mentoring Programs are seeking volunteer mentors to work one-to-one with a refugee or skilled migrant.

**What does a mentor do?**

A mentor is someone who:
- Will listen and give information and advice
- Provide moral support
- Offer ideas for career development or future study

- Give an insight about local workplace practices and career development opportunities
- May be able to help with learn specific skills

For further information and to register your interest online, visit – http://getskilled.sydneycommunitycollege.com.au/Volunteer%20Mentors

For further information please contact Customer Service on 8752 7555 or email – customer.service@scc.nsw.edu.au
Positions available in Language Schools in China

We are Gold Star TEFL Recruitment, an English owned and managed recruitment agency specialising in placing teachers at the most prestigious language schools in China. Language schools in China today range from diabolical to exceptional. We have assisted hundreds of teachers to secure positions at the very best language schools and would like to ensure your members do the same. All of the schools we work with have been through a rigorous screening process and offer the very best in English education and professionalism. All our schools offer the following:

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The recruitment process works as follows:

1. We provide candidates with details of specific jobs.
2. Candidates then choose the jobs that suit them best
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We make a fee from the schools, so there are no costs whatsoever for the teachers.

I would be pleased to answer any questions you may have about the recruitment process and to discuss things further via email at jim.althans@GoldStarTeachers.com or via a Skype call at ‘thejinbaobao’. Please go to our website for further details on the recruitment process – www.GoldStarTeachers.com

Kind regards

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The University of New England, Armidale, in the heart of the beautiful New England region of New South Wales, will play host to the national conference of the Australian Systemic Functional Linguistics Association (ASFLA) from Wednesday 21 to Friday 23 September 2011.

The conference is also supported by the Australian Literacy Educators’ Association (ALEA) – Northern NSW

Aims and themes
Systemic functional linguistics is a metalanguage adapted to account for language in its environment. It is a toolkit that has continued to evolve in interaction with new contexts and to engage bravely with the questions that emerge as a result. The 2011 conference at UNE entitled Language, knowledge & justice: New contexts, new questions, will provide an opportunity to explore questions and issues emerging from work at the interface, often the margins, of the social, the semiotic and the ethical.

The three strands of the conference theme pick up on this interest in the relationship between language and other kinds of work: language and other semiotic systems, knowledge and new work within the sociology of education, justice and work towards more ethical restorative systems.

The three themes highlight the importance of thinking about knowledge, language and justice in new contexts. While the three can be looked at individually they are obviously interwoven in social practice.

Language
The tools of SFL are being expanded and adapted to account for application to new ecosocial environments. These include the development of SFG for LOTE, computer generated languages, clinical settings and new educational contexts.

Knowledge
This theme draws on research into knowledge structures in sociology and education as inspired by the work of Basil Bernstein and Karl Maton amongst others. The theme acknowledges recent work on the transformation of knowledge through digital technologies.

Justice
Michael Halliday sees linguistics as a committed form of social action. Matters of social justice are at the heart of SFL. In this theme, we recognise important new work in youth justice conferencing, legal processes and research addressing inequities in education.

Further information and registration available at ASFLA: www.asfla.org.au

English Australia/Cambridge ESOL
Action Research in ELICOS Program

A primary goal of English Australia (EA), the professional association and peak representative body of ELICOS providers, is to raise levels of professional practice to ensure that Australia’s reputation for high quality in ELICOS continues.

The English Australia/Cambridge ESOL Action Research in ELICOS program was piloted to help meet this goal in 2010 and is now in its second year. The program goals are:

- to equip teachers with the skills to enable them to explore and address identified teaching challenges in the context of Australian ELICOS; and
- to share outcomes of this research in the form of presentations at local events and at the English Australia conference, as well as through publication.

Through the implementation of the program EA hopes to raise the professionalism of Australian ELICOS by: the development of teachers actively involved in classroom research (the program); the development of teacher peer networks; increased teacher engagement with research and academic researchers; and more teachers furthering their formal professional development.

To read more about this program together with details of projects and publication, go to the English Australia website, www.englishaustralia.com.au, or contact EA Professional Support & Development Officer Katherine Brandon, kathbrandon@englishaustralia.com.au.
### July


**8–9 (Asia and Oceania)** TESOL Symposium, “Sustainable Teacher Development Through Innovative Teaching and Research,” Beijing University, Beijing, China. Email: edprograms@tesol.org Web: [www.tesol.org/s_tesol/sec](http://www.tesol.org/s_tesol/sec)

**14-16 (Asia)** Language and Communication: Barriers and Challenges conference. A conference for teachers, educators and research scholars in English, organised by SRM College of Engineering and Management, Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh, India
Web: [http://communicationconference.blogspot.com](http://communicationconference.blogspot.com)


### August

**1–4 (North America)** XIX World Congress “Bridging Cultures”, organised by FIT/ATA. The Congress will bring together literary translators, interpreters, terminologists and other professionals from all over the world to discuss topical issues. Over 75 educational sessions will be offered in a variety of categories. San Francisco, California, USA

Contact: cebu2011@asian-efl-journal.com
Web: [http://www.asiatefl.org](http://www.asiatefl.org)

### September

**3–6 (Asia and Oceania)** The First Extensive Reading World Congress. “Extensive Reading – The Magic Carpet to Language Learning”, Kyoto Sangyo University, Kyoto, Japan.
Email: erwc1@erfoundation.org
Web: [http://erfoundation.org/erwc1](http://erfoundation.org/erwc1)

Email: piawhite@hotmail.com
Web: [www.mextesol.org.mx](http://www.mextesol.org.mx)

### October

**1–3 (Africa and the Middle East)** TESOL Conference in Qatar; “Putting Research Into Practice,” Qatar National Convention Centre, Doha, Qatar.
Email edprograms@tesol.org

**13–15 (North America)** Southeast TESOL, “Culture, Language, & Heritage,” Omni-Downtown, Richmond, Virginia, USA. Email: jkuchno@gmail.com.
Web: [www.vatesol.cloverpad.org](http://www.vatesol.cloverpad.org)

**15–16 (Asia and Oceania)** 19th Korea TESOL International Conference “Pushing Our Paradigms; Connecting with Culture”, Seoul South Korea
Web: [www.kotesol.org](http://www.kotesol.org)

**November

Web: [http://jalt.org/conference](http://jalt.org/conference)

**30-December 2 (Asia and Oceania)** The Applied Linguistics Associations of Australia (ALAA) and New Zealand (ALANZ) 2nd Combined Conference, “Applied Linguistics as a Meeting Place,” University of Canberra and the Australian National University, Canberra, Australia.
Email: appliedLing.2011@canberra.edu.au
Web: [www.alaa.org.au](http://www.alaa.org.au)
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 to update members on events
- Professional learning for teachers
- Regular seminars and workshops
- Reduced registration rates to the ACTA conference
- Reduced rates to ATESOL professional learning activities
- Regular newsletters
- TESOL in Context, journal of ACTA
- Affiliation with national and international associations
- Up-to-date information about TESOL opportunities

Contributions to the newsletter
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Website: www.atesolnsw.org