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President's Report

Gwenna Finikin

I had a great time at CLESOL this year. It wasn't just the brilliantly cold Kirikiriroa mornings that let me relive my childhood there, pretending I was a dragon with clouds of condensation billowing from my mouth. It wasn't just getting to sneak a few (slightly misquoted) lines from the musical *Hamilton* into my conference speech—although I did enjoy that. More than anything, it was seeing people again and sharing ideas about the work we do.

One of the things I value most about our profession is the chance to connect with colleagues. Depending on where we work, we might be surrounded by like-minded educators, or we might be the only English language teacher in the school. Working as an island can be rewarding, but it can also be isolating. We miss those conversations where someone understands exactly what we're talking about, shares a resource that makes life easier, or simply reassures us that they're grappling with the same challenges. That's why opportunities like CLESOL, and the work TESOLANZ does throughout the year, matter so much.

Being part of the Networks of Expertise has given us the chance to think creatively about how we support English language teachers across Aotearoa. One initiative we're trialling this term is a mentoring programme for new ESOL and EAL teachers.

As I write this, schools are about to head back for the term and our first mentoring cohort is about to begin. Many of us found our way into English language teaching by accident rather than design. We stumble across the unicorn horn that is an ESOL role and suddenly find ourselves wondering how we got here. Often we arrive with teaching experience but little specialist preparation, and sometimes no formal ESOL qualifications at all.

Our hope is that this short mentoring programme will help new colleagues feel more confident in their roles, build connections with experienced practitioners, and encourage them to continue their professional learning through TESOLANZ, Ministry-funded professional learning clusters, and further study.

We were delighted by the response to the pilot. So many experienced and highly qualified teachers volunteered to be mentors that we simply couldn't fit everyone into the nine places available this time. That's a wonderful problem to have, and we're grateful to everyone who put their hand up and hope they apply next time as well. As with any new initiative, we expect there will be a few bumps along the way, and we'll be taking on board feedback as we refine and, we hope, expand the programme in future terms.

It's an exciting time for TESOLANZ. The additional funding through the Networks of Expertise gives us opportunities to offer more professional learning and to connect with teachers in new ways. We'd love to hear your ideas about what would make the biggest difference to you and your colleagues. Please get in touch with Angela or me at pld@tesolan.org.nz and let us know what's working, what's missing, and what you'd like to see next.

Finally, TESOLANZ is only as strong as the people who make up our community. We want to hear voices from every part of Aotearoa and from every teaching context. Whether you're new to the profession or have been teaching for decades, your ideas and experiences help shape where we go next.

Newsletter Coordinator and Editor Wanted

Reports To

The TESOLANZ Newsletter Coordinator and Editor reports to the Publications Coordinator.

Position Purpose

The TESOLANZ Newsletter Coordinator and Editor is responsible for producing and distributing three TESOLANZ newsletters each year. The role involves coordinating contributions, editing and formatting content, managing advertising, and ensuring newsletters are accessible and professionally presented.

Key Responsibilities

- Produce three newsletters annually, published in:
 - Autumn

- Winter
- Spring
- Manage submission deadlines for newsletter contributions:
 - 20 March
 - 20 June
 - 20 October
- Liaise with contributors to coordinate the submission and publication of articles and other content.
- Liaise with advertisers regarding advertising content and placement.
- Edit, proofread, and format all newsletter contributions to ensure consistency, clarity, and quality.
- Design and produce the newsletter in an accessible format, including:
 - Clear colour contrast
 - Compatibility with screen readers
 - Good accessibility practices
- Distribute the completed newsletter to the TESOLANZ membership.
- Provide a PDF copy of each newsletter to the TESOLANZ Web Manager for publication on the TESOLANZ website.

Key Skills and Attributes

- Excellent written communication and editing skills.
- Strong organisational and time management skills, with the ability to meet fixed publication deadlines.
- Attention to detail and a high standard of accuracy.
- Ability to communicate effectively with a range of contributors and stakeholders.
- Familiarity with document formatting and accessibility standards is desirable.
- Ability to work independently while collaborating with the Publications Coordinator and other members of the TESOLANZ Executive.

Neither Plague nor Panacea: Teacher Judgement in the Age of AI

Elizaveta Tarasova

Opinions about the use of generative AI in education seem to occupy opposite ends of the temperature scale: freezing or scorching, with nothing (or very little) between the extremes. At one end, AI is presented as a tireless digital colleague that will personalise learning, eliminate paperwork and, perhaps, even make the photocopier behave. At the other, it is treated as an existential threat to teaching, learning and possibly civilisation itself. Similar concerns have accompanied many new technologies. Within my own professional memory, I have heard colleagues and teachers describe computers and the internet as threats, not necessarily to humanity, but certainly to creative thinking, learner autonomy and independent judgement. The technologies change, but the perception of their influence, which sometimes looks like a mixture of excitement, suspicion and mild panic, remains very familiar.

Neither extreme is particularly useful. During the recent CLESOL conference in Hamilton, it was reassuring to see that many presenters discussing generative AI in ESOL education occupied the middle ground, taking a practical position that recognises that the technology is already here. It is therefore up to us to decide what it is useful for, where it struggles and when we, as teachers, must take over.

This approach seems both logical and prudent because AI is already entering educational practice, sometimes through familiar platforms with AI-enabled features increasingly built in, such as Kahoot and Quizlet, and sometimes through more visibly generative tools such as ChatGPT, Microsoft Copilot, and Claude. Learners are already using these tools, whether or not teachers feel ready for them. Therefore, without a working understanding of what generative AI can do, where it may be misleading and how its use can be limited, current teaching practices risk becoming obsolete in the new digital world. Additionally, the tools are changing so fast that guidance documents, training materials and even institutional policies can begin to look dated before the cup of coffee you were going to drink while reading them cools down.

For ESOL practitioners, this means going back to basics, similar to what we did with the arrival of computers and the internet. The established principles of language teaching pedagogy should still guide us in deciding how AI can be used ethically and confidently to support learning, as we also help students develop an informed and critical understanding of the technology. This position is supported by several trustworthy international frameworks. For example, UNESCO's guidance emphasises human-centred, ethical and pedagogically appropriate use, while its AI competency framework places human agency, ethics and AI pedagogy at the heart of teacher capability (Miao & Cukurova, 2024; Miao & Holmes, 2023). The OECD's AI principles similarly emphasise human oversight, transparency and accountability (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2024).

A common explanation I hear from teachers who do not use AI is that it feels intimidating, complicated or simply too unpredictable for their liking. That response is understandable, but waiting for AI to become simpler or safer is probably not a good choice. While waiting may feel cautious, AI will continue to shape educational practice whether teachers participate in the conversation or not. We therefore need practical working principles now.

One such principle is almost painfully obvious: weak pedagogy combined with AI produces weak teaching materials, only faster. However, when guided by sound pedagogical principles, AI can reduce some of the routine drafting work and create more time for what teachers do best. This applies across our practice, from lesson planning and materials development to teaching, assessment and reflection. AI can laminate a bad idea remarkably efficiently. Unfortunately, lamination and polish are not pedagogy. A pretty worksheet may look professional and engaging, but it may still lack a meaningful learning purpose, coherent progression, cultural relevance, appropriate scaffolding or any convincing reason for learners to do the task it sets for them.

What this means is that the teacher's role is not limited to a final proofread of an AI-generated output. It is a quality-assurance process that turns raw AI output into usable, high-quality teaching material. This idea is not new. Shulman (1987), for example, described professional teacher knowledge as involving comprehension, transformation, instruction, evaluation and reflection. Mishra and Koehler's (2006) TPACK framework similarly reminds us that technology becomes educationally meaningful only through its relationship with pedagogy and content in a particular context. Therefore, as impressive as AI may be as a materials-creation tool, it has not abolished the need for professional knowledge.

Apart from the speed with which AI can produce things that otherwise may take us hours, another area in which generative AI can be genuinely useful is the production of raw materials. It can:

- generate several possible contexts, scenarios or text variations;
- reduce first-draft time for instructions, dialogues and practice items;

- suggest model phrases, vocabulary lists or checklist content;

- adapt a teacher-selected text to different proficiency levels; and
- provide options that a teacher can compare, reject, combine or revise.

These are small jobs with visible boundaries. They are relatively easy to supervise, and the teacher remains the designer.

What AI struggles with is the hidden work of teaching. It does not know what happened in yesterday's lesson, which learner has lost confidence, why a seemingly simple activity may not work for the students in your class, or which local reference will make a text meaningful for the people in the room. It cannot reliably determine how learning should be sequenced for a particular group, understand classroom dynamics, build relationships, notice when learners' eyes glaze over, or conduct formative assessment in the way an attentive teacher can.

When preparing for CLESOL, I reviewed a collection of AI-generated materials some of my colleagues shared with me. One of the recurrent examples was a reading worksheet that looked tidy but consisted of a generic paragraph followed by three to five equally generic questions, some of which learners could answer without reading the text at all. This was often followed by a speaking activity asking learners to share their answers or ideas with a partner, or by a writing task instructing them to produce a paragraph on the same topic. The worksheet might have been attractively formatted, but typically there was no clear communicative purpose, no meaningful progression, no language support and no tangible outcome. Learners were asked to produce answers, but very little had been designed to help them learn.

