

Wellington Association of Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages



WATESOL EXPO 2026

In-person only

**Rutherford House
Victoria University of Wellington
33 Bunny St
Wellington**

<https://www.wgtn.ac.nz/about/campuses-facilities/campuses/pipitea/pipitea-campus-map.pdf>

**Wednesday 19 August
3:30 – 7:30pm**

Nau mai, haere mai

Welcome

TESOLANZ and WATESOL members free

**Non-members: \$25 waged, \$15 low waged, \$10
students**

(please bring cash – no Eftpos or online banking available)

WATESOL Expo Programme, August 19th, 2026

Rutherford House 3:30pm	Registration opens 3:30pm: Mezzanine level, Rutherford House Refreshments			
4:00 – 4:50pm	Opening Plenary: 4:00 – 4:50pm Room: Lecture Theatre 2 Keynote Speaker: Professor Averil Coxhead Title: <i>Gen AI classroom-based vocabulary exercises: Principles and practice</i> Book launch			
4:50 – 5:10	WATESOL AGM: Lecture Theatre 2			
5:10-5:40pm	Pizzas – Networking – Spot prizes			
5:40 – 6:10pm	Room: MZ01 Presenter: Keith Hutton Target audience: Teachers of primary, intermediate and secondary schools <i>Language as Mana - How peer-teaching heritage language builds confidence, identity and connection</i>	Room: MZ02 Presenter: Emma Roylands Target audience: Secondary and tertiary teachers/ intermediate and advanced <i>Why Aren't They Talking? Designing Better Speaking Opportunities</i>	Room: MZ03 Presenter: Renee Nielsen Target audience: Teachers of all levels <i>Multiliteracies and critical thinking in an intercultural adult English Language Studies classroom</i>	Room: LT 2 Presenter: Elizaveta Tarasova Target audience: TESOL educators <i>From Prompt to Pedagogy: Designing Better TESOL Tasks with AI</i>

6:10-6:20pm	10-minute break between sessions			
6:20-6:50pm	Room: MZ01 Presenter: Uzma Kanwal Target audience: early years teachers/ teachers of primary <i>Benefits of language acquisition through phonics</i>	Room: MZ02 Presenter: Courtney McDonald Target audience: teachers of Beginner-intermediate ESOL students <i>Writing Identity in 17 Syllables: Haiku in ESL Classrooms</i>	Room: MZ03 Presenter: Zihuai Qin Target audience: EAP/ESOL teachers, tertiary teachers, teacher educators <i>From “Work on Your Weak Areas” to Guided Independent Learning in EAP</i>	Room: LT 2 Presenter: Ha Hoang Target audience: teachers of all levels <i>From Auditing to Action: A Pedagogical Personalisation Model for AI-Supported Language Learning Platforms</i>
		Presenter: Natalia Beliaeva Target audience: all language teachers and TESOL educators <i>Learn everything in your English class: Anecdotal evidence from a lazy teacher</i>		
6:50-6:55pm	5-minute break between sessions			
6:55-7:20pm	Closing Presentation: 6:55-7:20pm Room: LT 2 Presenter: Olly Ballance Title: <i>Technology, Social Interaction, and Self-Regulation in Vocabulary Learning</i>			
7:20pm	Farewell			

4:00-4:50pm

Keynote Speaker: Professor Averil Coxhead

Title: *Gen AI classroom-based vocabulary exercises: Principles and practice*

Room: **RHLT 2**

Abstract

Generative AI is causing seemingly equal measures of excitement and trepidation for English language teachers everywhere. Calling on the spirit of the Year of the Horse which promises much in terms of independence, vitality in great measure, momentum and transformation without boundaries, this talk begins with considering research-based principles which are important for creating and evaluating classroom-based vocabulary exercises. We then apply these principles to practical examples of exercises from Gen AI and bring in some online tools for creating activities for good measure. There will be time for practice and questions.

