

# April 2026 Newsletter



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## Editor's Foreword

It's been a very busy start to 2026 for so many people, so it's great to be able to offer our autumn newsletter with plenty of reading to capture your attention and interest for when you get the chance to put your feet up. Amongst other exciting developments for TESOLANZ, It's also conference year when we get the opportunity to catch up with each other and with what's happening in the TESOL world. In her look forward, Gwenna Finikin outlines new and continuing work for our association, and, in his piece about the conference, Mark Dawson-Smith gives us a heads up about what to expect at the CLESOL conference in Hamilton next July.

In their article, Tracey Millen and her colleagues, Jocelyn Howard and Kathryn MacCallum, discuss issues surrounding the use of AI in teaching and learning. This article is longer than our usual articles but it's packed full of valuable information and definitely worth taking the time to read. As Nick Baker also points out in his article, AI is here to stay whether we like it or not. He offers a useful strategy for incorporating its use in the teaching of writing that acknowledges it as a helpful tool rather than a threat.

Rose Baty's article highlights the challenges EAL learners face in schools as they grapple with their maths learning. She offers some useful strategies and reminds us about the helpful resources available to us. This is an interesting companion read with Haidee Jenkins' interview, in which she shares how she and her colleagues cater to EAL learners in her school. I want to acknowledge her generosity in the scope and depth of her answers, as I think it could be argued that they offer a blueprint of best practice for ensuring that our young EAL learners meet their full potential.

Once again, we have two more articles from Paul Nation in the PART Series. In one, he highlights the importance of explicitly teaching our learners how to learn – something we often assume they already know at our peril, particularly with our more mature learners. In the second article, he offers explicit advice on how to teach vocabulary deliberately, and outlines the most efficient and effective techniques for this. I can't

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say often enough how lucky we are to have Paul's regular contributions, where he explains the links between research and practice so clearly for us.

We also have a new feature in this newsletter – Teaching Tips! Five of our professional colleagues from across the sectors represented by TESOLANZ have given a teaching tip that they have tried and proven. If you have one – or more! - that you are willing to share, please don't hesitate to email Siân Waite, the Publications coordinator via [secretary@tesolanz.org.nz](mailto:secretary@tesolanz.org.nz). As you'll see when you get there, Cambridge University Press might make it worth your while!

Don't forget to check out the book reviews so capably coordinated by Elizaveta Tarasova, or the branch and SIG reports furnished by our regional leaders. It's great to see some new faces moving into key roles on the branch committees. I hope you will support them by actively participating in their activities, whether that is attending the events they organise or joining your local committee. They are TESOLANZ's backbone.

And finally, this is my final newsletter. As you can see from the President's look ahead in this edition and the new look for the newsletter, the Executive is moving in a new direction, which seems like a good time for me to step down and let someone new take the reins. I wish you all the best.

Nga mihi nui  
Christine

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## Looking Forward March 2026

**Gwenna Finikin**



Kia ora koutou,

I have been invited to write a companion piece to the reflection shared by former president Daryl Streat at the end of 2023, titled TESOLANZ: Looking in the Rearview Mirror. In that piece, Daryl reflected on the significant work the executive and he had undertaken to position the organisation strongly for the future. Their leadership ensured that TESOLANZ continued to meet the needs of its membership, advocate effectively with the Ministry of Education, and develop meaningful professional learning opportunities for ESOL practitioners across Aotearoa New Zealand.

The years surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic presented considerable challenges for many professional organisations, including our own. The executive at that time faced difficult decisions as membership numbers declined and our capacity to deliver activities was constrained. Through the dedication and resilience of those involved, TESOLANZ adapted and persevered. The organisation worked collectively to maintain its core functions while laying the groundwork for recovery and renewal.

From the 2022 Annual General Meeting through to the following AGM in 2023, I had the opportunity to shadow Daryl in preparation for assuming the presidency. This experience proved invaluable. It provided a clear view of the thoughtful leadership and strong foundations established by previous Executive committees, and it reinforced the importance of continuity in the stewardship of our organisation.

Since taking on the presidency at the 2023 AGM, the leadership team has continued to progress our strategic priorities. These include strengthening membership, maintaining a strong advocacy voice for ESOL teachers and English language learners, and engaging with opportunities to help shape national curriculum developments. Between 2021 and its pause by the current democratically elected government in 2025, I represented TESOLANZ on the Curriculum Voices Group for the curriculum refresh. In addition, a number of our members have contributed their expertise to the development of the new English as an Additional Language (EAL) curriculum, while others have worked to ensure that the needs of English language learners are acknowledged across wider curriculum documents in the compulsory school sector.

Beyond this, our members have also contributed to tertiary-level change processes through consultancy work with the New Zealand Qualifications Authority on the New Zealand Certificate in English Language (NZCEL) qualifications.

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Encouragingly, membership numbers have begun to recover following the COVID-19 downturn. While this improvement reflects the reopening of educational institutions and the return of employment opportunities within the ESOL sector, we have also introduced initiatives to support future growth. One such initiative has been the provision of complimentary membership for full-time postgraduate students. This approach enables emerging professionals to engage with our community and, we hope, to transition into full membership as they enter the ESOL workforce.

Professional learning remains central to the value TESOLANZ offers its members. Wherever possible, we have prioritised the delivery of hybrid and online events to ensure that educators from across the country can participate. The Executive committee, and in particular Lucy MacNaught, has been instrumental in developing systems that allow branches and special interest groups to host accessible online and hybrid professional development sessions. At the same time, the work of our web manager, Marty Pilott, has enabled us to host recorded sessions within the members' area of our website. These recordings have already attracted new members who initially join to access professional learning materials. We hope they will remain and engage with the wider professional community that TESOLANZ provides.

Our advocacy efforts have also helped raise the profile of TESOLANZ within the wider education sector. As a result, we have been included among the recognised subject associations and invited to contribute to professional development initiatives through the [Networks of Expertise – Professional Learning & Development](#). In particular, we have been asked to support ESOL teachers as the new EAL curriculum for Years 11–13 is introduced. During the initial phase, the professional learning programme will take a broader focus, before moving into more targeted curriculum support in 2027 and 2028. These opportunities not only support teachers and their ākonga, but also allow many educators to see firsthand the value of engaging with TESOLANZ.

For wider language policy issues, I represent TESOLANZ in the Languages Alliance Aotearoa NZ, a network of language experts which is advocating for the benefits of multilingualism and an evidence-based national language policy.

Looking ahead, our intention is to continue building on the strong work that has come before. We remain committed to growing our membership, strengthening our advocacy for English language learners, and supporting educators through high-quality professional development. By maintaining a clear strategic focus and working collaboratively across our community, we aim to ensure that TESOLANZ continues to play an important role in supporting ESOL education throughout Aotearoa New Zealand.

## A Note from the Publications Coordinator

The newsletter has a 'new look' to help meet the needs of our members. A remit was presented and a discussion held at the September 2025 AGM regarding accessibility and a printer-friendly version of the newsletter. Based on this discussion and remit, TESOLANZ committed to developing and adopting accessibility guidelines for all publications. The timeframe for this was within six months.

Due to this commitment by TESOLANZ, the newsletter has undergone some significant changes in order to meet the accessibility guidelines.

Some of the changes made to the newsletter include:

### 1. ALT text for images

Every image and advertisement in the newsletter will have an alt text. If images do not render on a device, the alt text will appear so members can still be informed as to the image contents.

### 2. headings for each section

By using headings for each section, screen readers will be able to move between sections easily, allowing members to access a section multiple times without the screen reader needing to start at the beginning of the newsletter.

### 3. colour contrast analyser

All colours used in the newsletter were carefully chosen to be accessible with a white background. By using this contrast tool, both the accessibility and printer-friendly needs have been met.

### 4. font

Size 12 point sans serif font has been used as it meets the minimum requirement needed for accessibility. There are no italics in the main content of the newsletter to meet the accessibility needs of members. Italics have remained in references as this is recognised as part standard referencing.

All internet and email links have been hyperlinked to words in articles, these are indicated in a particular colour and have been underlined. These links will open in a new window in members' internet browsers. This also meets accessibility needs for those who use screen readers.

All these changes will also help with the printability needs of our members as well.

A big thank you to Christine for all her hard work as Editor of the newsletter over the last few years. It has grown in size considerably under her capable hands.

Thank you also to Judy Robinson for publishing the TESOLANZ newsletter for the last nine years. We are very grateful for the work she has done and time she has given to the newsletter.

Another thank you needs to go to Dr Elizaveta Tarasova for her role as Book Reviews Editor for TESOLANZ. She is stepping down from her role as of November 1st 2026. Your time and contributions to the newsletter as Book Reviews Editor are greatly appreciated.


Thank you must also go to Dr Oliver Ballance for editing the journal. This is his final year as Editor for the TESOLANZ Journal, he has worked extremely hard to gather articles for the journal over the last few years.

Thank you to you all for your hard work with the two publications from TESOLANZ, we are sorry to see you go.

To our members, thank you for your patience with this edition of the newsletter.

We are looking forward to hearing your feedback on these changes. Please send any feedback or comments through to [secretary@tesolanz.org.nz](mailto:secretary@tesolanz.org.nz) to be passed on to Publications

Moving forward, members can expect further changes to the newsletter and the journal as we work towards making all our publications accessible for all our members. If you would like to be involved with the upcoming changes, please contact Siân Waite via [secretary@tesolanz.org.nz](mailto:secretary@tesolanz.org.nz). Thank you to both Mark Dawson-Smith and Daryl Streat who have already volunteered their time and have been involved with some of the changes.




ON DEMAND

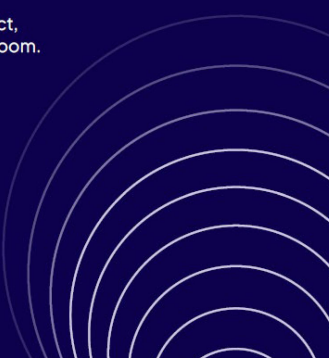
## How PTE is really scored — and what it means for your students

Explore how PTE scores are calculated, what they truly reflect, and how to address common misconceptions in your classroom.

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**Sarah Hughes**  
Director of Assessment,  
Research and Validity for  
Pearson Tests of English



**CLESOL 2026**



## An Insider's Guide!

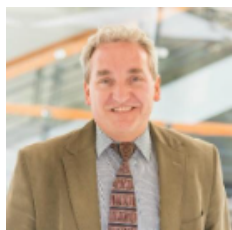
July 2026 sees Kirikiriroa Hamilton playing host to the 19th National Conference for Community Languages and ESOL, better known as CLESOL, taking place at the University of Waikato on the 4th and 5th of July. It will be exactly ten years since the last time that CLESOL was held in the mighty Waikato, and we are hoping that this latest event will have everything from ten years ago and more! After an unplanned interruption from Covid in 2020, and a hiccup from the World of Wearable Art (WOW) in 2023, it is great to have the biennial event back on track. The event is Aotearoa New Zealand's most significant biyearly conference for teachers, educators, language professionals and students, and the face-to-face event is a highlight for many TESOLANZ members, providing an opportunity for them to (re-)connect with friends and colleagues across the sectors.

Focussing on the conference theme of "Back to the Future: Celebrating the past to shape the future", the conference will include sessions focussing on areas such as digital innovation and learning technologies, language education across the sectors, teacher education and professional development, and assessment and standards, to name just a few.

The conference programme is now available on the [CLESOL 2026 conference website](#), with more than 100 presentations, workshops and keynotes over the two days of the conference. Care has been taken to schedule presentations from the primary, secondary, and tertiary sectors in a way that allows maximum choice for participants from each of those sectors.