In my view, the problem with such examples is not that they were AI-generated, but that professional judgement was not part of their creation. To make that judgement more visible, I draw upon backward design (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005), models of pedagogical reasoning and professional teacher knowledge (Mishra & Koehler, 2006; Shulman, 1987), and human-centred guidance on generative AI in education (Miao & Cukurova, 2024; Miao & Holmes, 2023). From these principles, I suggest a simple six-stage Teacher Judgement Loop that teachers can apply readily on a busy Monday morning: Purpose, Prompt, Inspect, Adapt, Teach and Evaluate.

1. **Purpose:** What should learners be able to do, and what evidence would show that they can do it?
2. **Prompt:** Provide the level, learner context, purpose, support, expected outcome and limits of AI's role.
3. **Inspect:** Treat the output as a draft. Look for gaps, inaccuracies, assumptions, bias, unsuitable language, missing scaffolds and activities that are busy rather than useful.
4. **Adapt:** Localise and sequence the material, add models and language support, and set a clear boundary between AI-supported preparation and learner work.
5. **Teach:** Notice what happens. Respond to learners, adjust timing, clarify instructions and protect the thinking, speaking and decision-making learners need to do themselves.
6. **Evaluate:** Examine the evidence of learning. Did the task achieve its purpose? What should be kept, revised or rejected next time?

The loop matters because teacher judgement does not occur only before a lesson. It continues during and after the lesson when evidence of learning becomes visible. AI may help to draft, but it cannot complete this cycle independently. To produce a useful draft, however, it needs a prompt containing more than a topic and a hopeful "please".

Prompting is often presented as a collection of clever phrases or secret formulas. For teachers, good prompting is about instructional clarity. It means giving the tool information that matters in a particular teaching context. For example, asking AI to "create a speaking task about travel" will usually produce something considerably less workable than: "Create a B1 information-gap speaking task about travel for adult migrant learners in New Zealand, focusing on giving advice about places to visit and activities to do. Include roles, useful phrases, a clear outcome and a short preparation stage. Draft the teacher materials, but do not produce the learners' responses."

The second prompt contains a considerable amount of teacher thinking:

- **Level:** What language demands are realistic?
- **Learners:** Who are they, and which contexts and goals matter to them?
- **Purpose:** What will learners use language to do?
- **Support:** What models, phrases or examples are needed?
- **Outcome:** What decision, product or exchange will complete the task?
- **Stopping point:** Where must AI hand the work back to the teacher or learner?

This is why a good prompt can be understood as a compressed lesson plan. It does not guarantee a good lesson, however. AI can still misunderstand the brief, produce generic content or cheerfully invent something unsuitable. A stronger prompt merely provides a better starting point; teacher judgement is still needed to evaluate, refine and decide whether the output should be used at all.

The stronger prompt also reveals something important: teachers who struggle to prompt AI may not need a lesson in "magic prompt words". They may need time to clarify the learning outcome, learner needs, task sequence and evidence of learning. Good prompts come from good pedagogy, not the other way around.

There is understandable pressure to draw one universal line between acceptable and unacceptable AI use. In practice, as far as teachers are concerned, most decisions sit in a grey area and depend on purpose, context, transparency and assessment conditions. The clearest red lines are crossed when AI erodes agency and undermines the pedagogical purpose of the task. Things, however, become more complicated when learners are encouraged to use AI as an always-available tutor. While this issue deserves an investigation of its own, a useful set of questions for teachers is:

- What learner thinking must remain visible?
- Would AI use make the evidence of learning disappear?
- Can the support be transparent, fair and teachable?
- At what point does this require my professional judgement?

For example, asking AI to identify recurring grammatical errors in a learner's paragraph and explain them is quite different from asking it to produce the learner's assessed written response. Generating prompting questions that help a learner deepen a reflective journal may promote learning; generating the journal entry removes the reflection. The issue is not simply whether AI was involved in the task, but whether it replaced the learner's cognitive, linguistic or creative work. Educating the learner about ethical AI use takes us back to teacher agency. Agency is not merely the freedom to choose a tool; it involves making purposeful professional decisions in a particular context (Biesta et al., 2015). Sometimes that decision will be to use AI or instruct the learners to use AI. Sometimes it will be to give it one small preparatory job. Sometimes AI will not be necessary at all.

To sum it all up, generative AI is neither plague nor panacea. It has some worthwhile benefits like reducing unnecessary drafting, providing a range of options and supporting faster adaptation of materials. However, it is important to remember that reducing workload does not equal outsourcing professional responsibility. The question is no longer simply, "Can AI do this?" (because it often can). A better question is, "At what point does this require my professional judgement?" The moment the answer is "Now!", AI stops. AI is not making teacher judgement obsolete; in fact, it is making teacher judgement more valuable than ever.

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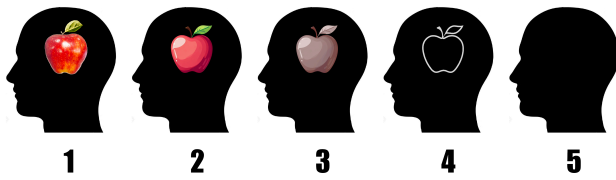
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The Inner World of the Language Learner

Amber Fraser-Smith

Picture a red apple. How clearly can you see it? Is it bright and detailed, vague and blurry, or perhaps black and white? Or maybe you cannot see it at all.



1

2

3

4

5

This simple exercise is often referred to as the ‘apple test’ and can reveal something surprising about the way people think. Some people can create vivid mental images at will, while others cannot generate visual imagery at all. This latter experience has been labelled **aphantasia** (Zeman et al., 2015).

"No pictures in their mind? That's impossible," a student of mine declared when I mentioned the concept.

Yet aphantasia is just one example of the hidden differences that shape our learners' inner worlds. Some people have little or no ability to imagine sounds in their minds, a condition known as **anauralia** (Hinwar & Lambert, 2021). Others may have limited or absent inner speech, the silent voice that many people use to think through ideas, rehearse conversations, or monitor their language use. The term **anendophasia** has been suggested for this (Nedergård & Lupyan, 2024).

As teachers, and as human beings, we naturally assume that other people think in ways similar to ourselves. It can be surprising to discover how varied human cognition really is. What seems effortless for one learner may be inaccessible to another.

These differences are particularly relevant in language learning because many common teaching strategies rely on learners being able to internalise aspects of the external world. We may ask students to picture a scene, imagine a conversation, silently rehearse a sentence, or ‘hear’ a word in their heads before saying it aloud. Such activities may work well for many learners but not for all.

Visual imagery can support vocabulary acquisition, reading comprehension and recall, and aspects of writing such as narrative construction (Sadoski & Paivio, 2013). Inner speech is associated with improved verbal working memory and rhyme-judgment tasks (Nedergaard & Lupyan, 2024) while auditory imagery and auditory processing support second-language pronunciation, sound-pattern recognition, and the consolidation of new phonological forms (Baddeley, 2003; Kadota, 2019; Saito et al., 2024).

However, learners who have reduced access to one or more of these internal processes are not necessarily disadvantaged in every aspect of language learning. Instead, they may rely on different pathways. A learner without visual imagery, for example, might depend more heavily on semantic understanding, repetition, physical actions, or written notes. Another learner may develop strong analytical strategies instead of relying on an internal voice.

For teachers, this highlights the importance of providing multiple modes of learning. Rather than assuming learners can automatically transform external input into internal representations, we can make our teaching more inclusive by keeping key information visible, audible, and accessible.

Practical strategies include using pictures, videos, demonstrations, gestures, graphic organisers, physical movement, and structured speaking frames. Pronunciation can be supported through explicit teaching of mouth position and articulatory movements. Vocabulary learning can be strengthened through real objects, images, contextualised examples, and hands-on activities. Scaffolding can provide a bridge between external support and independent performance.

Some learners may also develop stronger internal representations over time. A child learning to read, for example, may begin by reading aloud before progressing to whispering, mouthing words, and eventually reading silently. Such development illustrates how external and internal processes can interact and evolve through practice, although the path is unlikely to be the same for everyone.

It is also valuable for learners to understand that people experience the world differently. Discovering that others do not necessarily think as they do can be enlightening and reassuring. For some learners, it may explain why particular tasks have always felt difficult. For others, it may reveal strengths they had never recognised.

Ultimately, understanding the diversity of learners' inner worlds encourages us to move beyond assumptions about how learning ‘should’ happen. The more learners understand their own cognitive preferences and the more teachers provide varied pathways to learning, the greater the opportunity for all students to succeed.

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Testing the Test: Evaluating an Assessment for English Language Learners

Rose Baty

As reflective, informed educators, we know that not all tests are the same. We recognise that our learners need evidence-based assessments, designed with their needs in mind and backed by recent research in the field of language acquisition. The purpose of this article is to test the test for our English Language Learners (ELLs).