Professor Averil Coxhead is the Dean of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences at Victoria University of Wellington. She was previously the Head of School of Linguistics and Applied Language Studies. She is a co-author of *Teaching essential units of language: Beyond single-word vocabulary*, 2nd edition (2026; Routledge); *Introduction to English for Academic Purposes*, 2nd edition (2025, Routledge); *Measuring the vocabulary size of native speakers* (2021, John Benjamins) and *English for Vocational Purposes* (Routledge, 2020).

4:50 – 5:40pm

WATESOL AGM

Followed by Refreshments and Networking

5:40 – 6:10pm

Title: *Language as Mana - How peer-teaching heritage language builds confidence, identity and connection*

Presenter: Keith Hutton

Room: MZ01

Target audience: Teachers of primary, intermediate and secondary schools, people who would like to offer extension to bilingual students and celebrate their first language.

Abstract

Monolingual norms often marginalise the linguistic identities of multilingual learners in Aotearoa. This presentation explores the Language Leader programme where Year 7 students peer-teach heritage languages. By repositioning learners as linguistic experts, the program leverages cultural knowledge as a powerful learning tool. Using scaffolds like digital resources, hands on games and planning templates, the model fosters student growth in confidence, pride, and identity. Attendees will gain practical insights into implementing this model, shifting classroom mindsets to celebrate heritage voices and challenge traditional monolingual schooling norms.

Keith Hutton has been teaching for over 20 years in primary schools. He is currently a CRT teacher in a full primary school, teaching years 2 to 8. He is running the language programme with all of his Year 7 students. keith@clydequay.school.nz

Title: *Why Aren't They Talking? Designing Better Speaking Opportunities*

Presenter: Emma Roylands

Room: MZ02

Target audience: Secondary and tertiary ESOL teachers/intermediate and advanced.

Abstract

It is easy to say students need more speaking practice, but harder to design tasks that actually make speaking feel possible and purposeful. This presentation draws on a curriculum alignment analysis, classroom observation, a teacher interview, and changes I am making in my own teaching. I look at why 'please discuss' often falls flat, and how structured tasks such as information-gaps, jigsaw tasks, 4-3-2 fluency activities, and 'Coffee Hour' can give students a real reason to use the language. The focus is on practical ways to build speaking confidence without turning every interaction into a performance

Emma Roylands is studying an MTESOL at VUW. She tutors 100 and 200-level French courses and is beginning co-teaching EAP at the English Language Institute. She previously spent three years teaching English and coordinating language programmes in High Schools in New Caledonia. Her interests include practical teaching and communicative language teaching. emma.roylands@vuw.ac.nz

Title: *Multiliteracies and critical thinking in an intercultural adult English Language Studies classroom*

Presenter: Renee Nielsen

Room: MZ03

Target audience: Teachers of tertiary or adult learners; all levels

Abstract

‘Multiliteracies’ is a term that describes interconnected reading skills across multiple language and cultural contexts (Wedin & Berg, 2024), using different modes of communication (Esperat, 2024). For adults learning a second language, the diverse modes of multiliteracies can help to support accessible learning opportunities (Burgess, 2020). This study reflects on practical, real-life teaching experiences wherein multiliteracy approaches were applied in teaching NZCEL Level 4 Academic Reading to international adult learners enrolled in English Language Studies courses. Higher participation in discussions and critical thinking opportunities, and increased connection in the classroom space to one’s own sociocultural identity, were observed.

Renee Nielsen is the ESOL Coordinator and lecturer at IPU New Zealand, teaching mainly international adult tertiary learners. Recently, she became a member of MANATESOL. Her teaching and research interests are in embracing sociocultural identities, multiliteracies in contemporary education, and on narrative identity and cross-cultural storytelling. rnielsen@ipu.ac.nz

Title: *From Prompt to Pedagogy: Designing Better TESOL Tasks with AI*

Presenter: Elizaveta Tarasova

Room: Lecture theatre 2

Target audience: TESOL Educators

Abstract

Generative AI can produce classroom materials in seconds, but speed does not guarantee quality and usefulness of the materials. While AI can assist with drafting texts, generating activities, and adapting existing resources, it cannot determine what learners need, how tasks should be sequenced, or where meaningful learning takes place. Those decisions remain the responsibility of the teacher.