This year's conference will also see the return of the TESOLANZ annual general meeting (AGM), which will be held at 8.30am on the morning of Sunday 5th May. Special meetings for TESOLANZ's special interest groups (SIGs) are also scheduled for the Saturday afternoon (avoiding the lunch time sessions to allow more participants to attend).

The four keynote speakers have been announced. As with the other parallel sessions, the organising committee has tried to select keynotes from a range of different sectors and backgrounds to help ensure that the interests of all conference participants are addressed. The keynotes are (in the order that they will be presenting:



**Professor Douglas Bell** the University of Nottingham, Ningbo, China. Doug has considerable expertise in the area of English for Academic Purposes (EAP) and English for Specific Purposes (ESP), and his presentation aims to shed some light on the possible future of the field of EAP, especially given the rapid emergence of generative artificial intelligence (Gen AI).



**Dr Melissa Derby**, Kaihautū Whakawhanaungatanga-ā-Iwi Race Relations Commissioner, Te Kāhui Tika Tangata Human Rights Commission. Melissa worked at the University of Waikato as a Senior Lecturer, teaching early literacy and human development with a special interest in Māori education. Since November 2024, she has served as the Race Relations Commissioner with the New Zealand Human Rights Commission.



**Dr Margaret Franken** is well known to almost everyone working in the ESOL and community languages sector here in Aotearoa New Zealand. A key figure in the sector for many years, Margaret's involvement in EOSL and community languages pre-dates the formation of TESOLANZ by almost a decade. Margaret's presentation will share reflections on her vast experience and learnings as a teacher, researcher, curriculum designer, supervisor, and mentor across school and tertiary contexts.

**Dr Tim Gander**, Executive Director, Education Partnership & Innovation Trust. Tim has been involved in collaboration and innovation in education for well over a decade, founding Future Learning in 2013, and then going on to work in key positions for academyEx and AUT before becoming Executive Director of EPIT in late 2024. Tim is an advocate of equitable and thoughtful technology integration in education, looking at ways to bring new ways of learning to those who may otherwise may not have access to such learning.

Similar to previous CLESOL conferences, registration includes entry to all keynote sessions, all workshop and paper presentations, access to exhibitors including IELTS, Cambridge University Press, and Pearson (PTE), as well as catered lunches and morning and afternoon tea on both days.

Early-bird registrations opened on Friday March 21st and will remain open until Friday May 29th. Early-bird registration offers a significant reduction on the full conference registration cost, so we encourage all participants to register sooner to make sure that they don't miss out on this opportunity.

## The AI Revolution: To Embrace or Not to Embrace

Tracey Millin, Jocelyn Howard, Kathryn MacCallum

### Introduction

Across Aotearoa New Zealand, teachers are increasingly being asked to do more with less. Curriculum reform, expanding linguistic diversity in classrooms, growing parental expectations, and intensifying pedagogical demands have collectively expanded the scope of teachers' work. Educators supporting multilingual learners often sit at the centre of these pressures, expected to enact strengths-based approaches that recognise students' linguistic resources while simultaneously meeting assessment, curriculum, and reporting requirements. While these expectations reflect important commitments to equity and inclusion, they also contribute to an increasingly unsustainable workload.

National and international survey data suggest that many teachers in Aotearoa are experiencing significant professional strain. For example, findings from the OECD Teaching and Learning International Survey report that New Zealand teachers are working longer hours than the OECD average and are more likely to report high levels of work-related stress ([RNZ; Wylie & MacDonald, 2020](#)). While recent teacher workforce data shows that teacher turnover has stabilised at around 18.5 percent annually, this nonetheless reflects substantial movement within and out of the profession ([Education Counts](#)). Sector organisations have also signalled that workforce sustainability is becoming a critical issue, with some research showing that a substantial proportion of teachers are considering leaving the profession within the next five years ([NZEI Te Riu Roa](#)). These trends suggest that many teachers in New Zealand are experiencing significant professional strain.

Against this backdrop, the rapid emergence of generative artificial intelligence (AI) has entered education discourse with promises of efficiency and innovation. Yet, its implications for already stretched language teachers remain largely unexplored. At this point, it is important to note that the term *language teacher* in this article is used in a broad and inclusive sense, reflecting the widely recognised position that learning occurs *through* language across all curriculum areas, with mainstream teachers, as well as ESOL specialists, having shared responsibility for making language visible, explicit and accessible for linguistically diverse learners (Gibbons, 2015; [Tāhūrangi NZC](#)). Framed within this understanding of language teaching, AI is not simply a development for specialist contexts but has significance for all educators working in multilingual classrooms in Aotearoa New Zealand.

As the AI landscape continues to evolve, educators are presented with a mixture of new opportunities and emerging challenges (McGeorge, 2024). Among these developments, AI has attracted growing attention for its potential to transform aspects of professional work, including the administrative and preparatory tasks that occupy significant portions of teachers' time ([Godwin-Jones, 2024](#); Holmes et al., 2019; [Kasneci et al., 2023](#); Mollick, 2024). McGeorge (2024) argues that such technologies may assist educators in completing routine or time-intensive tasks more efficiently, potentially creating greater space for higher-value work such as lesson design, responsive teaching, and meaningful engagement with students. In this sense, AI can be conceptualised as a form of digital assistance, functioning variously as a virtual teaching aide, planning partner, or feedback support. Whether educators actively seek out these tools or not, access to them is becoming increasingly commonplace.

Historically, technological innovations, from the printing press to everyday household appliances, have been framed as mechanisms for increasing efficiency and freeing time for more meaningful pursuits. At a moment when teacher workload, cognitive load, and professional burnout are widely documented concerns, the possibility that emerging technologies might help educators work more sustainably warrants serious consideration. In this way, AI may serve as a form of cognitive offloading, supporting teachers with routine planning and administrative tasks while allowing them to focus on higher-value pedagogical work. For teachers working with multilingual learners, whose work often involves extensive differentiation, scaffolded materials, and ongoing feedback, the potential efficiency gains may have additional relevance.

Yet the introduction of AI into education also raises important questions around professional agency, linguistic equity, and the potential reshaping of teacher expertise. As AI tools become more embedded in everyday educational practice, decisions about how knowledge is produced, mediated, and evaluated may increasingly involve algorithmic systems rather than solely teacher judgement. For language educators, this shift is particularly significant.

AI systems are typically trained on vast global datasets that may privilege dominant varieties of English and dominant cultural norms, raising concerns about whose language practices are validated and whose may be marginalised. At the same time, the growing reliance on automated tools for tasks such as feedback generation, lesson planning, or material creation, prompts questions about the evolving nature of teacher expertise and professional autonomy. While AI may offer meaningful support in managing workload pressures, its integration into multilingual classrooms must also be considered through a critical lens that attends to issues of equity, representation, and the professional role of teachers.

This article argues that while AI has the potential to alleviate aspects of teacher workload in multilingual classrooms, its adoption must be accompanied by critical attention to linguistic equity, professional agency, and the evolving nature of teacher expertise. Drawing on emerging research and perspectives from language education, the discussion considers how AI might both support teachers and reshape the pedagogical landscape of multilingual education in Aotearoa New Zealand.

## Generative AI and the Changing Landscape of Educational Work

While recent attention may make AI appear new, AI has, in fact, been present in language education for many years. Prior to the emergence of generative AI, AI was largely embedded within digital tools rather than explicitly labelled or recognised by users. It typically supported narrow, [task-specific functions designed to assist aspects of language learning, assessment, or translation](#). Examples include machine translation tools, automated writing evaluation systems, speech recognition for pronunciation feedback, and adaptive learning platforms. In many cases, AI has operated behind the scenes within educational applications, meaning teachers and students were often unaware that AI was supporting these features.

The emergence of generative AI around 2022 has brought AI into far greater visibility and public discussion. Generative AI refers to systems capable of producing new content - such as text, images, code, or audio - rather than simply supporting specific features within software. This shift has opened a wider range of possibilities for education, enabling teachers and students to interact directly with AI tools.

Among these technologies, large language models (LLMs) - such as ChatGPT, Claude, and Gemini - have attracted particular attention. Trained on vast collections of text, these systems generate responses by predicting likely sequences of words, allowing them to summarise texts, generate explanations, simulate dialogue, support translation, and provide feedback. For language education, this creates new opportunities that enhance prior uses but also offer completely new affordances.

## Why AI Matters for Teachers' Work

Much of teachers' work takes place beyond the classroom and involves significant cognitive labour, including planning lessons, designing assessments, creating learning materials, and providing feedback on student work. Generative AI tools have attracted attention because [they can assist with many of these knowledge-intensive tasks](#). For example, AI can help teachers draft lesson plans, generate learning materials, create quizzes or rubrics, and provide formative feedback on student writing. In language classrooms specifically, AI can generate dialogue examples, simulate conversational partners, and support activities such as role-play and language practice.

However, generative AI does not "understand" language in the way humans do. Instead, it produces responses based on statistical patterns within its training data, meaning outputs may sometimes be inaccurate or misleading. As a result, AI cannot replace the knowledge or professional judgement of the teacher. Rather than replacing teachers, generative AI functions best as a cognitive support, allowing some aspects of knowledge work to be delegated to digital systems. This can enable teachers to focus their expertise on higher-level pedagogical decisions, such as designing meaningful learning experiences and responding to students' needs.

## Implications for Teachers: Knowledge, Skills, and Professional Judgement

The growing presence of generative AI in education raises important questions about the knowledge and skills teachers need to use these tools effectively. At the core of teaching is pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) - the ability to transform subject knowledge into forms that are meaningful and accessible to learners. Generative AI does not replace this expertise, [but it can reshape how teachers apply and develop it](#).

When teachers use AI for planning, teaching, or assessment, they engage in a process of human-AI collaboration. AI may generate ideas, explanations, or feedback, but teachers must determine whether these outputs are accurate, pedagogically appropriate, culturally relevant, and aligned with students' needs. When used critically, AI can amplify teachers' professional knowledge. However, uncritical reliance on AI outputs may undermine professional judgement or lead teachers to place undue trust in authoritative-sounding responses.

To use AI effectively, teachers therefore need AI literacy alongside their existing pedagogical expertise. This includes understanding how generative AI systems work, recognising their limitations and potential biases, crafting effective prompts, and critically evaluating the outputs they produce. Teachers must also support students in developing similar skills, helping them question, verify, and reflect on AI-generated content.

Ultimately, generative AI does not diminish the importance of teacher expertise. Instead, it increases the need for professional judgement, ethical oversight, and disciplinary knowledge to ensure that AI tools are used in ways that genuinely support learning rather than simply automating aspects of teaching.

## Collaborating with Generative AI: Three Practical Affordances for Language Teachers

While [much of the discussion about AI focuses on risks or disruptions](#), including concerns about ethics, equity and academic integrity, it is equally important to consider specific ways that these tools can support educators in responding to the complex demands of multilingual classrooms. For language teachers – understood here in its broadest sense – much of the work of teaching occurs beyond the classroom through the preparation, adaptation and ongoing support of learning. Generative AI has the potential to assist with aspects of this work in ways that complement, rather than replace, teacher expertise. Drawing on the discussion above, we now focus on three practical affordances with examples to illustrate how AI can function as a form of collaborative support in everyday teaching.

### Reducing the Cognitive and Administrative Load:

A significant proportion of teachers' professional work occurs outside the classroom through activities such as detailed planning, assessment design, resource creation and communication. These tasks require sustained cognitive effort and often extend well beyond contracted hours. AI tools can assist by generating draft lesson sequences, summarising complex texts, or organising assessment criteria into user-friendly formats. For example, a language teacher might use AI to:

- generate a first draft of a unit plan aligned to specific curriculum objectives
- adapt a reading text to different levels of language proficiency
- create a bank of questions at varying levels of complexity
- draft clear instructions and success criteria for an assessed task

Importantly, the role of AI here is not to replace teacher expertise. Rather, it shifts some of the initial workload, thereby allowing teachers to focus on refining, contextualising and aligning materials to curriculum goals and learner needs. In this sense, AI can act as a form of cognitive offloading to allow language educators to manage some tasks more efficiently, whilst maintaining professional judgement and control over important pedagogical decisions and implementation.