Learning Village is a blended language, literacy, and curriculum-access programme that develops English language skills through an immersive, image-based platform designed for learners from a wide range of backgrounds and literacy levels. Several criteria will be applied to evaluate the Vocabulary High Frequency Word Size test which is embedded in the research of Paul Nation (2013). I will analyse the test in terms of its suitability for ELLs. The criteria for carrying out this evaluation include the reliability and validity of the assessment, the suitability of the content and design for ELLs, and whether learning steps can be identified by teachers and students from viewing the results. Following this initial evaluation, the implications of how our findings impact teaching and learning for ELLs will then be discussed. Finally, the implications for ELLs will be explored, using a socio-cultural and political lens to view how their assessments can help or hinder their future educational and work-related circumstances. Examples discussed include the involvement of their First Language (L1) and ensuring that the questions include culturally familiar concepts.

Validity and Reliability

Firstly, the validity of the assessment will be evaluated by exploring what the assessment seeks to measure and how it measures this. According to Nation (1996) there are four main features to consider. He states that assessment is more reliable if it is given under the same conditions, consistently marked, has many questions and, lastly, the instructions are clear.

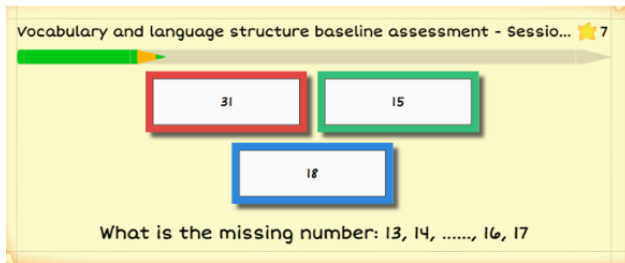
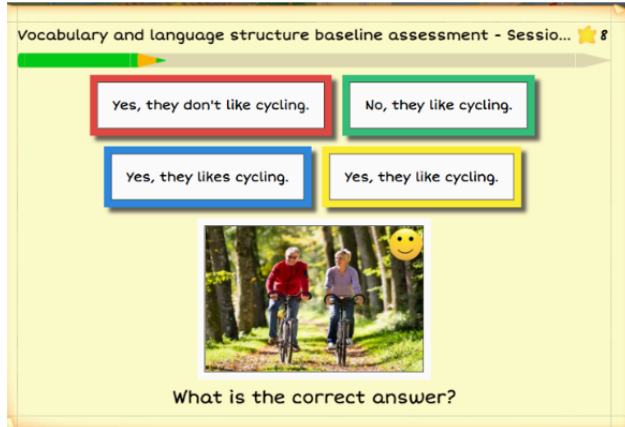
When analysing this assessment against these four markers, I believe the Learning Village vocabulary test is a reliable assessment for the following reasons:

The Learning Village programme suggests that teachers allow 30 minutes in a quiet space for the learners to complete the assessment. As a multi-choice test, there is a clear marking schedule carried out online and the results are then shared with the teacher. There are many questions in the test and the instructions for how to complete the test are clearly set out for both the teachers and learners.

Content and Design

The content and design of the assessment is evaluated in regards to whether it is set out to make it accessible for ELLs. I.e., does it meet their specific learning needs?

See examples from the assessment below:



The content of the test is clearly set up to assess the vocabulary used in the course. As you can see from the examples, the assessment is set out with questions regarding grammatical structure of sentences, direct vocabulary questions, and some mathematics-related questions. Unlike previous methods of vocabulary and reading tests such as the Burt Word test (Gilmore et.al., 1981) which is a progressive single word reading test that has been used in primary schools in New Zealand, this assessment uses the word in a sentence to give it meaning and context. According to Warrington et. al. (2018), having a written script to go alongside vocabulary questions helps ELLs to understand the questions with more clarity. Questions also have a picture to support them, which acts as a visual aid. This is important because there are many cues that ELLs can utilise to gather meaning other than just reading the word.

As highlighted above, this test aids ELLs' understanding, as the word in question is written within a sentence. The learner is required to look at the picture, read the word in the context of a sentence, and gather the meaning of the word in question. The visual aids are a positive feature of the assessment, too, as ELLs will be using visual cues as a skill to enable them to understand text. Using a variety of resources for language learning can make the information more accessible for ELLs in the classroom. Kress (2003) looks into this notion further, stating that while research on academic language (AL) has tended to place emphasis on written language, the importance of oral language and other forms of communication such as gestures, symbols, maps, and graphs must also be emphasised. Exploring other tools of communication is important because learners can use these across several areas of the curriculum and they needn't rely solely on their English language comprehension. This assessment tool includes pictures and other visual cues and this helps give context and comprehension, providing them with a multi-faceted language-rich learning experience.

Results

The ESOL Progress Assessment Guidelines (MOE, p 10) consider an assessment usable if it 'yields results that users can easily understand, interpret and make generalisations from'.

This assessment has a simple layout and the learners are able to choose one answer from the selection. As this is an adaptive, online test, the computer programme marks and grades the assessment, displaying the results as seen below:

Username	First name	Last name	Year group	Class	Home language	Week usage (mins)	Secondary	Assessment
HPetro12	maria	petro	6		Romanian	0	Yes	52% (53% [9%]) 00:01:35
Scroll the list to view historical results for the selected learner, the most recent of which is shown first. More details								
Date	Results							
	Question (correct answer)	Answer						
	1. Two of these are little. (Yes)	No						
	2. You must look when you want to find the way. (Yes)	Yes						
	3. When someone says, "What are you called?", you should say your name. (Yes)	No						
	4. There are many ways to get money. (Yes)	I don't understand						
	5. All the world is under water. (No)	I don't understand						
	6. When you keep asking, you ask once. (No)	Yes						
	7. He sees his friends. (Yes)	Yes						

There is a breakdown of the results for the assessment, showing the learner's answer for every question. The fact that they are clearly itemised and easy to interpret is beneficial. This is a reliable tool that can help show any patterns or gaps in their learning which will help inform their next steps.

Involving the Learner in the Learning Process - Self Assessment

Encouraging life-long learning is a goal I have as a teacher of ELLs. The idea of asking students to consider their own strengths and weaknesses as a learner can help them gain insight into their language learning journey. It gives ELLs an awareness - and therefore a role - to take some control over their own learning; learner agency. This plays into the notion of students seeing themselves as adaptive, positive, and self-aware learners (Xiao & Yang, 2019). Xiao and Yang's research states that teachers should encourage students to take part in formative assessments and practice self-regulation skills as they are both essential for life-long learning. There is an opportunity for self-reflection for the learners at the end of the vocabulary assessment. See below:



Again, there are visual aids here to assist language learners. There is a happy face to represent that they felt good about how they did in the test, a neutral expression, and a sad face to represent that they felt it was too hard for them.

Teachers can view results immediately. If the teacher chooses to include the learner in the process of viewing the results and looking for gaps in their knowledge, this allows them to take more control of their own future learning and set their own goals.

Socio-cultural and Political Implications

A very important component of any chosen assessment for ELLs is considering the socio-cultural implications for the learners. The Ministry of Education (2005) highlights the importance of the familiarity of the cultural content of the task as having a significant impact on the learner's experience. If the content is not at all familiar to them and their home culture it can potentially affect their attitude towards the task and hinder their motivation.

If this assessment could include multi-cultural visual aids or be translated into their home language, even partially, then the learners could benefit from this. Many language learning researchers have discovered the strong connection that using an ELL's home language can have on their acquisition of the target language. According to Lopez, et. al (2017, para. 1) 'most assessments reflect a monolingual, monoglossic, fractional view language'. Their research claims that as educators of ELLs we need to take a more bi-lingual and multi-lingual approach to language learning.

Schleppergrell (2004) states learners can be empowered as a member of the class to engage in varied conversations with their peers. We could think of this in terms of a more futuristic viewpoint; as a member of the working world beyond the classroom, ELLs are going to need to be taught academic vocabulary specific to the field they choose to study and work in.

This idea can be likened to equipping learners with a language tool belt they can use when communicating with their cohorts or clients with clarity and confidence. Freire and Mecedo (1987) used the phrase "read the word and read the world" and this helps paint a picture of how teaching and assessing vocabulary can benefit ELLs beyond the classroom.

Conclusion

ELLs bring rich cultural and linguistic knowledge into our classrooms. There is a need for us as educators to acknowledge this and bring this understanding into our assessment tools. It is not enough to place a 'one size fits all' approach onto language assessments. New Zealand primary schools have a wide variety of assessment tools at their disposal and it is up to educators to make informed decisions as to which assessments are the best fit for all of their learners, including ELLs. The criteria for choosing appropriate assessments for ELLs needs to be straightforward and applied with reference to recent research in the area of language learning.

This paper analysed a Vocabulary High Frequency Word Size test on the 'Learning Village', an online education programme. The results showed that this particular assessment was appropriate for ELLs on many levels, including its research-based content and usability. Its clear format, inclusion of visual aids, simple language, and grammatical structure makes this assessment highly accessible and meets many unique learning needs of ELLs.

