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BBC Worldwide and BBC Learning English
It is my pleasure to introduce this issue of *English Australia Journal*. It is a true honour and privilege to step into the role of Executive Editor and to work with such an engaged and organised editorial team. Throughout the preparation of this issue, outgoing editor Dr Phil Chappell has provided expert advice and a thorough handover, and I am grateful for his guidance during the transition period. I also thank the journal team – Sophia Khan, Richard Ingold, and designer Derek Trow – for welcoming me aboard and showing me the ropes. Thank you to English Australia, especially Sophie O’Keefe, and to the Editorial Board for providing support and guidance. I look forward to engaging further with the journal contributors and readership.

The peer-reviewed articles in this issue address topics relevant to many English language course providers: considered use of technology in the EAP curriculum, English-only policies in ELICOS, and engaging students in a reflective feedback process. The section opens with John Smith’s presentation of his TALS (Technology-enhanced Academic Language Support) framework, which addresses a gap in the learning design and EAP literature. The framework is a useful resource for curriculum designers that can be adapted to a range of teaching contexts. Yulia Kharchenko and Phil Chappell examine English-only policies in ELICOS through the gaze of the key stakeholders affected: teachers and students. Their findings call for a reconciliation between the research on bi- and multilingual speakership and practices at ELICOS institutions, and initiate an important conversation about best practice in ELICOS from the perspective of the core stakeholders. Finally, in her Brief Report, Blanka Malecka introduces the concept of ‘backfeed’, which is a process of mindfully engaging with teacher feedback. Malecka provides strategies that can be used to facilitate this important process to enhance students’ learning experience and further exploit written feedback. All of these contributions have potential to spark meaningful conversations in staffrooms.

In the Classroom Talk section, Sophia Khan’s 10 Questions interview is with Mark Hancock, pronunciation expert and author of the award-winning *PronPack 1-4*, which is also reviewed in this issue. Ceara McManus and Henno Kotzé provide a how-to for implementing gamified goal-setting to enhance student engagement based on their action research project. Thuy Dinh takes us through a series of a series of ready-
to-use activities for developing intercultural competence in the EAP classroom, and Yanina Leigh and Yulianto Lukito help us move beyond temporality in teaching tenses by presenting other useful concepts to help students understand when and how we use different tenses.

The Reviews section, overseen by Richard Ingold, brings insights into a wide range of recently published teaching resources and research publications. These cover topics such as teaching EAP, test preparation and assessment, pronunciation, and key principles in SLA.

We hope that you, our readers, will find this issue to be both useful and thought-provoking. We also encourage you to consider submitting a piece for a future issue. Research articles and Brief Reports are reviewed by two or more researchers in relevant area, while Classroom Talks and Reviews undergo review and feedback from the Editorial Team. Sophia and Richard do a fantastic job of supporting writers with their contributions.

Thank you to our peer reviewers, who generously contribute their time and considerable expertise to ensuring the quality and rigour of our research articles and brief reports. This process is invaluable for both the journal and its contributors, and we appreciate the detailed feedback provided.

We thank Derek Trow for his exacting work on the design and printing of the issue, a key step in ensuring that the hard work of the contributors reaches the readership. We also thank the English Australia Secretariat for their ongoing support. Finally, thank you to the Editorial Board for supporting the publication process.

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Experience Better Learning
A developmental framework for technology-enhanced academic language support (TALS)

John Smith
Griffith English Language Institute, Griffith University

Technology-enhanced academic language support (TALS) refers to any adjunctive learning and teaching program that utilises digitally based technologies to support and develop academic English language and skills. Despite its prevalence, TALS has been largely ignored in the literature. This lack of research and exploration is concerning, not only because such a widespread learning and teaching practice has been so neglected, but also because there is real need for good guidance. With the increasing rapidity of change in technology-enhanced education, there is a correspondingly increased need for TALS programs to have a solid grounding in theory, educational design and quality assurance. This paper will therefore briefly present a framework for TALS development that can be utilised across a variety of contexts and settings. It is expected that this framework will be of most use to teachers and developers interested in online academic language learning and teaching.