### Supporting Responsive Teaching in Linguistically Diverse Classrooms:

Teaching in multilingual classrooms requires ongoing responsiveness to learners' varying levels of language proficiency, background knowledge and access to academic language. AI tools can support teachers by suggesting differentiated learning activities, allowing materials to be quickly adapted and providing multiple entry points for more targeted or personalised learning. For instance, teachers could use AI to:

- simplify or elaborate texts while retaining the key concepts
- generate bilingual vocabulary lists or glossaries with definitions tailored to varying levels of language proficiency
- produce alternative explanations using culturally relevant examples and different modes
- design scaffolded writing frames tailored to specific materials and levels
- provide feedback in students' heritage languages, helping to support understanding and making it more accessible for whānau

The use of AI capabilities in this way can make it more feasible for teachers to implement inclusive, strengths-based approaches that recognise and build on learners' linguistic resources. While they are not a replacement for the pedagogical knowledge that is necessary to design effective language learning experiences, this type of AI use can provide practical, time-saving support for educators addressing diverse linguistic needs.

### Reclaiming Time for the Relational Work of Teaching:

One of the most significant potential contributions of AI lies in its capacity to increase the time teachers can devote to the relational and instructional aspects of teaching that are central to student learning. High quality teaching is inherently interactive - listening to students, responding to their ideas, providing feedback and adapting instruction in the moment. However, these aspects of teaching are often constrained by the demands of preparation and administration. By assisting with routine or time-intensive tasks, AI tools may enable teachers to spend more time:

- conferencing with students about their learning
- providing targeted and timely feedback
- engaging in sustained whole-class interactions
- monitoring progress and adjusting instruction accordingly

Beyond the classroom, this redistribution of tasks and time may also support teacher well-being by reducing the after-hours workload. In this sense, the value of AI is not simply in automation and efficiency, but in its potential to support more sustainable teaching practices that prioritise human connection, responsiveness, and the complex work of supporting language development in linguistically diverse classrooms.

## Conclusion

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While generative AI cannot replace the pedagogical judgement, relational expertise or professional knowledge that teachers bring to the classroom, it has the potential to provide meaningful support in responding to the increasingly complex demands of contemporary teaching. For language educators working in linguistically diverse contexts, the capacity to rapidly generate and adapt differentiated materials, support multilingual communication and feedback, and streamline planning and assessment processes can complement strengths-based and responsive teaching practices. As AI tools continue to evolve, an important task for the wider language teaching community in Aotearoa New Zealand is to engage critically and creatively with these technologies, exploring affordances and limitations while keeping teacher expertise and professional judgement at the centre of their practice.

## References

Note: Sources available online are hyperlinked in the text; only print or non-linked sources are listed below.

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**Dr Tracey Millin** is a Senior Lecturer at the University of Canterbury. A South Africa-born Kiwi fluent in English and Afrikaans, she is a secondary-trained English and ESOL teacher whose PhD research examined evidence-based scaffolding of academic writing to promote equity in literacy achievement. From 2019 to mid-2025, she led the MTESOL and PGCertTESOL programmes at UC before taking up the role of New Zealand Chair of the International TESOL Union. Dr Millin's interest in literacy equity stems from her work with linguistically marginalised and low-SES students in South Africa. Her research focuses on second-language acquisition and development, English for Academic Purposes, academic writing development, and educational linguistics.



**Jocelyn Howard** is a senior lecturer in the School of Curriculum, Pedagogy and Assessment at Te Whare Wānanga o Waitaha | University of Canterbury. She teaches courses in inclusive education and languages education for preservice primary and secondary teachers and has developed customised professional programmes for international in-service EAL teachers implementing mandated language curriculum initiatives. Her research interests include languages education, intercultural language teaching, digitally mediated teaching and learning, and the learning experiences of distance students. She is co-author of a book on intercultural language teaching and has published widely on technology-enhanced learning and inequities in access to language education.



**Kathryn MacCallum** is Professor of Digital Education Futures at the University of Canterbury, Aotearoa New Zealand, and Head of School. Her research focuses on AI literacy, digital pedagogies, and equitable approaches to emerging technologies in education. She is co-director of the Digital Education Futures research lab and co-creator of the [Scaffolded AI Literacy \(SAIL\) framework](#), supporting educators and learners to critically and responsibly engage with artificial intelligence. Kathryn works across sectors, from early childhood to higher education, and is widely recognised for her leadership in advancing thoughtful, culturally responsive, and future-focused education.

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# AI in the Writing Classroom: You are the Author, AI as the Simulated Reader

**Dr Nick Baker**

This Tech Tip is going to try something different, by focusing on AI (it's not going away) and how we can integrate it into our and our students' workflow when writing. When I say AI in this piece, I mean tools like ChatGPT, Claude, and Gemini.

As we try to get used to AI in our world of teaching and EAL learners, AI keeps evolving — and with it, the question that keeps being revisited. That is, how do we use AI in ways that genuinely support English language development, rather than having AI do the work for learners?

The answer begins with providing clear roles and boundaries for AI when writing. We need an approach that places AI in a specific, supportive role within the writing process without taking away from the learning and creative experience of writing itself. The key is thinking about this as a workflow question, not just whether to use AI, but when we can use it.

## Writing First, AI Second: A Workflow That Works

Writing researchers Flower and Hayes (1981) identified three core phases in skilled writing: planning (developing ideas), drafting (getting them on the page), and reviewing (evaluating and refining). This model remains foundational in language teaching—and it offers a practical guide to where AI could fit.

One space it could reside is the focus of this article, which is in the reviewing phase. Once a student or even we ourselves have done our own planning and drafting, AI can serve as a responsive feedback tool. Bringing it in earlier risks short-circuiting the very thinking processes that build language competence, and even the creative act of writing the text. Researchers consistently note that the act of composing itself develops both language and cognition (Graham, 2018). This is a benefit that disappears if AI composes on the student's behalf. Think of AI here as a Vygotskian scaffold: useful precisely because the learner has already done the hard work of reaching a decision about what they want to write.

In practice, this means giving AI a clear role, with clear expectations and limits. Low-risk writing tasks, a classroom exercise, or a formative piece (for us, it could be emails, descriptors, or activity design) are ideal starting points for both teachers and learners to explore how AI could be used.

## The Simulated Reader: A Practical Strategy

One of the most effective uses of AI in the language classroom is the “simulated reader” approach, providing feedback for the writer. Once a student has a draft, they share it with an AI tool and ask questions a real reader might ask: What was the key message of this text? What was unclear? What questions do you have for me as the writer? Was the language accessible?

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This positions AI as a mock audience member rather than a co-author. The student receives feedback they must then evaluate. Do I agree? Does this reflect my intention? What will I change, and what will I keep? That critical evaluation is where genuine language learning happens.

For best results, prompts should be specific. Name the AI's role, describe the task clearly, and set constraints (for example, "do not suggest new ideas"). Then always vet the output before acting on it.

Crucially, encourage students to have a dialogue with their simulated reader and not just accept a single response. Students might challenge the AI's comments, ask it to explain its reasoning, request specific suggestions for a weak point, or ask it to name strengths worth preserving. This back-and-forth mirrors the kind of iterative feedback conversation that research consistently links to sustained writing improvement (Ferris, 2003). It also helps to prepare them to interact with future human readers who can also provide feedback. Consider the following figure of steps as a possible guide.

<b>1</b>	<b>Student drafts</b>	Write your paragraph independently. No AI yet.
<b>2</b>	<b>Set up the AI</b>	Give AI its role: "Act as a reader and give feedback only."
<b>3</b>	<b>Share the draft</b>	Paste your draft and ask specific reader questions.
<b>4</b>	<b>Receive AI feedback</b>	AI responds as a simulated reader with observations.
<b>5</b>	<b>Dialogue with AI</b>	Challenge, probe, or ask for more. Don't accept passively.
<b>6</b>	<b>Evaluate the feedback</b>	Decide what to keep, change, or reject. This is your judgment.
<b>7</b>	<b>Revise</b>	Update the draft based on what you found useful.

*Figure 1. Using AI as a Simulated Reader: a seven-step workflow*

The simulated reader won't replace the human experience of being read. But used at the right moment, with the right constraints, it can give students a taste of what real readership feels like, and that, in turn, gives their writing a direction towards a more meaningful audience. For us as teachers, it's just as useful as a low-stakes way to trial our own writing before our audience does.

**Nick Baker** is a PhD graduate from the Higher Education Development Centre at the University of Otago in Dunedin. He is currently working for the University of Otago as a Senior Professional Practice Fellow at the Graduate Research School, running their Master's and PhD candidate workshop programmes and developing comprehensive online learning courses for research postgraduates. Nick is also researching and publishing around the topics of Dialogic Feedback and the Village Formation Tool, practising blues guitar, tai chi, meditation, and philosophy.



## The Language of Maths: Accommodating for English as an additional language (EAL) learners to support your school's maths programme

### Rose Baty

An EAL learner may be confident interacting with teachers and peers using everyday English, but the mathematics curriculum employs abstract academic vocabulary and, to access this, they need to be taught in a specific, intentional way. In addition, EAL students may already be highly proficient in mathematics but the English vocabulary in their maths problems may be a hurdle that causes confusion, adding to their cognitive load and knocking their confidence. Consequently, there is a lot for an EAL teacher to consider.

According to Trakulphadetkrai et.al. (2020, para. 2), 'solving mathematical word problems has increasingly become a standard assessment tool to measure learners' mathematical understanding and performance'. This highlights the important role of **context** for our learners on top of any vocabulary and grammatical technicalities. Here are some ideas to help EAL specialists tackle this problem.

Firstly, we need to carry out an initial maths assessment to assess prior knowledge and gain insight into our learners' level of ability. It is best to do this in an informal environment using gestures to aid understanding and link questions to their home culture and familiar contexts.

Secondly, we need to consider mathematical **vocabulary**. The vocabulary covered in the NZ and Australian maths curriculum is vast. You can see examples of terms used at the primary level here in the [NZ maths vocabulary list](#), and in the [Australian Curriculum](#) (Ministry of Education NZ and Ministry of Education Australia, n.d.). We can look at this comprehensive list through the eyes of our English as an additional language or dialect (EAL/D) learners and feel overwhelmed, or we can look at it through our 'linguistics' or 'structured literacy' lens and start identifying patterns in the words, for example, root words and their meanings, or suffixes and prefixes. We can also deconstruct the words into understandable 'word chunks', or highlight patterns for our learners. Paul Nation (2013) states, 'There needs to be an intensive focus on the first 2000 words and the first 540 word families of the academic word list as these are the essential basis for academic study'. Averil Coxhead (2000) developed the Academic Word List (AWL) which is a comprehensive list of word families, many of which can be used in the context of teaching mathematics. You can also refer to the [Sublist of Academic Words List](#) which are extremely helpful when looking at, exploring, and breaking down word families with your EAL learners.

Teaching **grammar** is an important part of supporting EAL learners with their maths skills and understanding. Just as the vocabulary is needed for comprehension when tackling maths problems, grammar also has a part to play. Let's face it, learning English can be tricky and, particularly when learning mathematics, there are some potential potholes on a learner's road to proficiency. Some examples are:

- Homophones: e.g. two/to/too, ate/eight, one/won, by/buy/buy, four/for/fore
- Heteronyms: e.g. The nurse *wound* the bandage around the *wound*.

Both of these are examples of how understanding a word's meaning in the appropriate context is important.