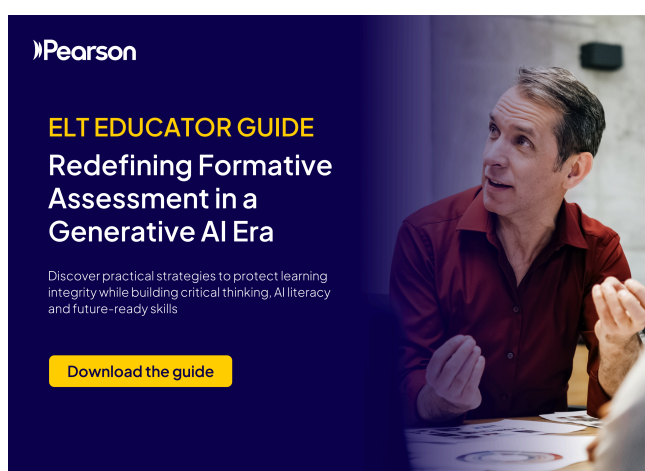
The test provides a strong foundation, with further opportunities to enhance learner engagement through self-assessment, home language support, and culturally familiar images. As a diagnostic and summative assessment tool, this test assesses ELLs' ability to read and understand English vocabulary and to apply grammatical knowledge taught in the programme, yielding results specific to their needs in this area. If educators choose to invite their learners to view the results together, this could lead to informative, reflective discussions and provide a powerful feedback pathway to inform students' next learning steps.

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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.



Study abroad: Who prepares the students, and how to online/face-to-face compare?

Tim Edwards

Many readers of TESOLANZ News will be teaching students who are studying abroad, whether they have come to your institute individually or through an organised institute-to-institute relationship. In most cases there is some type of preparation before studying abroad. But what type of preparation? Logistics? Cultural? Location-specific? Who is responsible for it? And what about learners who are not able to travel abroad for various reasons? Online or virtual study abroad experiences existed long before Covid-19, but increased in number and size during it: do they still exist? Are they still useful in 2026?

Let's briefly look at some of the above, thinking about preparation first and then about online/virtual options. The reader is left to make up their own mind on some considerations.

I should note that some of this might also apply to students of other languages in Aotearoa's secondary schools or universities. Further, refugee and migrant background learners envisioning long-term settlement may also undertake some form of preparation, such as at the [Māngere Refugee Resettlement Centre](#).

Specific destinations?

Many schools and language centres have relationships with overseas partners with regular exchanges. It seems to make sense to prepare these students for the language variety and local culture they will meet, although avoiding stereotypes (Cutting, 2015). Knowing locally-relevant language and cultural behaviour has obvious uses when arriving somewhere, and it is natural for students to want to sound local and 'fit in', (Byram et al., 2002; Walker & Archer, 2024). For example, introducing themselves with "What's up, Cobber!?" in Liverpool or Texas, or "Bout ye" in New Zealand might get varied reactions from gentle teasing, which may still be received negatively, to a lot worse.

Examples to illustrate local preparation needs from past experiences include:

- A student at the supermarket on their first day in New Zealand, hoping to practice a few words, was greeted with "Flybuys?" in a strong New Zealand accent. They were stumped.
- Multinational students in the Wellington confused over whether someone planning to go to Bali for a 'holiday' meant they intended to go for a week or a daytrip. Students understanding the latter told the holidaymaker that they had a daft plan. The intended trip was twelve days, a 'holiday' in British English, but a 'vacation' in American where 'holiday' tends to mean a single public holiday.

- Misunderstandings around the meaning of “Sweet as” in a Kiwi accent, “no thongs” signs at Australian bar entrances, and appropriate behaviour when teachers enter the room.
- An American colleague telling an all-commonwealth-until-then teaching team that he had a girlfriend “still in school”. He meant working on her PhD as she approached 30, but the colleagues initially understood something rather different.

So it may make sense for students to have destination-specific preparation, but who is to do it, where, and when? Before departure or on arrival, or both? Repeat exposure is useful, but conflicting information or duplication of effort may not be.

Many schools already do this preparation in some way. However, many only provide students with logistical information sometimes from fragmented sources (Doi, 2026; Entwistle & Lumley, 2026). For actual language or culture preparation, online resources exist to help, especially videos, as potentially do recent students who might help keep information up-to-date (Edwards, R., 2024; Entwistle & Lumley, 2026; Nation & Crabbe, 2011). Once in Aotearoa, perhaps the actual locale can be part of the context-specific learning, with homestays, social activities, field trips, and students doing research projects on something local (Doi & Agullana, 2025; Home, 2026; Kimura & Hayashi, 2019).

But in the 21st-Century, is New Zealand-specific too focused?

English is a global language, used in many contexts often as a lingua franca (Walker & Archer, 2024). While some do, many learners may **not** have long-term plans to stay in Aotearoa. Some teachers on programmes that have New Zealand English and some Te Reo vocabulary and pronunciation involved, have experienced some students asking for more international English because they planned to find employment or do further studies or travel elsewhere. Reducing local content and linguistic elements may not be necessary, but it may be fair to broaden course content to allow for these points.

One potential benefit of this is that learners might move away from seeing a specific standard variety of English as a prestige or success marker, and move towards a goal of communicative effectiveness (Walker & Archer, 2024; Wu et al., 2024). Raising student awareness of the varied and global use of English can also help develop useful skills for a global world that uses English as an International Language (EIL), and maintain motivation while here if their longer-term goals are elsewhere (Davidson & Garas, 2023; OECD, 2024; Walker & Archer, 2024).

Preparing students for their experiences from this standpoint might involve using language samples from celebrity role-models with varied accents (e.g., Lorde, Jackie Chan, international sports or movie stars using English), and developing intercultural skills (Edwards, R., 2024; Walker & Archer, 2024). Further, this can be part of English learning for anyone as it is useful, relevant, and contemporary learning, knowledge, and skills.

So, what do to? Prepare students linguistically and culturally for their specific study abroad destination (in this case, New Zealand), or with more awareness-raising of Englishes around the world and EIL with general cross-cultural skills? This article may not be able to give readers one best answer, but maybe the above is part of your discussion.

What about *online exchange or study ‘abroad’*?

Some language centres and secondary school departments offered online international exchanges, collaborative projects, or virtual study ‘abroad’ before Covid-19. These surged and developed during the pandemic and some programmes still remain, either for individual students joining a hybrid class while they await things such as visas, or for organised groups. Reasons that students join up include that study or travel abroad is something that not everyone is willing (maybe due to environmental concerns), or able (physically, financially, or due to life, family, political, or phobia factors), to do (Alberola Colomar & Menn, 2024; ENZ, 2026; Machwate, 2021).

For schools, overseas or here, online multinational collaborative programmes may still exist because they can help students develop digital skills and provide exposure to and use of EIL experiences (Alberola Colomar & Menn, 2024; Davidson & Garas, 2023). There are also benefits from language practice, intercultural interaction, and those financial and environmental savings.

Looking briefly at some example programmes and ideas might inspire readers with options for their own learners.

Many articles and much advertising of such programmes before Covid-19 focused on how (and how well), they worked. These usually focused on increasing student confidence in English and willingness to use it, motivation to use it (e.g., for interest and communication), development of autonomy, collaboration, cultural interest, and on levels of teacher involvement (Podlesnik, 2023; Roarty & Hagley, 2021; Skidmore, 2023).

With face-to-face study abroad programmes which moved online in 2020-2022 with adaptations, initially in haste and later with better planning (Moore et al., 2021), there was some variety in operationalisation. Activities and approaches included live, recorded, or Virtual Reality tours of historical, cultural, educational, and tourist locations, and related discussion between students from different countries involved. Discussions might have been asynchronous through video clip recordings or chat forums, or, depending on time zones, live. One example of the latter was Japanese students virtually visiting East Coast Australia (Otaru-Wollongong, 2020).

Numerous programmes were written about, either for research or advertising. Some examples are described by Medel (2023), outlining multinational collaboration projects, negotiating practice, and experiencing different teaching styles. Liu & Shirley (2021) employed a mixture of local students, websites and maps, cameras, and other resources to provide multicontinental students virtual experiences which led to discussions within their home classes and across international peers. Discussions covered language and culture, hobbies, and amenities such as local norms for institutional sports facilities and libraries.

If your school/institute is involved in or considering online/virtual study abroad, there are a few more things to consider. The need for teacher presence, the amount of planning, and the need to adapt in real time are often greater than predicted. Also, students might choose these programmes but are still aware that they are not the same experience as physically travelling to the places despite many of the same learning outcomes being achievable (Davidson & Garas, 2023; Liu & Shirley, 2021; Medel, 2023). The future may be a mix of brief face-to-face study-abroad programmes with pre- and post- online phases.

Covid-19 restrictions have faded to history for now. However, there are still more online or virtual exchange opportunities now than in 2019, enabling students to experience language exposure and elements of other countries’ people, culture, and local sights. Yet they are not simple direct substitutes for in-person exchanges and travel, are most effective if students choose them rather than have them imposed by circumstances, and do take planning (Skidmore, 2023). Further, face-to-face programmes tend to bring more income and raise profiles for institutions, and lead to greater personal development (Medel, 2023). Hybrid options with both modes available, as choices or combined, might be one way forward.

So, if receiving (or even sending) international students at (from) your institute, what might you do?

The above looks at considerations for planning, preparing, and choosing a medium for international educational experiences. The aim is not to give a best plan, but to prompt active consideration and maybe discussion.