This practical presentation demonstrates how TESOL educators can use AI as a supportive design tool while maintaining pedagogical integrity and learner agency. Through a series of real classroom examples, participants will see how small changes to prompts influence AI-generated outputs, learn to identify common weaknesses in AI-produced tasks, and explore simple strategies for transforming generic materials into communicative, learner-centred activities. The session concludes with a practical framework that helps teachers decide when AI can appropriately support task design, and when professional judgement should take precedence. Participants will leave with practical techniques they can immediately apply in their own teaching, together with greater confidence in using AI critically, ethically, and purposefully.

Dr Elizaveta Tarasova is the Quality Assurance Manager at ETC, an English language teaching institution based in Palmerston North. She is actively involved in teacher development through delivering Trinity College London TESOL qualifications. Her professional and research interests span morphology, materials and assessment design,

teacher agency, and the pedagogical integration of linguistic knowledge. She has extensive experience in language teaching, teacher training and mentoring support, research, and supervision. elizaveta@etc.ac.nz

6:20 – 6:50pm

Title: *Benefits of language acquisition through phonics*

Presenter: Uzma Kanwal

Room: MZ01

Target audience: early years teachers/ teachers of primary

Abstract

The benefits of phonics in language acquisition, particularly in developing early literacy skills. It highlights how systematic phonics instruction supports children in decoding unfamiliar words, improving reading fluency, spelling accuracy, and long-term retention of sound-symbol relationships. Drawing on classroom experience, the presentation demonstrates how structured phonics teaching enables learners with limited initial literacy skills to make rapid progress in reading and writing. It also emphasises the role of phonics in building learner confidence and independence. Overall, phonics is presented as an essential and effective approach for strengthening foundational language skills in early education

Uzma Kanwal is a former Year 2 teacher from Sharjah, United Arab Emirates (UAE). She has more than eight years of teaching experience in multilingual classrooms. She taught in the British curriculum. Throughout her teaching career, she has developed a strong passion for phonics-based instruction, early literacy development, and English language acquisition.

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Title: *Writing Identity in 17 Syllables: Haiku in ESL Classrooms*

Presenter: Courtney McDonald

Room: MZ02

Target Audience: ESOL teachers for beginner-intermediate students

Abstract

Writing haiku can provide ESL learners with a concise and accessible way to explore identity while developing expressive language skills. This session discusses a classroom task in which students used haiku to engage with aspects of their national identity, drawing on prior knowledge while experimenting with new vocabulary and forms of expression. Designed as a creative challenge, the task encourages learners to communicate meaningfully even with limited language resources. Participants will be invited to discuss the task's applicability in their own contexts and contribute ideas for adapting and refining the activity.

Courtney McDonald joined the EAP Programme this year. Her background in teaching tertiary students developed with her involvement in the German and Intercultural Communication programmes at VUW. She holds a doctorate in Literary Translation and is interested in how creative forms, including poetry, can support language learning.
courtney.mcdonald@vuw.ac.nz

Title: *Learn everything in your English class: Anecdotal evidence from a lazy teacher*

Presenter: Natalia Beliaeva

Room: MZ02

Target Audience: all language teachers and TESOL educators.