Since language is used differently in social and academic settings, learners need to see words in various contexts to master them. The former is described by Cummins (2003) as *basic interpersonal communicative skills* (BICS). The latter, *cognitive academic language proficiency* (CALP), refers to language which is necessary for academic success. As EAL teachers, it is beneficial to mention the use of the word in these various contexts and the different applications for each.

Mathematics in the 'real world' demands an understanding of context. The English language utilises the same words across many contexts which can be confusing for EAL learners in particular. By ensuring we provide our students with the academic vocabulary and grammar understanding within various contexts, teachers can equip their students with a contextual framework to support their comprehension skills and success in solving word problems in mathematics. This will be a linguistic tool that will aid them in their lifelong mathematics learning journey.

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Rose has over 20 years' experience in New Zealand and UK primary schools, spanning two intermediate schools in NZ for three years, an International school in London for four years and 17 years at a primary school in Wellington, most recently as an EAL specialist. She has a Bachelor of Education, Diploma in Primary Teaching, and is finishing her Masters in TESOL at Victoria University, Wellington. Rose is passionate about inclusive teaching strategies and helping teachers working with EAL students.

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## Interview with Haidee Jenkins

### **How do you design and adapt lessons to support primary-aged English language learners at different stages of English language proficiency within a mainstream classroom?**

At our school, we tailor lessons to meet the diverse needs of English language learners by combining in-class and withdrawal support based on students' levels of English proficiency. Careful planning ensures each child can access the curriculum while continuing to build language skills. One key strategy is *front-loading*—we introduce essential mathematics and topic-specific vocabulary three to four days before concepts are taught in the mainstream classroom. This gives students time to become familiar with new words, reducing cognitive load during lessons and boosting their confidence to engage with new learning.

Vocabulary is a major focus across all areas of learning. We align language instruction with the classroom's cross-curricular topics. This means students can make meaningful connections and use new words in authentic contexts. Oral language activities form the backbone of our sessions; students are immersed in discussion, repetition, and retrieval practices to strengthen understanding and long-term retention. Each 45-minute session includes three short, engaging activities to maintain attention and enjoyment while ensuring frequent opportunities for success. This approach not only accelerates language growth but also fosters a sense of belonging and confidence for every learner in our multicultural classrooms.

### **What assessment tools or strategies do you use to evaluate English language development, and how do you use that data to inform your instruction?**

To evaluate the English language development of our 167 diverse ESOL students, we utilise a multi-layered assessment approach. Central to our practice is the English Language Learning Progressions (ELLP) Pathway. This tool allows us to map students' progress in oral language, reading, and writing against benchmarks, ensuring our instruction is levelled to just beyond their current proficiency stage as much as possible within our groupings.

Our learning assistants work integrally with classroom teachers, using lesson observations to identify immediate linguistic needs. By accessing teacher planning in advance, our team proactively forward-plans to "front-load" key vocabulary and concepts. This collaborative feedforward ensures that our support is perfectly synchronised with mainstream curriculum delivery, maximising student engagement.

For targeted monitoring, particularly with our newest learners or when measuring the impact of specific interventions, we implement the Team Approach to Language Learners (TALL) assessment. This involves:

**Oral Language Sequence and Retell:** We use a six-picture sequence to capture a baseline of the student's narrative ability. By recording exactly what the student says, we analyse their vocabulary range—including nouns, verbs, and prepositions—and their control over sentence structures and tenses.

**Timed Vocabulary Checks:** Students are given two minutes to name as many words as possible within a familiar context, such as the classroom.

This data directly informs our teaching. By identifying gaps in a student's vocabulary or syntax through TALL, our four learning assistants can front-load essential vocabulary before it is introduced in the mainstream classroom. This evidence-based cycle ensures our support is both proactive and tailored to the unique linguistic backgrounds of our learners.

### **How do you collaborate with classroom teachers, support staff, and families to ensure your English language learners are supported both academically and socially?**

Inclusion at our school is a multifaceted team effort designed to support all of our students. We meet formally with classroom teachers at least twice annually to discuss student progress and complete the English Language Learning Progressions (ELLP) Pathway forms. To manage our large roll, two "champion" teachers who are experts in the Team Approach to Language Learners (TALL) lead ESOL initiatives within their respective areas across the school and provide another avenue for classroom teachers to check in with.

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Our four bilingual learning assistants are integral to this ecosystem. They check in periodically with teachers to align on academic next steps and social needs, often using their language skills to bridge barriers for whānau. This team supports translation for school notices, phone calls, and whānau conferences, ensuring families are active participants in their child's education.

I also prioritise informal visibility, using after-school duties to assist parents with our reporting system or general queries. These "gate-side" interactions, alongside major cultural celebrations, foster a deep sense of belonging. By integrating formal assessment data with these strong community ties, we endeavour to ensure that our learners are supported both academically and socially.

How do you incorporate students' cultural and linguistic backgrounds into your teaching to create an inclusive learning environment?

Inclusion at our school is built on the principle of whanaungatanga, where we prioritise knowing the learner as an individual alongside focusing on academic output. We believe that valuing a child's identity is the prerequisite for successful language acquisition.

Our approach includes:

**Whanaungatanga Units:** Every year begins with a dedicated unit across the school and within our ESOL withdrawal program to establish connections and honour the unique backgrounds of our 167 students.

**Targeted Oral Language Assessment:** We use the Team Approach to Language Learners (TALL) to assess students in a way that respects their primary language. The "Oral Language Sequence and Retell" task can be completed in the student's home language as well as English to get a true baseline of their narrative ability.

**Systemic Cultural Celebration:** Our annual Global Cultural Celebration rotates six different cultures each year—one per year level. Over the last four years, we have celebrated over 20 countries, ensuring our Indian, Filipino, and South African communities see themselves reflected in the curriculum.

**Daily Visibility:** We actively celebrate Language Weeks and major festivals such as Diwali, Eid, and Chinese New Year.

What strategies do you use to help newly arrived learners build confidence, develop peer relationships, and feel a sense of belonging in the school community?

For our newly arrived learners, building confidence begins with a structured transition process that prioritises whanaungatanga and linguistic security. We conduct comprehensive whānau transition meetings for all new learners to collect vital supplementary information, including home language proficiency, parental languages, and prior schooling. This data allows us to place students strategically in classrooms where they can connect with peers who speak the same first language (if we can), immediately fostering a sense of belonging.

During these initial school visits, families are introduced to the ESOL team, establishing a bridge between home and school. In the classroom, teachers implement a robust buddy system to support social integration. To further reduce anxiety, our ESOL team can provide "task trays" containing activities previously taught in our withdrawal sessions. This ensures students can experience immediate success independently or with a buddy, boosting their confidence in the mainstream environment.



**Haidee Jenkins** is a primary school teacher in a large urban multicultural school in Tauranga. With her team of 4 staff, Haidee leads ESOL at her school to cater for over 160 funded students from a range of diverse backgrounds. She also presents or organises the PLD for the Tauranga Peninsula ESOL PLC along with providing support for ESOL programming to schools within her cluster.



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# Learning Village

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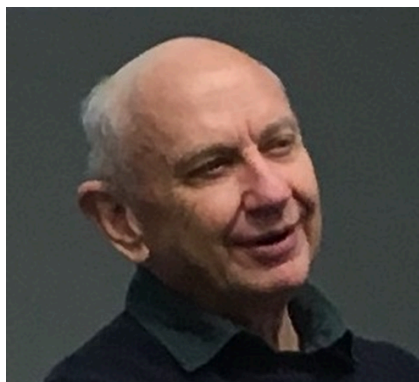
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## The Practical Applications of Research and Theory (PART): A continuing series

Each of the short articles in this series takes a piece of language teaching research and theory and suggests its practical applications for language learning and teaching. The aim is to bridge the gap between research and practice. Most language teachers who are not currently involved in academic study do not have easy access to journals and often do not have the time to read academic articles and reflect on how to apply their findings to their teaching. These short articles do this. They are not summaries of a piece of research but simply attempts to apply the findings of research to practice. The quality of the research has been carefully considered when choosing the articles.



**Paul Nation**

### **PART: Learning how to learn**

[Nation, P. (2024). Re-thinking the principles of (vocabulary) learning and their applications. *Languages*, 9, 160. <https://doi.org/10.3390/languages9050160>. This article is freely available from Paul Nation's resources pages.]

If we want to remember something, we need to focus on it, give it a reasonable quantity of attention, and give it good-quality attention. These attention requirements are well supported by a very large amount of research.

**Focus of attention** can come from being aware of what needs to be learned, having a clear understanding of the item, and being aware of how the learning needs to be used.

1 Focus: We learn what we focus on.

2 Accuracy: Our learning is more efficient if the information we are focusing on is complete, accurate, and comprehensible.

We can increase the focus of attention by keeping learners well-informed about what they need to learn. If we use problem-solving or trial and error approaches to learning, we should make sure that learners get timely feedback to make sure that they do not persist in error. Using vocabulary-controlled input is an effective way of making sure that the items to be learned are comprehensible.

**Quantity of attention** can come from repetition, especially spaced repetition, and from deliberately focusing on what needs to be learned. There are two quantities of attention principles.

3 Repetition: The more repetition, the more learning.

4 Time-on-task: The greater the quantity of attention, the better the learning.

We can increase repetition by coming back to the same material several times. For really important information, we can plan a schedule of repetition. We can increase time-on-task by spacing repetitions, by giving the item deliberate attention, by using recall tests, and by adding quality of processing.

**Quality of attention** can come from adding information to what is to be learned (elaboration), and by analysing the item.

5 Elaboration: Enrich the learning of an item by coming back to it in several different ways (through speaking, writing, listening, reading; through the first language; and through different examples or forms), and by linking it with other knowledge (pictures, visualization, contexts, other items).

6 Analysis: Deepen understanding of the item by looking at its parts and by looking at the patterns it fits into.

When vocabulary occurs again in a text, it usually occurs in a different sentence context, and sometimes in a different word form (as a verb rather than a noun), and this variation helps learning through adding more associations for the word. When we deal with the same material again, but in a different way (as in a linked skills activity), we get an increase in both quantity and quality of attention.

### **How can teachers help learners learn how to learn?**

1 Teachers should memorize the six principles of focus, accuracy, repetition, time-on-task, elaboration, and analysis.

2 Show the learners a range of techniques for helping learning. These should include doing retrieval, repetition, spacing repetitions, varying repetition, analysing what is to be learned, visualizing what is to be learned, writing, and using memory tricks. Keep coming back to these techniques several times.

3 When the learners understand the techniques, start analysing the techniques using some of the six principles.

4 Eventually, get the learners to memorize the principles and give them plenty of practice in applying the principles and reflecting and reporting on their learning.

A lot of learning is incidental learning, where the learners' attention is not strongly focused on what needs to be learned. An example of this is learning vocabulary while reading. Such learning usually requires a lot of repetition over a long period of time. We can increase such learning by applying the principles described here.

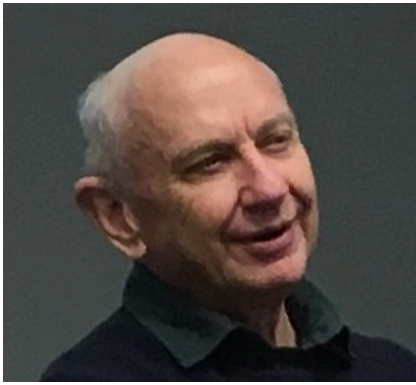
The six principles can be applied to many kinds of learning including learning vocabulary, learning multiword units, learning content matter such as geography, physics, mathematics, remembering people's names, and remembering a set of directions.

Learning how to learn is not a topic to be dealt with in a single lesson. It needs to be a theme running through the whole course. As well as giving attention what to learn, teachers should be showing learners how to learn so that they become autonomous learners who can take control of their own learning.