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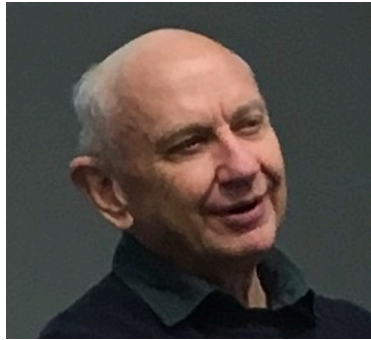
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ACROSS CULTURES

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 through a Book Flood

[Source: Elley, W. B., & Mangubhai, F. (1981). *The Impact of a Book Flood in Fiji Primary Schools*. Wellington: New Zealand Council for Educational Research. This short 28 page report is easy to read and describes a model that was followed in several other parts of the world.]

In order to learn a language, learners get large amounts of understandable (comprehensible) input at the right level for them. The four strands of opportunities include meaning-focused input, meaning-focused output, language-focused learning, and fluency development. Meaning-focused input and fluency development for reading and listening make up the comprehensible input parts of a well-balanced language course.

Comprehensible input allows learners to meet the vocabulary, grammar and discourse features that they need to learn, and large amounts of comprehensible input provide opportunity for the high frequency vocabulary and grammar features to be repeated enough times for learning to occur.

The Book Flood study described in the Elley and Mangubhai report was carried out in rural Fiji in primary schools where English was a foreign language. The children going to the schools were largely from low-income families and the schools did not have a lot of resources. The learners had roughly three hours of English instruction per week which consisted of teacher-fronted oral-aural work. In the Book Flood schools, about three quarters of the English instruction time was replaced by around 30 minutes per day of silent reading or shared books plus silent reading of high-interest children's books. Each Book Flood class of up to 40 learners per class had 250 books that the children could choose from for their reading. During the Book Flood class time some of the learners experienced the shared book activity where the teacher interacted with the learners as they read a large-sized children's book together, as well as doing their own silent individual reading. In other Book Flood classes, the learners just did their own silent individual reading. The learners in the control group classes followed the typical oral-aural language program.

The teachers in the Book Flood classes which included shared reading received a three day teacher training workshop on the shared reading activity. The teachers in silent reading classes received no workshop but they were told to encourage the children to read the books silently in class for around 30 minutes per day. The teachers in the control group classes had a one day workshop on the techniques of teaching English. It is important to note that all learners spend the same amount of time on English. The difference was that for three-quarters of the time spent on English the Book Flood classes were doing comprehensible reading.

After eight months, the learners in the Book Flood classes had made the equivalent of fifteen months' progress on a variety of language and language use measures. The measures included reading comprehension, listening comprehension, English structures, composition, word recognition, and oral sentence repetition.

What should teachers do about comprehensible input?

The Book Flood study showed that learners can learn through reading without being directly taught the language for all or most of the class time. Not only do they learn, but they learn more than when they are directly taught.

1. Teachers should include an extensive reading program as part of their language course. Close to a quarter of the learners' language learning time should involve extensive reading. The single most effective improvement that a teacher could make to a language course would be to include an extensive reading program.
2. The teacher should make sure that the extensive reading program involves the learners reading lots of books that are at the right level for them, and that are interesting for them. For most learners, especially at the elementary and intermediate proficiency levels, the books should be graded readers that are written within a controlled vocabulary.
3. Although only some of the Book Flood classes involved listening, an extensive listening program is also an important part of a well-balanced language course.

There is a large amount of research supporting the use of extensive reading programs as a part of a language learning course. In spite of this research, extensive reading programs are still not that common. This may be because teachers feel that just letting the learners get on with their reading seems a very uncertain way of developing proficiency in a language and seems to not fulfil their duties as a teacher. Because of the proven effectiveness of extensive reading programs, teachers need to try extensive reading, monitor their extensive reading program, and be aware of the research in extensive reading so that they become convinced of the value of getting their learners involved in extensive reading.

[Further reading: Nation, I. S. P. & Waring, R. (2020). *Teaching Extensive Reading in Another Language*. Abingdon, UK: Routledge. This book critically examines research and practice in extensive reading and describes how to set up an extensive reading program.

It is worth looking at the [Extensive Reading Foundation](#) web site to see the range of resources available for supporting extensive reading.

The [Xreading website](#) is a commercial enterprise that allows teachers to quickly set up an electronic extensive reading program drawing on hundreds of high-quality graded readers. The program allows teachers to test and easily monitor their learners' reading. The cost of using Xreading is remarkably low.]

PART Trial and error versus getting it right from the beginning

Brian Strong, Carleton University, Canada

[Strong, B., & Boers, F. (2019). The error in trial and error: Exercises on phrasal verbs. TESOL Quarterly, 53(2), 289-319.]

Phrasal verbs, which are multi word verbs composed of a verb and a particle—such as “give up,” “go on,” and “break down”—are crucial for effective everyday communication in colloquial English. Despite their importance, students whose first language does not have constructs that resemble phrasal verbs often avoid using them due to the linguistic challenges they pose.

One common exercise used to help learners master multi word verbs is the blank filling exercise, which can be formatted in several ways. In one format, the verb part of the phrasal verb is omitted from the sentence (e.g., “She __ out of milk”). In another, the particle is left out (e.g., “She ran __ of milk”), and in a third variation, the entire phrasal verb is absent (e.g., “She ____ out of milk”). These blank filling exercises are typically implemented in three main ways. First, exemplar material is presented to students beforehand, enabling them to complete the blanks by recalling the studied items. Second, the exemplar material is presented alongside the exercise, allowing learners to copy the phrasal verbs into the blank spaces directly. Third, the exemplar material is provided only after the exercise has been completed, serving as corrective feedback. This requires learners to guess the missing items, leading to potential errors. This method of trial and error runs the risk of students confusing their errors with the correct answers. This phenomenon, known as proactive interference, occurs when prior learning inhibits the ability to recall correct information later. By repeatedly guessing incorrect phrasal verbs, students may inadvertently reinforce memory traces of these errors, which can interfere with learning and recalling the correct verbs.

Building on this understanding, Strong and Boers (2019) compared different implementations of a particle-filling exercise for learning phrasal verbs, focusing on methods that required retrieval versus those involving trial and error. Their research found that the retrieval-based method was more effective for learning phrasal verbs than the trial-and-error approach. Furthermore, they observed the phenomenon of proactive interference, where students continued to regard their incorrect guesses as correct answers during a delayed posttest administered one week later. Notably, 25% of wrong responses on this delayed posttest were duplicates of incorrect guesses made previously, underscoring the long-lasting negative effects of incorrect guessing. This finding suggests that proactive interference can persist in memory for a significant period, highlighting the importance of learning strategies that promote correct recall and minimize the reinforcement of errors.

This study demonstrates that errors can hinder learning because they interfere with the memory of the correct answer. When learners exert effort to generate an answer, this effort can make the erroneous response more memorable than the correct answer, which is merely presented for study. Given these findings, learning strategies that prevent learners from generating errors should be prioritized. The most effective approach seems to be designing exercises that require retrieval of previously studied items. There is substantial evidence supporting the benefits of retrieval as a powerful mnemonic device for enhancing memory. Such practices not only help consolidate memory but also ensure the accurate retrieval of learned information, reducing the likelihood of reinforcing incorrect responses.

However, errors are inevitable. Not every item in an exercise will be retrieved successfully, and students may fail to retrieve the correct response. When this happens, it is beneficial for students to review their errors alongside the correct answers, rather than simply crossing out their errors, as this may not effectively remove the incorrect response from their memory.

What should teachers do?

- 1. When learning something, it is more effective if learners have a clear and accurate understanding of the items they need to practise and learn, than making guesses at the right answer.
- 2. When using trial and error, make sure the activity makes it highly likely that the learners will get the correct answer. This can be done by having learners work in pairs, by having obvious choices, and by providing some sort of guidance.
- 3. When errors occur, it is crucial to draw attention to them and ensure that learners closely examine the correct answer in relation to their initial error. This can be effectively achieved by having learners write the correct answer next to their error using a different color pen. Additionally, learners should be encouraged to circle the correct answer when they feel confident about retrieving it subsequently. This method not only emphasizes the correction but also reinforces the learning process through active engagement and visual distinction.

Put simply, the Boers and Strong study shows that it is better to struggle to remember the answer than to struggle to find the answer. This is good commonsense because the quantity of attention gets directed towards what needs to be learned rather than finding what needs to be learned.

This focus principle of accuracy is one of a set of eight principles of learning. These principles include two motivation principles (motivation and self-efficacy), and six attention principles (focus, accuracy, repetition, time-on-task, elaboration and analysis).

The accuracy principle is also closely related to comprehensibility and transferability. That is, what we are trying to learn should also be understandable and very much like the use we need to make of it when we use the language.

[Further reading: Nation, P. (2024). Re-thinking the principles of (vocabulary) learning and their applications. Languages, 9, 160. https://doi.org/10.3390/languages9050160. This article describes a short list of principles of learning, and one of the principles, accuracy, relates to the Strong and Boers study.]