Abstract

Language teachers teach life skills alongside language skills, and sometimes need to put life skills first because this is what many learners come to English classes for. To teach life skills in an English classroom seems nearly impossible on top of curriculum, assessment planning, administration paperwork, semester timelines, class levels, you name it. However, embedded life skill teaching approach builds life skills into teaching planning and makes teaching more effortless and time efficient. In this short workshop we will turn course planning upside down and learn a few practical tips for being lazy but effective teachers

Natalia Beliaeva is Director of Studies at English Teaching College, Lower Hutt. She brings together TESOL experience including teacher mentoring, practical experience in supporting migrants and refugees to employment, and research background in language learning and linguistics. Natalia@etc.ac.nz

Title: *From “Work on Your Weak Areas” to Guided Independent Learning in EAP*

Presenter: Zihuai Qin

Room: MZ03

Target Audience: EAP/ESOL teachers, tertiary teachers, teacher educators

Abstract

EAP students are often encouraged to study independently, but guidance can remain broad, reactive, and resource-based. The proposed design translates Nation's Four Strands into student-friendly learning purposes for guided independent learning: understanding input, practising output, noticing useful language, and developing fluency. The routine includes a student-facing activity menu, a short weekly template, and a worked example showing how students can connect current course tasks, self-diagnosis, activity choice, light evidence, and reflection. The design aims to support learner autonomy while remaining feasible for teachers

Zihuai Qin is a Master of TESOL student at Victoria University of Wellington with previous English-teaching experience in China. His interests include EAP curriculum design, learner autonomy, guided independent learning, and using Nation's Four Strands to support language learning beyond the classroom. qinzihu@myvuw.ac.nz

Title: *From Auditing to Action: A Pedagogical Personalisation Model for AI-Supported Language Learning Platforms*

Presenter: Ha Hoang

Room: LT2

Target Audience: teachers of all levels

Abstract

AI-supported language-learning platforms increasingly promise personalised learning, but these claims often blur the distinction between adaptive features and pedagogically meaningful personalisation. This presentation introduces a Pedagogical Personalisation Evaluation Model for examining whether platform adaptations are aligned with language-learning goals, based on interpretable learner evidence, understandable and actionable for learners, and feasible for teacher mediation. The model focuses on five interconnected dimensions: the platform's language-learning model, learner-evidence model, personalisation mechanism, learning opportunities and agency, and mediation and feedforward. An audit of one AI-supported English-learning platform is used to illustrate how the model can distinguish system personalisation from learner-centred learning. The presentation offers teachers and institutions a practical framework for evaluating AI-supported platforms beyond feature labels and technical claims.

Dr Ha Hoang is a Lecturer in Applied Linguistics and a Senior Teacher in EAP at Te Herenga Waka - Victoria University of Wellington. With 25 years of TESOL experience, her work spans EAP, language teacher education, curriculum design, CLIL, language programme development, and consultancy. She researches language pedagogy, curriculum issues, teacher development, and classroom-based language learning. ha.hoang@vuw.ac.nz

6:55 – 7.20pm

Closing Presentation

Title: *Technology, Social Interaction, and Self-Regulation in Vocabulary Learning*

Presenter: Olly Ballance

Room: LT 2

Target Audience: All ESOL teachers

Abstract

Vocabulary learning is often framed as selecting effective strategies, but learners' experiences reveal a more complex process. This paper reports a thematic analysis of interviews with eight successful language learners about their lifelong vocabulary learning experiences. Findings identify goal-driven self-regulation, technology and social interaction as major factors in their learning. Individual cases illustrate different learners' positionality in relation to these factors. Vocabulary instruction should therefore extend beyond strategy teaching to address learners' goals and raise awareness of the technological and social resources that support sustained, long-term vocabulary development within and beyond formal instruction.

Dr Olly Balance is an applied linguist who specializes in language teaching and learning. His research interests include vocabulary studies, computer-assisted language learning, language for specific purposes and corpus linguistics. He has taught a wide range of courses at undergraduate and postgraduate levels, including second language grammar and vocabulary pedagogy, curriculum design and development, teaching English for academic purposes, language teaching methods, discourse analysis, and language and communication studies. oliver.ballance@vuw.ac.nz