[Further reading: Nation, P. (2014). *What do you need to know to learn a foreign language?* This book is freely available under Publications on Paul Nation's web resources pages. It applies principles to learning another language.]

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## **PART: The deliberate learning of vocabulary**



## Paul Nation

[Source: Nakata, T. (2020). Learning words with flash cards and word cards. In S. Webb (Ed.), *The Routledge Handbook of Vocabulary Studies* (pp. 304-319). Abingdon, UK: Routledge. The 35 articles in this excellent handbook survey research on vocabulary teaching and learning.]

Young native speakers of English around thirteen years old know around 11,000 words. Second language learners need around 5,000 words to cope with informal spoken language in conversation and movies, and around 9,000 words to cope with reading newspapers and novels. Second language learners thus need to learn a lot of vocabulary. This learning needs to occur through a balance of extensive listening and extensive reading of material at the right level, and through deliberate study of vocabulary.

The most efficient and effective way of doing deliberate learning is through the use of a flash card app or through using sets of small word cards. You can find a [video of a learner using word cards](#) here. A word card is a small card around 5cm wide and 2cm high. On one side is the word, phrase or short sentence to be learned, and on the other side there is a translation of the word, phrase or sentence into the learner's first language. Learners can make their own word cards. A learner typically works on their word cards in their own time, but some class time can be set aside for this learning particularly when learners are being trained in how to make and use word cards. A learner looks at the word on a card and tries to recall the translation which is written in the other side. The learner can then turn the card over to check. The learner should go quickly through their pack of cards at various times. The recall (retrieval) and spaced repetition are the factors that help learning. Flash card apps such as Quizlet, iKnow, and Anki also apply the principles of retrieval and spaced repetition.

While there are a large number of researchers involved in studying the principles involved in word card learning, Tatsuya Nakata is one of the leading researchers focusing on word card learning in a foreign language. His research provides guidelines for the design of flash card apps and for the training of learners in the use word cards and flash card apps.

### What should teachers do about word cards?

Strongly encourage learners to use word cards or flash card apps to systematically learn vocabulary

Train learners how to use word cards well. This training should involve the deliberate learning of principles and the application of these principles to learning. Here are the most important principles ranked according to their importance for learning with the most important first.

1. Do retrieval. Each retrieval is like a small test. Putting the word on one side of the card and the meaning on the other encourages retrieval. Flash cards programs are also designed to encourage retrieval. Vocabulary notebooks where the learners always see the word and meaning together do not encourage retrieval.
2. Do spaced repetition. Spaced learning is much better for retention than massed learning. If you want to go through your pack of word cards several times in one session, make sure you have at least thirty or forty words in your pack and wait a few minutes between each go through the pack. Having a lot of words in your pack means that there is a good space of time before you come back to the same word again. Learners are usually not aware of the effectiveness of spacing learning and this very important principle needs to be made clear to them. Spacing between word card sessions can be several days or weeks.
3. Do meaning recall (look at the word and try to recall the first language meaning) if you are learning vocabulary for listening or reading. Do form recall (look at the first language meaning and try to recall the foreign language word) if you are learning vocabulary for speaking or writing.
4. When using a flash card program, use recall not just multiple-choice recognition when you are learning vocabulary for speaking or writing.
5. Use first language translations rather than definitions in the foreign language to give the meaning. Pictures can also help and hearing the word helps learn the spoken form. Good flash card apps include the opportunity to hear the word.
6. Keep the word cards simple. Do not include a lot of information on the card. Add a contextual sentence only if it is necessary to make sense of the word.

7. Learners with cell phones or tablets should be encouraged to use flash card apps because these typically apply good learning principles and keep a record of use and what has been learned.

There is a false belief that all vocabulary learning needs to occur in context. While learning vocabulary in context through extensive listening and extensive reading is an essential part of vocabulary learning, learning vocabulary without context using word cards or flash cards is a very efficient and effective way of complementing contextual learning. It greatly speeds up the learning of large numbers of words.

[Further reading: Nakata, T. (2011). Computer-assisted second language vocabulary learning in a paired-associate paradigm: A critical investigation of flashcard software. *Computer Assisted Language Learning*, 24(1), 17-38. This article describes a list of criteria for evaluating flash card apps. The criteria are a detailed list of principles to guide word card and flash card learning.]



## Teaching Tips

Do you have an activity or trick or idea that you've used and used again successfully with your learners? You are invited to share here with your colleagues and go in the draw for a book prize generously donated by Cambridge University Press.

For this edition and as part of its ongoing and staunch support for our association, Cambridge University Press has provided the book, [Promoting Professional Learning by Silvana Richardson](#).

Choosing a winner is a hard one for this category as each contribution is invaluable, so the decision was made with a draw. As a result, the book goes this time to **Nicola Kingston**. While Nicola uses this activity with her primary-aged learners, this is a multi-layered yet focused and engaging activity that could be adapted and used at all ages. It's also guaranteed to get learners moving, talking, and laughing!

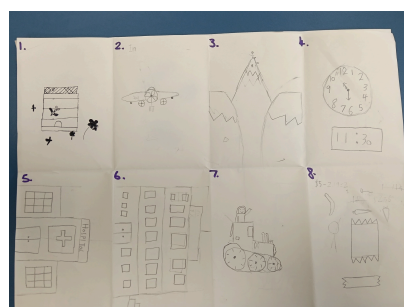
Send your tips to Siân Waite via [secretary@tesolanz.org.nz](mailto:secretary@tesolanz.org.nz)

## Running Picture Dictation Nicola Kingston

This is a quick, no-preparation, multi-modal task, which can be easily differentiated. It is a fun and interactive way to teach ELLP goals, such as topic-specific vocabulary and grammar.

### Procedures

Set up a list of instructions, away from the room.



Students (the runners) take turns to read each instruction, and relay it back to their partner or group. Others listen and complete the task (the runner can draw too!)

## Example

Sir Edmund Hillary (for a Year 4 group of learners).

### Script:

1. Sir Edmund Hillary was a beekeeper like his father. Draw a beehive with some bees.
  2. Sir Edmund Hillary flew planes in World War 2. Draw a plane.
  3. Mount Everest is the tallest mountain in the world. Draw a tall mountain.
- 

## Word Unscramble

### Sarah Roper

Here's a good starter activity to revise new vocabulary from the previous lesson.

A teaching tip I use often is 'word unscramble'. It probably has a more eloquent name but I call it that because it requires unscrambling of letters to form a word. It's a good starter activity to revise new vocabulary from a previous lesson or introduce a new topic. The teacher puts up the scrambled letters and learners work out what the word is.

**Pro tip:** Prepare the scrambled order of your letters beforehand as it's easy to misspell or miss out letters. It takes just a few minutes and is an engaging way to activate knowledge.

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## Getting to know your learner

### Siân Waite

Building a great classroom vibe starts with the 'getting to know your learner'. When you take a moment to learn a student's preferred name, their cultural roots, or the languages they grew up speaking, you're telling them, "You belong here." It's also vital to find out what they're obsessed with outside of school, computer gaming, sports, or art. When you can link the lesson to something they love, they can understand the content much better. At the end of the day, students don't just learn from a teacher, they learn from a person who cares about who they are.

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## Picture Books

### Gwenna Finikin

I use this as a primary teacher, but it could be adapted to other levels where appropriate.

One picture book can produce weeks of lessons. This is useful for those who are resource-poor, time-poor, space-poor, or who simply like an easy way to focus their planning. A curriculum or framework can still be used to lead the planning.

Each carefully chosen picture book can be used to look at overall themes, cultural significance, or anything else that comes to mind. Each page can be used as starters for discussion, or writing, or reading activities.

During lockdown, I recorded myself reading my chosen books with the instruction to listen to me, to read with me, or to mute me and read the book themselves. Each day, I would send a photo of the day's page, and the writing starter I had prepared. The book choice and writing starters were chosen based on what I knew about my learners.

My favourite books to use for this are:

*Voices in the Park* by Anthony Browne (great YouTube videos available for this one)

*A Walk in the Park* by Anthony Browne

*My Two Blankets* by Irena Kobald

*The House That Jack Built* by Gavin Bishop

While I hope we never experience another lockdown, I know I will use this type of resource to teach again if we do. Actually, I will be using it this year with my groups, but with a focus on oral language.

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## Encouraging careful proofreading using a peer review and ranking task

### Nicky Riddiford


Encouraging students to pay close attention to reviewing and proofreading their writing is often a challenge for teachers. Many students rely solely on the teacher to identify and correct any errors.

I have used a peer review and ranking task which is designed to motivate students to focus on the accuracy and tone of their written work. The students were all highly motivated adults who were studying on a workplace communication course. The piece of writing was often an email.

The steps:

1. In response to a context description and prompt, students write a short piece of prose (e.g. a paragraph for an essay or email).
2. I collate all items into one document, removing any identifying features including names, and hand out the document to each student.
3. I sometimes add my own example to the document.
4. In pairs, students analyse two of their classmates' emails, paragraphs, etc in terms of the features that the teacher identifies, e.g. grammar, structure, punctuation, spelling, sentence length, clarity, voice, tone.
5. Each pair gives each of the two pieces of writing a score 1-5 based on the features that the teacher has identified. The score of 5 is the best.
6. In class, each pair discusses their rankings with each other and then presents their rankings and the reasons for these to the whole class.
7. The whole class discusses the suggested ranking and reasons. In my experience, quite often the class finds further reasons which either increase or decrease the score suggested. If asked, I give my suggested score and reasons why.
8. Often the issues raised offer the opportunity for me to give a quick grammar lesson, e.g. the use of the article, verb tense forms, email conventions.
9. I repeat this process several times with different pieces of writing.

I have found that after this process, most students started to pay more attention to proofreading their work which led to more clarity and accuracy in their writing.



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## Book Reviews

Dr Elizaveta Tarasova



**Liza** works as the Director of Studies (DOS) at the English Teaching College (ETC) in Palmerston North, where she is responsible for organising the collaborative efforts of both teachers and students. With a profound commitment to language education and more than 25 years of language teaching and research experience, Liza strives to ensure that ETC provides the best learning opportunities to domestic and international students. Liza's main research areas include morphology, morphopragmatics, and cognitive linguistics. Her most recent research projects investigate the role of systemic competence in receptive and productive skills development. These reflect her aim of bringing the results of linguistic research into the classroom.



Piovesan, L. (2023). *Milad Goes to the Library Level 2*. ESL Reads. ISBN 978-1-922826-01-5 (pbk.) 23 pp. 15.99 AUD



Piovesan, L. (2023). *Zahra Has an Appointment Level 2*. ESL Reads. ISBN 978-1-922826-05-3 (pbk.) 19 pp. 15.99 AUD

## Judith Lacy (ETC)

A student's favourite grandson is called Milad (shhh, don't tell the other four). Milad is also the name of a former student. Wikipedia tells me Milad (or Mawlid) is a festival celebrating the birthday of the [Islamic](#) prophet [Muhammad](#). I have also taught a Zahra; Muhammad's daughter was [Fatimah al-Zahra](#).

Islam is the predominant religion of the students I teach, so these books have immediate appeal. The relatability continues with the stories – Zahra needs to take a bus to a doctor's appointment and Milad is lonely in his new country. Students certainly encounter late buses in Palmerston North and often need to visit medical centres for a range of injections. My students can see our city's public library from our classroom and outings there reinforce the joy Milad experiences of free access to such a treasure trove.

The books are easy to hold with simple black and white sketches to assist decoding. Each page has plenty of white space and the text is large and in a simple font. **Milad Goes to the Library** has been checked for cultural appropriateness by a member of the Australian Iranian community and **Zahra Has an Appointment** by a member of the Australian Afghan community.