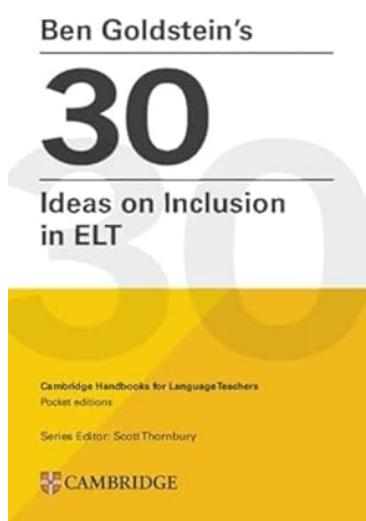


Book Reviews

Dr Elizaveta Tarasova



Liza is the Quality Assurance Manager at English Teaching College (ETC), an English language education provider headquartered in Palmerston North. With more than 25 years of experience in language teaching, teacher education and research, she works to support high-quality, learner-centred provision for domestic and international students, including migrants and refugees. She is also involved in teacher development through Trinity College London TESOL qualifications.



Goldstein, B. (2025). *30 Ideas on Inclusion in ELT*. Cambridge Handbooks for Language Teachers. Pocket Editions. Series Editor: Scott Thornbury. Cambridge University Press. ISBN 978-1-009-8057 4-2 (pbk.) 150pp. \$21.95

Reviewed by: **Rebecca Vane, Centre for Languages, Wintec, Hamilton**

Ben Goldstein's **30 Ideas on Inclusion in ELT** is from the excellent series: Cambridge Handbooks for Language Teachers. Although a pocket edition, it is comprehensive and packed with useful links. Primarily a resource for language teachers and management, Goldstein's focus is the ELT classroom, but the ideas and in-depth knowledge would be useful in almost any teaching context.

Inclusion and diversity are controversial and often sensitive topics. I imagine most teachers are aware of the issues but may be apprehensive about addressing them. However, the author has written this book precisely because the topic is so complex and he has succeeded in informing readers without presenting bias and providing far more than thirty ideas

on inclusion.

The format is reader-friendly. The contents page lists sections A to G, with thirty subsections making it easy to locate areas of interest.

Section A is **Understanding Inclusion**, discussing, for example: the use of inclusive language, critical pedagogy, and how to overcome barriers to learning. It is a valuable reminder to listen to students' views and perspectives and not impose our own worldviews. If you are short on time these twenty-two pages alone are highly informative.

Section B is **Methodology: Strategies and Activities**. It describes digital technology such as generative AI for neurodiverse learners or those with physical disabilities. The impact of digital inequality and the digital divide is also discussed as well as ideas about using L1 to respect cultural diversity.

Section C, **The Learning Environment**, is about creating a classroom community (either online or face to face) built on trust and empathy. It has ideas for all ages and includes suggestions for handling conflict and prejudice. Although I would not implement all of these strategies myself, they are certainly food for thought in a sensitive area of classroom management.

Sections D and E are **Analysing Materials: Inclusive Representation and Assessment**. They are a goldmine of links to materials and resources. Goldstein warns us to look out for tokenism and stereotyping in written materials and images, reminding readers to consider the perspective texts are written from.

Section F is **Working Together**. It suggests initiatives for creating an inclusive learning community, including giving and getting collegial support as well as involving parents and guardians.

I found Section G, **Problematizing Inclusion**, reassuring. The Closing Thoughts section acknowledges that terms and labels used in inclusion discourse are often complex and fluid. Goldstein acknowledges uncomfortable truths such as positions of privilege, controversy, and politics. However he concludes with a pragmatic summary "... inclusive practices should not revolve around scrambling to include everybody: this is an impossible and fruitless task. It is much more about being aware of those who are frequently excluded from society and acting to redress the balance" (Goldstein, 2025, p.126).

The final fourteen pages are an extensive Glossary packed with extremely useful terms and acronyms that clarify often complex topics.

To conclude, although I sensed a slight bias towards 'Western' values and an assumption of high socio-economic status, this little book is an essential read for anyone involved in education today.



Wong, Shelley D., Romney, Mary, Tu, Thuy and Mattson, Janna. (eds.). (2026). *Freedom songs: A resource for teachers by teachers*. Fairfax, VA: 123 Press. ISBN 978-1-942695-50-9 (e-book) 440 pp. Free

Natalia Beliaeva, English Teaching College

Dialogic approaches in ESOL teaching have been on the rise as a powerful tool to enhance willingness to communicate. Building on the concept of dialogism in Bakhtin (1981), dialogic pedagogy aims to deepen and extend learning by encouraging discussion (Alexander 2020, Kim & Wilkinson 2019). The book under review is a compendium of multimodal texts and accompanying teaching materials compiled by a multicultural commonwealth of ESOL teachers aiming 'to develop and extend learning in community with others' (p. xiii).

The book is a result of Shelley D. Wong's Fulbright project developed in collaboration with Birzeit University academics and inspired by the author's professional, personal and political identities. As evident from Personal Preface, the pedagogical approaches, as well as textual material is presented via the lens of 'personal and political identities and awakenings as an Asian American woman in occupied Palestine' (p. xi). Consequently, the topics and textual sources may appear biased towards Northern American perspective and pro-Palestinian views.

The topics covered in the book include activism, freedom, political conflict and human rights. Methodologically, the book is centered on exposure to multimodal material (songs and their lyrics, video clips and supporting texts), following the well-recognised approach to using music as highly beneficial for second language acquisition (Sposet 2008), 'especially in the first learning phase wherein one needs to segment new words' (Schön et al. 2008: 982).

Each of the 26 chapters in the volume introduces songs on complex topics such as immigration challenges, war, political conflicts and human rights violations. Songs are accompanied by biographical data of authors, links to lyrics and publicly available recordings, as well as texts on sociocultural and historical background, worksheets and lesson plan suggestions. For ease of navigation, chapters include key words and details on the proposed age and proficiency level of the learners.

As stated in the Introduction, '[T]he book is organized into 3 sections according to the simplicity of the lyrics so that teachers can select songs based on the proficiency level of their students' (p. xviii), from songs with simpler lyrics to more complex material, the final chapters covering songs in languages other than English, or those with bilingual lyrics. Although the overall organisation of the chapters appears to follow this structure, there is no explicit division into sections, which would have made the volume easier to navigate.

In sum, the book can be of interest for teachers committed to critical, multilingual and multicultural education, and can be used as a valuable supplementary resource in a variety of ESOL courses.

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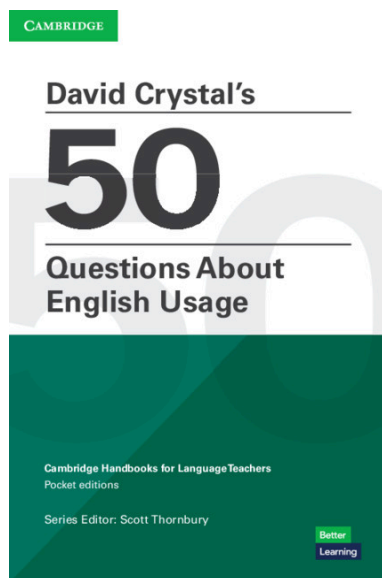
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Schön, D., Boyer, M., Moreno, S., Besson, M., Peretz, I. & Kolinsky, R. (2008). Songs as an aid for language acquisition. *Cognition*, 106(2): 975–983

Sposet, B.A. (2008). *The role of music in second language acquisition: A bibliographical review of seventy years of research, 1937-2007*. Edwin Mellen Press.



Crystal, D. (2021). *David Crystal's 50 Questions About English Usage*. Cambridge Handbooks for Language Teachers. Pocket Editions. Series Editor: Scott Thornbury. Cambridge University Press. ISBN: 978-1-108-95918-6 (pbk.) 112pp. \$22.95

Reviewed by: **Elizaveta Tarasova, ETC**

I attended the CLESOL conference in Hamilton last week and was lucky to pick up a couple of books from Cambridge University Press stall, one of TESOLANZ Book Reviews' most loyal supporters for inclusion in future issues. One of them was David Crystal's **50 Questions About English Usage**. While waiting for buses and planes, I decided to poke my nose into it. By the time I reached Auckland Airport from Hamilton, I was halfway through, and by the time I boarded the plane a couple of hours later, I had regrettably finished it.

For me, as a linguist, many of the facts were already familiar from Crystal's other publications, but it was good to have a quick revision of the basics. However, this concise and highly readable book will certainly appeal to ESOL teachers, teacher educators and language enthusiasts alike. Although the title suggests a practical usage guide, it offers more than answers about "correct" English. Crystal uses common questions about English (similar to what my husband asks me in the rare moments of his interest in language) to explain how English works, why it changes, and why usage is often shaped by context rather than fixed rules.

The book is organised around questions about words and idioms, grammar, pronunciation, spelling and punctuation, and genres. Many will feel familiar to teachers: Can a sentence begin with **and**? Should we say **burned** or **burnt**? Is texting damaging English? Why is English spelling so difficult? Crystal's answers are brief, engaging and grounded in linguistic knowledge, yet accessible to non-specialist readers.

For TESOL teachers, the value of the book is in how it models thoughtful language explanation. Rather than reinforcing rigid prescriptivism, Crystal encourages readers to consider variation, history, register, audience and communicative purpose. This makes the book especially useful in multilingual classrooms, where learners often need more than a simple "right or wrong" answer. Teachers can draw on Crystal's explanations to support discussions about appropriacy, World Englishes and changing language norms.