Introduction

Increasingly, academic English language programs have turned to digital technologies to enhance and supplement their face-to-face offerings. Demand for more flexible learning options (Leslie-McCarthy & Tutty, 2011), the popularity of off-campus study (James, Krause, & Jennings, 2010), tighter financial constraints (Mort & Drury, 2012) and rising enrolments of international students (International Education Advisory Council, 2013) are some of the reasons that there has been such massive growth in digital learning. The HELP Yourself Resources developed by EnglishHELP at Griffith English Language Institute, Griffith University (www.griffith.edu.au/englishhelp) is a typical example of these websites. The resources comprise short, animated videos with corresponding interactive practice activities on 20 identified areas of essential and academic grammar topics. Designed to support the academic language needs of students with English as an additional language, these resources are not attached to any specific course and are instead intended for self-access and study.

While numerous researchers have explored the fact that the HELP Yourself Resources
and similar programs represent a distinct breed of technology-enhanced language learning with its own particular objectives, expected learning outcomes and educational design needs (Conroy, 2010; Drury & Jones, 2010; Dunworth, 2013; Leslie-McCarthy & Tutty, 2011; Mort & Drury, 2012; Nallaya & Kehrwald, 2013; Strauss, Goodfellow, & Puxley, 2009), a comprehensive umbrella term for this set of learning and teaching practices has yet to be adopted. Dunworth (2013) opts for a lengthy descriptive approach with ‘online and e-learning language development opportunities that are self-access programs or independent learning resources’ (p. 62); Leslie-McCarthy and Tutty (2011) employ the much more succinct, but overly general (and semantically confusing), ‘ALL [academic language and learning] websites’ (p. 24); and Goodfellow, Strauss, and Puxley (2012) write quite specifically about ‘web-based writing support’ (p. 1).

Levy and Hubbard (2005) have argued that ‘having a generally accepted term available is helpful’ (p. 148), but the literature has not yet come to any kind of terminological consensus. Existing terms such as CALL (the cognate discipline of Computer-Assisted Language Learning) and ALL websites do not seem entirely appropriate, with CALL being too closely aligned to the specific teaching of English (as opposed to academic language support), and ALL websites being so broad as to possibly include an information page about a centre’s service options. Web-based writing programs, on the other hand, is not inclusive enough. Therefore, this project will attempt to strike a balance between specificity and inclusivity by utilising the term technology-enhanced academic language support (TALS), which as a label, is parsimonious, inclusive of a variety of different practices, and each of its constituents possesses a degree of cachet in the literature (Almpanis, Patrick, McLellan, Dinsmore, Faustino, & Basuki, 2010; Bayne, 2015; A. Kirkwood & Price, 2014; Levy & Hubbard, 2005; Murray & Nallaya, 2014).

Currently, at least 35 of Australia’s 39 universities and a large majority of ELICOS institutes (particularly those offering pathways into tertiary institutes) provide some form of technology-enhanced academic language support to their students (Academic Association of Language and Learning, 2016). Despite occupying a seemingly large piece of academic real estate, the number of published studies on TALS design and development is surprisingly low, and what literature does exist consists mostly of case studies (Berry, 2012; Conroy, 2010; Goodfellow et al., 2012; K. W. Kirkwood, 2012; Leslie-McCarthy & Tutty, 2011; Mayes & de Freitas, 2007; Mort & Drury, 2012; Nallaya & Kehrwald, 2013; Pryjmachuk, Gill, Wood, Olleveant, & Keeley, 2012; Shea, 2007; Wijeyewardene, Patterson, & Collins, 2013). Yet, there is demonstrable need for good guidance. Goodfellow, Puxley, and Strauss (2009) found that most TALS materials are little more than ‘descriptive of approaches to academic writing, rather
than materials to assist in its development’ (p. 1029). In one of the few surveys of TALS, Leslie-McCarthy and Tutty (2011) reveal that the final product often fell short of developers’ goals (p. 27). They concluded that TALS programs in Australia:

- were often *ad hoc* and sometimes haphazard in planning,
- produced unexpected results in terms of how the students engaged with materials, and
- suffered from a lack of input from experts in web-development and educational technology.