One of my A1 (CEFR) students managed to slowly but surely read the books to me, which are part of the ESL Reads series. Each story is written in four levels for learners with varying reading abilities, ranging from short, simple sentences to long sentences with descriptive and idiomatic vocabulary. Another student liked that someone helped Zahra and that Zahra went on the bus as she does. My third student reviewer liked that Milad is learning English and moved to a new country like him.

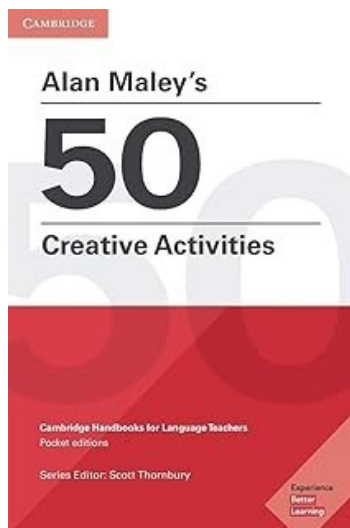
While ESL Reads is an Australian business, the stories are not full of Australianisms that could confuse students. Founder Lauren Piovesan is an experienced English as an additional language teacher. Like me, she isn't a fan of giving adult students books about unicorns, igloos and rainbows. She thought her students deserved better and did something about it.

The books would have benefitted from more proofreading, especially the library programme timetable in **Milad**. The copyright page for **Zahra** is missing the words "has been checked". I have used other ESL Reads titles in my classroom and highly recommend them all.

More please, Lauren.

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Maley, A. (2018). *Alan Maley's 50 creative activities*. Cambridge University Press. ISBN 978-1-108-45776-7 (pbk.) 107 pp. ~ NZD 28.40



## Jean L. Arnold Victoria University of Wellington

Maley's **50 Creative Activities** can be used with a range of proficiency levels and many areas, such as creative writing, working with music and sound, working with drama and voice, playing with language, and hands-on activities. The activities serve multiple purposes in addition to learning English. Many soft skills such as learning to work collaboratively, making polite requests and commands, negotiating, and how to voice criticism politely can be practiced as part of these exercises.

While I was reading the book, I found myself annotating it as I do my cookbooks - "Try this" or "Adapt it thus to suit this special requirement". I teach on a specialised ESP programme with a different content theme for each cohort of students; nevertheless, I discovered activities that I could use with my group of government officials from developing countries. I could also envisage using some of Maley's activities with children, or students of all ages and levels in between.

Maley begins the book with a section called 'Why I wrote this book' in which he spells out different characteristics of creativity, such as "making something new", "perceiving old things in new ways", "finding new connections", "being open to new insights" or "evoking pleasurable surprise" (p. viii). Many of these ideas I have used over the years in classes in one form or another, so it was good to be reminded of successful techniques. Maley also offers many suggestions to build on the activities and use others in successive lessons. From the in-depth alternatives he provides, I can see how well-considered the activities are.

Maley instils the reader of this book with a sense of curiosity – he doesn't give everything away. When writing about Activity 32: "Making masks", for example, he instructs, "While they are acting, put a cardboard box in the corner. What will they do? Trust the process; something will happen". He has a way of making you want to try this just to see what WILL happen. In learning a language, especially for adult learners, 'losing face' is a serious concern. Putting one's face behind a mask lessens that worry and may help shy students to find their voice.

I found that Maley's teaching suggestions pay great attention to specifics and work on building positive affective features in the classroom. Arnold and Brown (1999) define these as "aspects of emotion, feeling, mood or attitude which condition behaviour". In Maley's introduction, he states that he has striven to use a wide range of types of input and processes because these can keep both students and teachers motivated and interested (p. ix). Arnold (2021) concluded that, "Arguably, one of the challenges of education today is to provide more ways to educate all aspects of the student, including greater attention to the affective aspects as well as the cognition". Maley addresses the affective side of language learning exceptionally well and provides ideas for teachers that are "something a little more stimulating and enjoyable" (p. ix).

While not every activity would be used in every classroom, I recommend reading them all to spur one's own creativity.

Arnold, J. (2021). Affective factors and language learning: Making a difference. In M. Simons and T. F. H. Smits (Eds.), *Language education and emotions: Research into emotions and language learners, language teachers and educational processes* (pp. 18-33). Routledge.

Arnold, J. & Brown, H. D. (1999). A map of the terrain. In J. Arnold (Ed.), *Affect in language learning* (pp. 1-24). Cambridge University Press.

[Note: This is a different J. Arnold from the current reviewer.]

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# Shining Lights

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Humphreys, N. and Thomson, M. (2025). *Shining Lights (Levels 1 and 2)* Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press and Assessment. ISBN 978-1-009-22727-8 (pbk)128 pp. \$77.95

## Elaheh Jamshidian (ETC)

**Shining Lights** Levels 1 and 2 are part of a blended learning series for secondary learners, supported by workbooks and digital resources. Both books are visually appealing and clearly organised, with user-friendly unit structures, helpful feature overviews, and a consistent layout. The use of images, headings, and feedback boxes makes the material easy to follow, and the inclusion of real-life topics and digital practice helps keep learners engaged while encouraging some independent learning.

One of the standout features across both levels is the inclusion of dedicated Oracy sections. These focus on developing key speaking skills such as turn-taking, asking questions, and active listening, and offer a thoughtful way of building learners' confidence in spoken communication. That said, many of these activities remain quite structured, so teachers may want to extend them to allow for more natural, spontaneous interaction.

The books also do a good job of integrating reflection and skills development. Challenge tasks, self-evaluation activities, and problem-based elements encourage learners to think more deeply about what they are learning and to engage with the content in a more meaningful way. The clear presentation of grammar and vocabulary can also be helpful, particularly in more form-focused or exam-oriented contexts.

At the same time, there are some practical considerations. Pages can feel quite busy, with a large number of tasks and visual elements, which may be overwhelming for some learners and can make lesson pacing more difficult in shorter courses. While communicative activities are included, they are often quite guided, which may limit opportunities for more extended or authentic interaction.

The series also places a strong emphasis on assessment and exam preparation. This will suit some teaching contexts well, but teachers working in more communicative programmes may need to adapt tasks to create greater space for meaningful language use.

Finally, the grammar progression may feel ambitious at these levels, with structures such as modal verbs, first conditionals, and relative clauses introduced relatively early. Some learners may require additional support to work with this language effectively.

Overall, **Shining Lights** Levels 1 and 2 provide a comprehensive and engaging set of resources, particularly well suited to exam-focused contexts, while still offering a solid base that teachers can adapt to support more communicative learning.

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## Reports

### President's Report March 2026

#### Gwenna Finikin

I am very much looking forward to the upcoming CLESOL Conference. This conference is always a highlight in our professional calendar—a valuable opportunity to reconnect with colleagues from across Aotearoa New Zealand while also learning about new innovations, research, and practice in the field of ESOL and language education.

A great deal of work goes on behind the scenes to bring the conference together. I would like to acknowledge the dedication of the organising team who take on this significant responsibility, along with the professional support group, Composition, who work alongside them. Their commitment ensures the conference runs smoothly and continues to be such a rewarding experience for attendees. Our sponsors and stall holders also play an important role, helping to keep costs manageable and ensuring the event remains accessible to as many educators as possible.

This year the TESOLANZ Annual General Meeting will once again be held during the conference, as has traditionally been the case. Holding the AGM at CLESOL allows for broader representation from across the country and from our regional branches. A call for nominations and remits will be circulated soon, and I encourage members to consider how they might contribute to the governance and direction of our organisation. When we join TESOLANZ, we are invited to join a special interest group. This generally relates to the sector in which we work. I am part of the primary sector because I teach primary school. Each special interest group has a steering committee consisting of a few members who work towards advocacy and professional development opportunities. SIGs meet at CLESOL. Make sure you attend the meeting of the group you have chosen, and think about if you would like to put your name forwards to be chosen for the steering group.

As TESOLANZ continues to work towards its strategic goals—strengthening membership, maintaining a strong advocacy voice for ESOL and English language learners, and engaging with opportunities to help shape national curriculum developments—many people across the organisation are contributing their time and expertise. Some of these dedicated individuals are visible on the TESOLANZ website, but many others work quietly behind the scenes supporting the work of our branches, special interest groups, and national initiatives. Their contributions are deeply appreciated.

One of our major goals is to grow our membership. Achieving this requires providing meaningful and relevant professional development opportunities for educators across the sector. Each branch and special interest group plays an important role in organising events that support professional learning and connection within their communities.

This year has also seen TESOLANZ included in the Network of Expertise (NEX) professional development contract with the New Zealand Ministry of Education (see my report earlier in this publication). This equips us with the resource to provide an even larger amount of professional development opportunities than we currently are. Participation in this initiative has required a number of both short- and long-term changes to our organisational infrastructure. I would like to acknowledge the considerable additional work this has created for many of our volunteers. Serving in leadership or organisational roles within TESOLANZ is very much a labour of passion—many people contribute countless hours simply because they believe in the value of our professional community. Please keep an eye out for opportunities to volunteer as roles arise throughout the year.

Finally, I would like to reflect on the importance of collaboration within our sector. When I was part of English Language Partners New Zealand, then-CEO Nicola Sutton completed a master's thesis exploring partnerships between nonprofit organisations in New Zealand, particularly the value of collaboration rather than competition. This idea resonates strongly with the work of TESOLANZ. Our organisation spans the full range of TESOL contexts, and one of our ongoing challenges is ensuring professional learning opportunities remain relevant to educators across these diverse sectors while also working constructively alongside the professional learning communities supported by the Ministry of Education.

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Fortunately, there is significant overlap between these communities. Many leaders of professional learning groups are also active members of TESOLANZ. As a result, we often find ourselves “wearing different hats,” sharing information and extending opportunities through our collective networks. It is my hope that our involvement in the NEX programme will further strengthen this collaborative approach as we work together to meet the needs of educators—particularly during this first year of the contract.

I look forward to connecting with many of you at CLESOL and to another year of collaboration, professional learning, and advocacy for our field.

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## Auckland TESOL Branch Report - March 2026

Welcome to 2026 for the AKTESOL Committee. Sadly we have had to farewell Stephanie Layec who stepped in to hold the reins as chair in 2025. Stephanie did a brilliant job while also working as the foundation principal at Ecole Francaise Internationale in Auckland. Many thanks, Stephanie, you will be much missed.

This year we will be organising three events:

- Term 2 18th June (including AGM)
- Term 3 13th August Topic: CLESOL Re-told
- Term 4 29th October

We have recently sent out a survey to see which topics and types of events our members would like to take part in. At this stage, all events will be available online, and recordings will be made available in the members' area of the TESOLANZ website. We have yet to decide on the practicality of face-to-face events given the wide geographical spread of the Auckland region, and are awaiting membership input on this.

Our Term 2 event will include the AKTESOL AGM where we will be asking for more members to join the committee. We hope to have two people in each committee role to spread the load. The committee would love you to consider joining the team. If you would like more information on what each role might include, please do reach out to one of the team.

At this stage, the committee consists of

- Co-chairs - Nicola Kingston and Breda Matthews
- Treasurer - Zhou Ling
- Secretary - Breda Matthews
- Publications and membership Martin Walsh, Sarah Scholz, and Carol Griffiths
- Siân Waite - role TBC

As you can see, we have some double-ups and would love any help you can offer!

As our events will all have an online presence, we hope they will be accessible to teachers and para-professionals north of Auckland or in rural areas who do not have easy access to a branch. We would also welcome any BOPTESOL members. Please do join us at AKTESOL - we are a friendly bunch!

Additionally, we continue our membership drive by connecting with education providers through [this flyer](#).

Looking forward to working with you all in 2026!