The book's brevity is both a strength and a limitation. It is easy to dip into, but some topics could invite deeper critical discussion. Nevertheless, it is a great resource for teachers who want to respond to difficult language questions with accuracy and confidence and encourage curiosity about language in their learners. I felt that the book reminded me that good language teaching involves not only knowing rules, but also understanding when and why those rules matter.

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Reports

NEX: Networks of Expertise

The Ministry of Education has established the Networks of Expertise (NEX) fund to support subject associations to deliver high-quality professional learning and development (PLD) for kaiako. Through this initiative, TESOLANZ has been funded as the national subject association for English as an Additional Language (EAL) educators across Aotearoa New Zealand. TESOLANZ will design and deliver PLD using a range of approaches, including online forums, shared resources, inquiry clusters, and face-to-face collaboration opportunities.

In 2026, the first year of delivery, PLD is focusing on areas relevant to EAL educators across all settings. As curriculum priorities are confirmed, TESOLANZ will provide more targeted support aligned with the New Zealand Curriculum – English as an Additional Language. This will include a focus on Years 11–13 (Phase | Tūarere 5), alongside support for implementing Years 9–10 (Phase | Tūarere 4). All PLD will be designed to support effective curriculum implementation and respond to the needs of the sector.

For the initial exploratory year of NEX implementation, TESOLANZ is currently working with two key pou. The first pou has focused on addressing sector wide needs and delivering primarily through podcasts and online presentations. These have focused on 'Just-In-Time' content alongside elicited PLD wants identified through the needs analysis carried out by TESOLANZ in April this year. The topic six PLD needs identified have been: Programme Development, Assessment Tools, Supporting Beginners & Late-Arriving Learners, Integrating Language & Curriculum Learning, Digital Tools & AI for Language Learning, and Neurodivergent ELLs. The second pou is at a one-to-one personal level. We currently have ten mentors from the primary and secondary sectors who are working with approximately 50 mentees across Aotearoa | New Zealand. The process for creating the programme began in Term 2 with the mentorship programme beginning in Term 3. The majority of the mentoring is being done online with some face-to-face opportunities where there are opportunities to do so. The group of mentors have also created the opportunity for a community of practice. Finally, a third pou of resource development will be developed in Terms 3 and 4.

To find out what is happening with NEX, please connect with the TESOLANZ Facebook page as well as [NEX webpage](#) on the TESOLANZ website. Please contact Dr. Angela Bland (pld@tesolanz.org.nz) for any suggestions or questions.

Branch Reports

AKTESOL Branch Chair Report: August 2026

Committee Updates

Our committee has a wonderful array of new members who have put their hand up this year. The committee now includes:

- Angie Finnigan
- Carol Griffiths
- Shireen Junpath
- Nicola Kingston
- Breda Matthews
- Roshan Sayed
- Sarah Scholz
- Wilma Viegas
- Siân Waite

We feel very fortunate that these members have been prepared to step up. Their expertise will be invaluable as we continue to support our membership. You can read more about the committee members [here](#).

A number of roles are vacant and we welcome any expressions of interest. If you think that you can help - please let us know by emailing Nicola at n.kingston@pointview.school.nz or Breda at bredamatthews@gmail.com

- Branch chair - currently Nicola Kingston and Breda Matthews but seeking a replacement for Breda
- Secretary - vacancy - minutes etc
- Membership - vacancy - encouraging people to join usually via training providers

Farewell and thank you

We would like to thank Zhou Ling who is stepping down from her role as treasurer, and Martin Walsh who is stepping down from publications. Their work has been invaluable and they will be much missed. Many thanks to you both.

Events in 2026

AKTESOL held its first event online on 18th June (including AGM). We were lucky to have both Jean Kim and Yidi Wang to present. They spoke about **Evaluating the Influence of Generative Artificial Intelligence on Chinese ESL Students' Academic Writing in New Zealand Higher Education**. Their qualitative study examines how Chinese ESL students in New Zealand higher education engage with Generative Artificial Intelligence (GAI) in academic writing.

This presentation was followed a panel discussion on the Use of AI led by Siân Waite and Sarah Scholz.

The meeting also included the AKTESOL AGM which includes a raffle for CLESOL sponsorship. Our winners will be presenting at our CLESOL retold on 13th August and we look forward to hearing from them.

Our Committee member, Carol Griffiths, conducted a questionnaire to investigate teacher agency in response to professional challenges, an issue which is attracting contemporary attention.

Upcoming events

- Term 3
 - Thursday 20th August AKTESOL CLESOL retold -primary focus
 - Thursday 27th August AKTESOL CLESOL retold -secondary/tertiary focus
- Term 4 29th October TBC

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 and would also welcome any BOPTESOL members. Please do join us at AKTESOL - we are a friendly bunch!

And don't forget that TESOLANZ continues to have a 5 for the price of 4 subscription.

MANATESOL

Renée Nielsen

On the weekend of July 4th-5th, Kirikiriroa Hamilton hosted the CLESOL 2026 Conference at Waikato University.

As well as my first conference to attend, this was also my first conference to present at. It was wonderful to be surrounded by so many like-minded people of community languages and TESOL fields! It was an event fit for networking, but even introverts like myself found plenty of time and spaces for recharging during break times. Enjoying good coffee at the Kahurangi café and a stroll around the Waikato University campus lakes was great.

Thank you to all the event staff and organisers for making such an opportunity for first-time presenters accessible. It was a long drive up from (and back to) Te Papaioea, but it was well-worth it!

Ka mihi aha ki Kirikiriroa, for the peaceful winter stay in the Waikato sunshine, fog and rolling whenua.

Ngā mihi nui to all the event organisers, including TESOLANZ, Composition, Kahurangi Catering, Waikato University. Special thanks also to IPU New Zealand and MANATESOL members for the support. It was a privilege to participate in the gathering.

Looking forward to further MANATESOL and TESOLANZ gatherings and events! ☺

WATESOL report for TESOLANZ newsletter, August 2026

WATESOL Event: WATESOL Expo 2026 (in person only)

- **Date:** Wednesday August 19, in-person only
- **Time:** 3:30-7:30pm
- **Venue:** Rutherford House, Victoria University of Wellington
- **Keynote speaker:** Professor Averil Coxhead
- **Title:** Gen AI classroom-based vocabulary exercises: Principles and practice

Abstract

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



In addition to Averil's keynote address there will be other presentations. The Expo will conclude with a presentation from Olly Ballance on **Technology, Social Interaction, and Self-Regulation in Vocabulary Learning**.

CANTESOL: Connection, Collaboration, and a Creative Course

Opaque waters, clear solutions: When 'rice' isn't just rice

Dr Jude Bautista serves up a deep dive into English orthography, turning cross-linguistic variations into a menu of transparent CALD literacy strategies

By Navjot McCormack, Chair, CANTESOL

When a student reads the word "ask" and pronounces it "ax", or decodes "ice cream" as "aizikurim", they aren't making errors, they are displaying a sophisticated, crosslinguistic superpower.

This electrifying shift in perspective captivated 25 primary, secondary, and tertiary educators at CANTESOL's first professional development event of 2026, centring on the timely presentation topic: Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Learners (CALD) and Literacy Teaching in Aotearoa New Zealand. As the newly stepped-in Chair alongside a brand-new committee, I couldn't have dreamed of a better kick-off. Taking the podium was Dr Jude Bautista, Senior Lecturer at the University of Canterbury and CANTESOL's invaluable Secretary. With his characteristic warmth, brilliant humour, and deep academic scholarship, Dr Bautista delivered an entertaining masterclass bridging cognitive science with profound cultural empathy. Attendees were deeply engaged, praising Dr Bautista for navigating "the sensitivities felt through having a different accent" while validating "linguistic repertoires".

Dr Bautista tackled the complexity of English, a famously “opaque” orthography where vowels shift unpredictably compared to “transparent” scripts like Filipino. Rather than demonising phonetic slips, Dr Bautista used witty, real-world examples to show how first-language (L1) features naturally express themselves in English. These include initial “ng” nasal clusters in Māori and Filipino, Korean vowel insertions, or Thai script’s lack of word boundaries, which heavily increases parsing difficulty.

Dr Bautista then demonstrated how words themselves carry hidden cultural worldviews. For instance, a single English word like “rice” often branches into half a dozen distinct terms in an ELL’s native tongue, depending on whether it is raw, cooked, fried, or tied to socio-economic status. Similarly, a storybook sentence like “He handed the paper to his mom” can evoke alternate interpretations based on cultural respect norms, such as whether it was handed over with one hand or two. One participant noted that these “charming examples of cultural differences” made the session an inspiring journey.

While cross-linguistic transfer is already heavily studied in academic circles, translating that dense theory into actionable, daily classroom strategies is where teachers often feel they are navigating unfamiliar territory. To bridge this gap, Dr Bautista championed Structured Literacy but demonstrated how it must be dynamically adapted for ELLs by pairing decoding with a heavy injection of meaning. He brought this to life through interactive “word ladders” that force semantic processing. “I like the word ladder,” one attendee noted, “it is not just decoding.”