Breda Matthews, Nicola Kingston and the Committee

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## Waikato TESOL Branch Report

### Joy Wang & Rachel Kaur

Kia ora koutou,

Waikato TESOL held its first committee meeting of the year on 25 February, marking a productive start to the branch's annual planning and coordination. A key focus of this meeting was reflecting on member feedback from 2025. Overall, members expressed strong appreciation for the high-quality academic presentations delivered throughout the year. At the same time, there was a clear call for a greater number of hands-on, practice-oriented sessions in 2026. In particular, members highlighted their interest in professional learning opportunities focused on the teaching of listening.

In response to this feedback, the committee has developed a balanced and forward-looking programme for 2026. Four committee meetings and four professional events are scheduled across the year. Committee meetings will generally take place two weeks prior to each event (with the exception of the annual planning meeting), allowing for effective preparation and coordination. Event venues will alternate between Wintec and the University of Waikato College, supporting accessibility for members across the region.

The 2026 event schedule is as follows:

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- **Event 1: 25 March 2026, 5:00–6:00pm**  
Using GenAI Tools for Developing Course and Assessment Materials (by Dr Anthony Richardson)
- **Event 2: 20 May 2026, 5:00–6:00pm**  
ESOL Support in the Primary Sector (by Dr Bao Hoang); and Supporting Low Literacy Adult Learners (by Bronwyn Bulwer)
- **Event 3: 19 August 2026, 5:00–6:30pm**  
Culturally Respectful Guidelines for Working with Ethnic Communities (by Vanisri Mills and her Diversity Counselling New Zealand team)  
(This session will be preceded by the Waikato TESOL AGM, followed by the event)
- **Event 4: 21 October 2026, 4:30–5:30pm (National Online Webinar)**  
New Ways in Teaching Active Listening (by Dr Jonathon Ryan)

In addition, the branch is currently managing a treasurer handover from Elizabeth Arnold to Anna Stephens, which is expected to be finalised at the second committee meeting.

In addition to event planning, the committee discussed the upcoming CLESOL conference, which will be hosted in Hamilton. As the local TESOLANZ branch, Waikato TESOL is willing to support the organisation of this important national event. The committee reached out to Mark Dawson-Smith (Co-convenor) and received a detailed update on 20 March. It is encouraging to note that planning is progressing smoothly, with both the organising committee and Composition reporting that preparations are well on track. Look for Mark's CLESOL update elsewhere in this newsletter for further details.

Waikato TESOL looks forward to an engaging year ahead, with a strengthened focus on practical professional learning and continued collaboration within the TESOL community.

Nāu te rourou, nāku te rourou, ka ora ai te iwi.

## MANATESOL at the Inaugural Taranaki Japan Day

### Gwenna Finikin

On March 21, members of MANATESOL embarked on a road trip to New Plymouth to attend the inaugural Taranaki Japan Day. As New Plymouth is at the northern edge of MANATESOL's region, this was a wonderful opportunity to connect with our wider community and support this exciting first-time event. We helped out on the English Language Partners Taranaki information stall, and introduced interested language teachers to TESOLANZ.

Japan Day was created to introduce the people of Taranaki to the richness and diversity of Japanese culture, while also challenging common perceptions. As organisers highlighted, Japan is "more than just sushi, ramen, and Geisha girls." The day showcased the depth of tradition, artistry, and community spirit that defines Japanese culture.

Hosted and sponsored by Sushi Ninja, the event marked the first time the Japanese community in Taranaki came together to share their talents, customs, and heritage on such a scale. Visitors enjoyed a vibrant programme featuring authentic food stalls, cultural displays, drummers, dancers, martial arts demonstrations, tea ceremonies, and much more. The atmosphere was lively and welcoming, offering something for everyone.

The trip was suggested by MANATESOL Secretary, and English Language Partners Taranaki manager, Yuka Kobayashi. Yuka also participated in the laido demonstration, proudly representing her martial arts journey, and contributing to the spirit of cultural exchange that defined the day.

It was an inspiring event and a fantastic example of community collaboration. We look forward to supporting future Japan Day celebrations in Taranaki and continuing to strengthen connections across our region.



Yuka Kobayashi participating in the laido demonstration.

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## WATESOL report for TESOLANZ newsletter, March 2026

### WATESOL Events 2026

#### March 12:

**Professor John Macalister** gave an inspiring and thoughtful account of the time he spent teaching in Ukraine last year as a humanitarian volunteer.



### WATESOL Expo: Wednesday August 19, in-person

- Venue – Rutherford House, Victoria University of Wellington
  - Keynote speaker: **Professor Averil Coxhead**
-



Report from WATESOL November 2025 event:



## Linda Todd

### What Should Every ESOL Teacher Know

Professor Paul Nation

In his second presentation to our WATESOL and TESOLANZ community online Paul Nation focussed on vocabulary development through primary, secondary and tertiary levels. Beginning with describing the vocabulary growth of young native speakers who from the age of 2 – 14 build their vocabulary by about 1000 word families a year, Paul noted that, if a non-native speaker is born in NZ or arrives well before the end of primary school, they will reach native speaker competence within three to five years. He referred us to a picture vocabulary size test at <https://laurenceanthony.net/software/pvstweb/> where a learner's vocabulary size can be checked. He suggested that all learners at this stage will extend their vocabulary in a programme that provides activities and encourages word consciousness raising, as well as making sure that learners undertake large quantities of successful reading and writing.

With secondary learners, it is important to train learners in how to learn. Vocabulary teaching should focus on subject-related vocabulary. The teaching should be clear, simple and memorable, and the same words should be revisited multiple times. Learners should spend substantial amounts of time reading and writing. When testing these learners, Paul made a strong argument for supportive testing where the learners undertake a vocabulary-size test in order to obtain a more accurate result. He suggested sitting next to the learner as they do the test without giving any clues as to whether they are right or wrong, but supporting them by reading words they have trouble reading or pronouncing. It is important to make sure they they consider all the options, keep them on-task, and encourage them to keep going. Let them take a rest where necessary. Paul recommended Chapters 8 and 9 in his book "What should every ESL teacher know?" which is available free to download on his website. It will provide teachers with suggestions on teaching learners how to learn.

With adults, including pre-university learners, a needs analysis is very important, especially for EAL learners preparing for tertiary study. A teacher should know their vocabulary size, how well they know the first 3000 words of English (which largely includes the AWL), their reading speed in English, and their skill at listening, speaking, reading and writing. Paul suggested the most suitable vocabulary test for recent arrivals in New Zealand is one of the more recent Vocabulary Levels Tests. For university study, learner training (learning how to learn) is particularly important.

### Learning Community Hub at Hutt Valley High School 2025

## Sarah Roper

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In 2025 with encouragement from the Community Partnerships team at the Ministry of Education (MOE), Hutt Valley High School (HVHS) applied for funds to run a Learning Community Hub (LCH) at school. Usually, these hubs are run by community groups to better engage migrant groups with access to information about education in New Zealand and other aspects of their new lives here. The HVHS learning community hub aimed to foster connections with migrant parents and empower them with knowledge about the school system, and to better inform young people about school, NCEA, and pathways available to them. The LCH ran over Term two and Term three. There were four parent seminars and six student workshops and presentations.

Topics included:

NCEA information and the NZ Education system, Subject selection, Scholarships, Prizegivings and Graduation, Pathways beyond school, AI and education, Cyberbullying and internet safety, Financial literacy (Westpac and IRD), Study skills and time management.

The programme was well-attended with 25 families from 14 different ethnicities attending sessions. Parents were very appreciative of the opportunity to learn about school and the support that was offered. The events were supported by translators from our school community and food was provided at the end of each seminar. One parent gave this feedback:

"It was very informative as we are new to New Zealand. Teachers were very keen to explain each part of the topic very elaborately. Much appreciated that there were translator teachers for different Asian students. Thank you for being supportive"

One of the highlights for students was an Inspiring the Future workshop. <https://www.inspiringthefuture.org.nz/#/> 13 local community members, all of whom were migrants themselves or involved with migrant communities, formed a panel for students to interview about their career pathways. There was a diverse range of career pathways represented from the police, authors, photographers, city council members, PHD students and careers advisors. It was certainly an inspiring event for our young people. Here's what a few of our students said about the event: [It was good to hear] "about their journey from nothing to where they are standing today" "There will be more opportunities in our lives to change than we think, and not all of them are going to be bad or negative, but can be things that will change life in beautiful ways".

The LCH brought together a diverse range of families and members of our school community. The initiative was well supported by the MOE. Cinthia Soto, a member of the Community Partnerships team within the MOE helped organise guest speakers and arrange the programme schedule together with the school coordinator. A team of school staff were involved in translating, advertising, arranging catering, and setting up events. It was a lot of work but a very rewarding programme for all who were part of it. We have plans to repeat some sessions in 2026 and to provide more pathway and career guidance to students throughout the year.





## The Ministry of Education initiative 'Learning Community Hub' at Eastern Hutt Primary School.

### Wanwan Liao

Eastern Hutt School launched a **Learning Community Hub in 2025**, part of a nationwide Ministry of Education initiative first introduced in Christchurch in 2020 to support migrant and refugee communities to better understand New Zealand education. As the second primary school in the Wellington region to host a hub, the school is responding to a highly diverse community where 48% of students speak a language other than English and over 200 learners receive ESOL funding..

The hub provides a safe, welcoming space for families to build understanding of the New Zealand education system while strengthening home-school partnerships. Sessions are held fortnightly and begin with a shared lunch, creating opportunities for connection and reducing barriers to participation. Topics are co-constructed with families and include curriculum, literacy and maths support, wellbeing, digital safety, and navigating school systems such as parent portals.

Multilingual support, including Mandarin and Farsi interpreters, ensures accessibility for a wide range of communities. Attendance has grown through both formal registration and word of mouth, reflecting strong engagement across diverse cultural groups.

Feedback indicates increased parent confidence and participation, particularly in engaging with teachers and supporting learning at home. The hub model highlights the impact of culturally responsive, community-driven approaches in empowering families of English language learners and strengthening educational outcomes.

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## CANTESOL: Connection, Collaboration, and a Creative Course

### Navjot McCormack, Chair

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There was a distinct fresh start buzz at Hagley College's Auripo Building on Thursday, 19 March. After a season of transition, the CANTESOL committee met with a clear mission: To turn local expertise into a high-impact roadmap for our Canterbury practitioners. It was a special evening of **Tuākana-tōina** (mentorship). While our outgoing Chair Kerstin Dofs, Secretary Jocelyn Wright, and Treasurer Margi Memory, have officially stepped down from their committee roles, we are delighted they are remaining active members of the branch. Their presence provided invaluable guidance as they shared their deep experience of what works, anchoring our first meeting in a spirit of continuity and support.

The room felt re-energised as we formally introduced our new Executive trio: Jude Bautista (Secretary), Steve Cearns (Treasurer), and myself as Chair. For a leadership team only a few months into its tenure, the momentum is already remarkable. The real headline of the evening was the rapid, enthusiastic growth of our committee's strategic reach. In a single session, we successfully filled two key sector liaison portfolios: Amanda Skinner (Te Kāpehu Riccarton School) has stepped up to anchor the Primary sector, while Diana Castillo and Khadra Alazrak have enthusiastically taken on joint Secondary liaison roles.

While the national conversation is currently dominated by AI, CANTESOL has decided to look within. Recognising the deep well of talent in our own committee, we have pivoted our programme toward raw, practical classroom practice. Our "2+1" event schedule is already taking a hands-on shape:

**Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) Learners and Literacy Teaching: Jude Bautista** will lead a deep dive into the nuance of teaching culturally and linguistically diverse learners in New Zealand. He will explore and unpack issues around superdiversity, the status of the English language in CALD learners' heritage countries, language contact and English language varieties, orthography, and cultural backgrounds, and how all these affect CALD learners' language and literacy acquisition and learning. Ultimately, he will identify practical strategies that teachers can use as they navigate the changing landscape of literacy teaching in New Zealand without compromising culturally responsive pedagogy for CALD learners.