Dr Bautista left us with three golden rules: Extend wait times for cross-linguistic processing, scaffold rather than leaving students stranded, and never equate accurate pronunciation with true comprehension.

The feedback was a resounding “Wow! How lucky were we?” Ultimately, whether our learners’ cultural “rice” is raw, cooked, or beautifully fried, teachers left having gathered a rich bounty of ready-to-use recipes from Dr Bautista’s session to nourish their classrooms. For our new committee, this momentum is exactly what we need as we look to tackle member requests for targeted resources for pre-literate migrants.

Huge thanks to Dr Bautista (and our very own Jude) for bringing his wit and wisdom, and setting the bar so incredibly high! Your new committee is just getting started.



SIG Reports

Primary SIG - August 2026

Karen Cebalo

A highlight of this last term was attending CLESOL and meeting with our Primary sector ESOL colleagues in person. We had a very lively and productive SIG meeting there, discussing issues that are of particular and current relevance to our sector. Much of this was a continuation from our online discussion forum which was our term 2 event.

- ECE rep on Primary SIG: we would all love to have representation from the Early Childhood Education sector and it would be ideal if we were able to have an ECE representative on our Primary SIG steering group. If anybody knows of someone who may be interested in taking on this role, please let a member of the steering group know.
- Neurodiverse ELLs: we’re conscious of the complexity of these learners including how the trauma of moving to a new country and struggling with language and connections can manifest as, or exacerbate, ND traits. Some positive supports included setting up strategies of many kinds e.g. buddies, quiet space, ‘nurture rooms’, clearly structured programmes, explicit teaching and supporting children to build relationships with native speakers as well as children with the same home language..Community and external supports such as “Incredible Years”, “PPP Parenting”, “Autism NZ” are available. There are also psychologists and counsellors that work with families and who can make assessments in the child’s L1. It is worth being aware that we should now be referring to the Early Intervention Team at the MoE rather than RTLb.
- ELLPs - there was much discussion on the structure of the indicators in the ELLPs and whether these may be written as “I can” statements or success criteria. The HERO management system is written as goals. We were advised that ELLPs would not become aligned with the English curriculum, as the needs of our ELLs spans the whole curriculum, not just English.
- There was a request for the various Language Weeks to be shared with members. Currently the Pacific Languages are available on Tahūrangi but others are not.
- Structured Literacy: There was concern that some schools are not teaching soft skills and yet Tahūrangi clearly states that Structured Literacy includes vocabulary, morphology, syntax, fluency, structure, comprehension, oral language and writing processes, as well as decoding. Decoding is just one aspect. We feel it is important that schools are aware of the importance for our ELLs of oracy, vocabulary, connecting to a text and comprehension.
- Y0/1 Funding - There was considerable concern that funding for Y0/1 will be removed again in the future, and absorbed into Structured Literacy support. In a country where diversity is continuing to increase, we believe that maintaining strong ESOL funding in the early years is critical to ensuring that our education system remains fair, responsive and effective for all learners. We must ensure that Year 0-1 ELLs have the opportunity to develop rich oral language and vocabulary and to make connections between English and their home language, and between their cultures. The ESOL principles are critically important. This is the realm of ESOL and is far broader than Structured Literacy alone.
- Pre-service training: members are finding that Provisionally Registered Teachers are needing considerable support in catering for their ELLs and neurodivergent ELLs in particular. Concerns are that in pre-service training there is a lack of teaching about how to support ELLs in the classroom and ways to support the diverse range of needs

- generally. This means that not only are these beginning teachers struggling, but that the ELLs in their classrooms are not as well supported as they should be.
- EAL curriculum - this was not discussed at CLESOL but will be a matter for discussion in the near future.
- Currently, the government is looking at an EAL curriculum and the consultation process closed on 3rd August. The Ministry will now analyse the feedback from the sector.

The Primary SIG team is:

Karen Cebalo (coordinator) - North Shore, AKTESOL
Bernie Moffatt - WAIKATO TESOL
Haidee Jenkins - BoP TESOL
Gwenna Finikin - MANATESOL
Welcome to Siobhan Wallace - North-West AKTESOL
A special thank you to Cathie Cahill for her many years as a member of our steering group and for her considerable experience and expertise shared.

Secondary SIG - August 2026

The biggest news for the secondary sector is the development of the curriculum for English as an Additional Language (EAL). After years of advocacy, the sector was told in 2025 that English as an Additional Language would be a new subject in Phase 5 of the new curriculum. A team of writers worked on this in the first half of 2026. The draft EAL curriculum for consultation has now been released and is open for feedback until August 3.

To assist the sector in providing rich, specific feedback to the Ministry of Education, the secondary SIG ran a webinar to unpack the 70+ pages of the draft curriculum. We are encouraged that the draft curriculum presented five stages rather than the year 11 - 13 structure of other languages. The webinar attracted record numbers for a TESOLANZ online event reaching 114 participants. We hope the session helped individuals, departments, and clusters put together their feedback, despite the tight turnaround!

In June the Secondary SIG hosted a hybrid event together with CANTESOL about AI in Language Education. The presenter Dr Kathryn MacCallum, professor of Digital Education Futures and Head of School, University of Canterbury, explored how AI is reshaping language education and why English language educators and learners need AI literacy to use tools critically, safely and confidently. Kathryn's talk was interactive, engaging and thought provoking giving attendees many aspects of AI in education to consider such as the distinction between AI and generative AI and where we draw the line between language support and language replacement. Kathryn identified other key tensions for English language educators including equity and access, detection and suspicion of use and the need for careful policies to encourage responsible use. How do we work with this new technology to maximise its benefits and opportunities? The secondary SIG will look to offer more presentations about this in the future.

Looking ahead we hope to bring a CLESOL revisited event with some key presentations repeated online. We will follow the progress of the new EAL curriculum and look at how to offer PD pertaining to that and the impact it will have on our programmes, planning and assessment in the future.

Please do reach out with ideas you have for topics you'd like to see covered.

Kath Teeboon and Sarah Roper

Tertiary SIG - August 2026

Kia ora koutou. Ko Amber Fraser-Smith taku ingoa. Nō Ōtepoti ahau. I've been a member of TESOLANZ for the past 20 years, and caught up in the enthusiasm of our recent CLESOL conference in Hamilton, I found myself volunteering to coordinate the Tertiary Special Interest Group (SIG). After the initial moment where my heart dropped into my stomach and I wondered, **What have I done?**, the enthusiasm returned — and with a keen steering group drawn from across the sector, it looks set to stay. After all, what better opportunity to engage with others who are equally enthusiastic about the mahi they do.

Ko wai ahau?

I'm a senior lecturer at Otago Polytechnic, working with migrant, international, and refugee-background ākonga — mahi that is genuinely a joy and that embodies ako, as my students and I learn alongside each other. I bring a neurodivergent, social-justice perspective to my work, grounded in the belief that equity and understanding within education are essential for ensuring equitable outcomes.

A tertiary sector that recognises and responds to the needs of our ākonga was a key driver for those who attended the CLESOL Tertiary SIG meeting. The diversity of the group was clear, with voices from PTE providers, universities, polytechnics, community learning, and teacher education. Reflecting this, our steering committee now includes representatives from each of these sectors: Tim Edwards (VUW), Christine Biebricher (UoA), Anna Stephens (Uni of Waikato College), Lilly Vigneswaran (consultant), Nita Hutchinson (English Language Partners). Our committee exists to raise and advocate for issues that members believe need attention, and to organise Professional Learning and Development (PLD) that supports those working in the sector.

During the CLESOL meeting, issues facing our ākonga were highlighted, including those affecting refugee-background students. Members noted that while more refugee-background learners are entering tertiary education, their study pathways are impacted by financial issues, accessibility of foundation level courses and appropriate support for mainstream teachers. Without support in these areas, the social and economic long-term outcomes for this community are negatively impacted.

The group also discussed the increasing range of diverse learning needs among English language learners, acknowledging that this may reflect both improved recognition and increased complexity due to factors such as educational gaps and trauma.

Finally, the NZQA review of tertiary English language proficiency requirements was discussed. Concerns were raised about reduced institutional oversight following the loss of Committee on University Academic Programmes (CUAP) and universities now self-accrediting. Ensuring appropriate representation was a point raised. While polytechnics are represented on the NZQA review board, TESOLANZ currently is not.

Our group is here to continue addressing these issues and working toward solutions – whether that's in the form of teacher education or of advocacy. Together, we can make what might seem like small steps but can result in significant differences to the future outcomes of our learners. If you have any questions or suggestions, please email ...



UN International Days

August

9 August - International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples

31 August - International Day for People of African Descent

September

5 Sept International Day of the World's Indigenous Women and Girls

8 Sept International Literacy Day

21 Sept International Day of Peace

23 Sept International Day of Sign Languages

28 Sept International Day for Universal Access to Information

30 Sept International Translation Day

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.



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.tesolang.org.nz/join-us/>

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Juliet Fry (SIG Coordinator)

Lucy Macnaught

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Sally Hay and Sarah Roper, Secondary

Amber Fraser-Smith, Tertiary

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Waikato TESOL - Rachel Kaur and Yi (Joy) Wang

BOPTESOL – Jon Sadler

MANATESOL - Gwenna Finikin

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