**Digital Literacy for Foundation Learners: Diana Castillo and Khadra Alazrak** will facilitate a joint workshop exploring how adult ELLs with very low English proficiency develop basic computer skills for the first time. The session addresses the unique physical and cognitive challenges faced by older digital beginners, while celebrating the remarkable motivation and resilience they bring to the classroom. Practitioners will walk away with accessible, step-by-step strategies for building student confidence in typing, internet navigation, and simple research, using simplified, real-world tasks.

**Vocabulary teaching and global insights: Navjot McCormack** will facilitate a hands-on workshop sharing proven, step-by-step techniques to teach vocabulary, including subject-specific terminology in areas like Maths and Science. This session includes practical "do's and don'ts" for the classroom, alongside a curated briefing on key findings from recent IATEFL workshops regarding AI versus human-generated reading materials and the use of EdTech in the language classroom. Crucially, the session will also address the vital role of supporting learners' mental health within the language learning environment.

**Issues in Language Acquisition and Learning vis-à-vis Assessment and Reporting Requirements: Amanda Skinner** will lead a discussion on the transition to the government's new nationally consistent reporting systems. This session explores the professional challenge of providing standardised data without obscuring the nuanced, non-linear progress of English Language Learners. By focusing on the English Language Learning Progressions (ELLP), the session will examine how to fulfil new reporting mandates while ensuring every report authentically captures a student's unique linguistic journey.

By leaning into our own collective capability, we are ensuring that our professional development is created **by** practitioners, **for** practitioners.

Jude is currently polishing the final dates for the TESOLANZ national calendar, and we cannot wait to welcome our colleagues to our first face-to-face session soon. CANTESOL is back, we are organised, and we are ready to make this a standout year!

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## SIG Reports

### Primary SIG - March 2026

#### Karen Cebalo

The Primary SIG provides a voice for Primary school ESOL specialists, ELAs and Teacher Aides working in the Primary ESOL space. We aim to present termly webinars which have relevance to our sector.

CLESOL: We hope to have as many Primary members as possible at CLESOL on the 4th and 5th July in Hamilton. There is very strong representation from Primary-based presenters this year so there should be excellent choice of workshops and great relevance to our sector. There will also be SIG meetings - this year on the Saturday afternoon rather than in the lunch hour. Please do ensure that you talk to your school about supporting you financially as this is an excellent opportunity for us to connect and engage with others in our field and, this year, the Ministry ESOL team are unable to offer scholarships as they have done previously. The exact cost of registration is not yet determined so please keep an eye on the CLESOL website and take advantage of early bird registration once it's available.

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WEBINARS: This year we are hoping to explore further the changes in the curriculum and how they impact ELLs. We will also look at the Science of Learning and how to help classroom teachers incorporate ESOL principles within this. In addition we will hear from teachers working with refugee students and families, and seek to understand the additional provision needed and what support is available and how to access this.

SIG STEERING GROUP: We aim to have representation from each branch area but are happy to have more than one person from a branch, so please contact Karen at [karenc@brownsbay.school.nz](mailto:karenc@brownsbay.school.nz) if you would like to join the team. Currently our team consists of Bernie Moffatt (Waikato), Cathie Cahill (Wellington), Gwenna Finikin (Manawatu), Haidee Jenkins (Bay of Plenty) and Karen Cebalo (Auckland).

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## Secondary SIG

It has been a quiet start to the year in terms of SIG events and correspondence. This correlates directly to the very opposite of this experience in secondary schools around the country in the first half of the first term. All English Language specialists have a heavy workload settling new year 9 ELL students, new internationals and new migrants from other year groups. The Ministry ESOL Funding applications also dominate focus until the deadline of March 10th.

Behind the scenes we know that, work has started on writing the new subject, EAL (English as an Additional Language) as part of the Ministry of Education's curriculum development work. After years of advocacy, our subject will finally find a home within the new curriculum. Implementation of new subjects at Year 11 (whatever that looks like) is set for 2028, so until then, we will continue with what we have all been doing best: progressing our students' English language skills.

There are plans for professional development opportunities from Term 2 onwards. Topics being considered are the use of AI in language classrooms and developing AI literacy skills with our learners, writing assessment tasks for English Language Unit Standards and how EL specialists might help mainstream teachers in their schools better cater to the needs of ELLs.

Finally, the SIG is looking for members to join the steering group. This small group meets once a term online to discuss ideas for professional development for teachers and issues you face, about which TESOLANZ might advocate. An email has been sent to members asking for expressions of interest. This group will be especially important as TESOLANZ considers how best to fulfill the Network of Expertise (NEX) professional development contract with the New Zealand Ministry of Education.

If you have any ideas for professional development that you think would be useful (or that you could offer!) please email Sarah Roper or Kath Teeboon.

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## Tertiary SIG

### Juliet Fry

#### TESOLANZ SIG Coordinator

Are you someone who can understand and represent the breadth of the tertiary sector: universities, polytechs, PTE, and refugee and migrant education? The Tertiary Special Interest Group (SIG) is needing a leader. The leader would be supported by the TESOLANZ executive SIG coordinator. Additionally, the Tertiary SIG Steering Group has three current members from different parts of the country and from different types of institutions, so it has a foundation of support. If you are interested in leading this sector, providing advocacy and helping organise professional learning opportunities, contact Juliet Fry, the current TESOLANZ executive SIG coordinator: [julietfry21@gmail.com](mailto:julietfry21@gmail.com)

In the meantime, Daryl Streat, as the former Tertiary SIG leader, has been conducting an inquiry into the topics identified by different SIGs that would warrant future research. Daryl's presentation of this inquiry at CLESOL 2026 will be highly anticipated.

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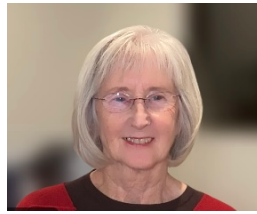
## New Faces



**Nicola** is the English as an Additional Language (EAL) Team Leader at a large primary school in East Auckland. She completed her TESSOL qualification in 2015 and earned her Master of Education with Distinction (endorsed in Teaching and Learning Languages) in 2023.

Recently, she has been leading professional development on when to use students' home languages in the classroom and exploring the intersections between the Science of Learning and EAL pedagogies.

Outside of school, Nicola enjoys kayaking and watching cricket. She has two teenage daughters, the eldest of whom began her university journey this year.



**Breda Matthews**, MA, B.Ed, Dip TESSOL is a facilitator and a teacher of English language learners. She has taught at secondary and tertiary levels, and has wide experience and expertise in programme design, teaching and assessing English language learners, resource creation and professional development in New Zealand. Breda has co-developed assessment resources and teaching and learning materials for English Language and English for Academic Purposes (EAP) standards for NZQA and the Ministry of Education. She is the founder of the English Language Resources Centre in New Zealand. Breda is also involved in supporting teachers in the use of the Learning Village, an online EAL programme used in schools.



### **Navjot McCormack**

It is a privilege to step into the role of Chair for CANTESOL. My journey has been shaped by a lifelong fascination with the power of language, a thread that has pulled me across nine countries, from international newsrooms to global classrooms.

I bring a distinctive hybrid of senior journalism and educational leadership. Before dedicating myself to education, I spent 26 years in senior editorial roles for major English language newspapers around the world, and locally with **The Press**. Even then, teaching was part of my daily rhythm; as an editor, I spent countless hours schooling university interns on the finer points of narrative precision and the ethical weight of the written word.

This “birds-eye” perspective transitioned naturally into a teaching career spanning the primary, secondary, tertiary, and vocational sectors. Whether leading an English Language department in Christchurch, serving in a senior leadership role as a Learning Specialist in Australia, or delivering EAP at Monash University in Melbourne and within Hong Kong’s vocational sector, I have seen language function as the ultimate tool for agency.

I am a firm believer in “outside the box” pedagogy. My Master of Education (Distinction) focused on language acquisition and leadership, and I am passionate about combining my two worlds — using the urgency and nuance of journalism to engage reluctant learners and bridge achievement gaps. I look forward to working alongside our talented Canterbury practitioners to build collective capability and ensure our diverse learners are empowered through excellence in language practice.

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# UN International Days

## April

- 15 April International Wellness Day
- 20 April Chinese Language Day
- 21 April World Creativity and Innovation Day
- 23 April English Language Day  
Spanish Language Day
- 26 April World Intellectual Property Day

## May

- 5 May World Portuguese Language Day
- 15 May International Day of Families
- 16 May International Day of Living Together in Peace
- 20 May World Bee Day
- 21 May World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development

## June

- 1 June Global Day of Parents
- 5 June World Environment Day
- 8 June World Oceans Day
- 11 June International Day of Play
- 12 June World Day Against Child Labour
- 20 June World Refugee Day

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## TESOLANZ position statement: Staff responsible for ESOL programmes in primary and secondary schools.

TESOLANZ believes that specialist teachers with a recognised ESOL qualification should have responsibility for developing, planning and implementing ESOL programmes. Programmes can be enhanced by paraprofessionals who would ideally hold qualifications in working with ELLs. We encourage all schools to support teachers and paraprofessionals to gain ESOL qualifications. Qualified staff have the benefit of training to support the micro-decisions of teaching required to accelerate the development of English language proficiency, enabling our learners to more readily access a broad classroom curriculum, achieving academic success and a sense of social and emotional wellbeing. TESOLANZ is an incorporated society, founded in 1994 with the following constitutional purposes:

- to promote the professional interests and cater for the needs of teachers of English to learners from language backgrounds other than English;
- to promote the interests and cater for the needs of learners from language backgrounds other than English;
- to cooperate with community language action groups in identifying and pursuing common goals;
- to publish research, materials and other documents appropriate to the Association's aims; and
- to affirm the maintenance of Te Reo Māori under the Treaty of Waitangi.

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**Executive Committee**

Gwenna Finikin (President)



**tesolan**  
te rōpū kaiwhakaaako reo ingarihi ki luiti reo kē

teachers of english to speakers of  
other languages aotearoa new zealand

## Join Us

TESOLANZ invites you to join us as a member.

Over the past 2 years, TESOLANZ has made significant gains in serving its members.

These gains include:

- New events
- Improved newsletters and website
- Increased advocacy/engagement with key stakeholders

Membership fees are:

- Full Membership - \$65/year
- Low Waged Membership - \$35/year
- New Graduate - \$0 for one year

Membership options can be viewed on our website:

<https://www.tesolan.org.nz/join-us/>

Sally Hay (Secretary)  
Margi Memory (Treasurer)  
Siân Waite (Publications)  
Julie Luxton (Branch Liaison)  
Juliet Fry (SIG Coordinator)  
Lucy Macnaught

### Special Interest Group (SIG) co-ordinators

Karen Cebalo, Primary  
Sally Hay and Sarah Roper, Secondary  
Daryl Streat, Tertiary

### Branch presidents/convenors

AKTESOL – Breda Matthews & Nicola Kingston  
Waikato TESOL - Rachel Kaur and Yi (Joy) Wang  
BOPTESOL – Jon Sadler  
MANATESOL - Gwenna Finikin  
WATESOL - Nicky Riddiford  
NATESOL - Annette Vartha  
CANTESOL – Nav McCormack  
Otago TESOL - David Woodfield.

### Web Manager

Marty Pilott

### Editors

Christine Hanley (newsletter), Dr Olly Ballance (journal).

### Editorial assistants

Dr Elizaveta Tarasova (newsletter), Dr Patrick Coelho (journal).

### Membership & distribution

Dr Thủy Bui



**tesolan**

te rōpū kaiwhakaaako reo ingarihi ki luiti reo kē  
teachers of english to speakers of  
other languages aotearoa new zealand