**Framework**

While case studies may be inspiring examples for developers, they are often highly contextualised to their specific environment and do not offer a clear developmental road map. Fox and Mackeogh (2003) therefore argue that the real advantages of technology-enhanced learning will flow from a ‘carefully designed pedagogical framework’ (p. 132). Rosado and Bélisle (2006) define a framework as ‘a rational structure that organizes institutional assumptions, curriculum objectives, educational concepts, ethical values, technologies, pedagogical goals and constraints and professional practices, in order to implement educational policies’ (p. 10).

As there are no such frameworks specifically designed for TALS, frameworks developed for the cognate discipline of CALL could provide instructive examples. One of the earliest and most comprehensive of these was developed by Hubbard (1992) and comprises three distinct modules: development, implementation and evaluation. Having been created well before the widespread use of web technologies, significant portions of his framework are given to developing and testing purpose-built software, and so much of Hubbard’s work is now dated. Enduringly beneficial however are his design principles for creating developmental frameworks for technology-enhanced language teaching:

1. The framework should be based to the degree possible on existing frameworks or views of methodology for language teaching and learning in general.
2. The framework should be non-dogmatic and flexible.
3. The framework should explicitly link the three facets of courseware development, evaluation and implementation.
4. Finally, the framework should faithfully represent the nature of the multiple relationships among its components

(Hubbard, 1992, p. 49).
Additionally, a TALS framework should aim to be both utilitarian and practicable so as to be easily accessible to both practitioners and developers. Utilising these five principles as a basis, Figure 1 delineates the structure of such a framework for TALS development.

Figure 1. A developmental framework for TALS

Similar to Hubbard’s work, the framework comprises three distinct modules: theoretical design, educational design and quality assurance. The framework must also consider the institutional context, such as available resources, local expertise, student demographics, institutional goals, budget, etc. Indeed, the institutional context encircles and constrains the whole of the framework, and would most certainly influence all aspects of the project.

The framework may be utilised to evaluate and renew established materials or to build a new program from the ground up. Whether renewing an existing program or constructing a new one, all TALS projects should first start by establishing the undergirding theory. Once a theoretical approach has been established, then the developer may choose to move freely between the other modules as the situational context requires. The next sections will examine each of these three modules in more detail.
Theoretical design

That any TALS programs must be grounded in theory is a resounding argument throughout the literature, and therefore design and development should emanate foremost from a theoretical core (Andrade, 2017; Blin, 2016; Chapelle, 2009; Hampel, 2006; Hubbard, 1987; Levy, 2002). Unfortunately, there are no actual native learning and teaching theories for TALS. Rather, program design and development is overly reliant on a tangle of interrelated approaches from a menagerie of different fields, such as CALL, academic language and learning and English language teaching (Berry, 2012; Clerehan, Turnbull, Moore, Brown, & Tuovinen, 2003; Hubbard & Levy, 2016; Leslie-McCarthy & Tutty, 2011; Mort & Drury, 2012). Moreover, there has yet to be a coalescence of any unified theoretical perspective with any of those relevant disciplines, and instead there has been a continuous divarication into increasingly refined niches (Chapelle, 2009; Hampel, 2006; Hubbard & Levy, 2016; Levy & Stockwell, 2006; Stockwell, 2014; Yang, 2010). Hubbard (2008), for example, identified no less than 113 distinct learning theories for technology-enhanced language learning in just 166 published papers from the venerable CALICO Journal. Burston (1996) laments this surfeit of theories as a serious burden that greatly complicates the process of tying theory to development, while Levy and Stockwell (2006) note that many educational designers pragmatically sidestep this academic Gordian knot by gathering a variety of theories and methods into a singular approach. Hubbard and Levy (2016) label this bootstrapping technique a ‘theory ensemble’ (p. 27) and endorse it as a practical way for developers to draw from a variety of different fields.

This idea of an ensemble is not a new one. Carr-Chellman and Duchastel (2000) affirmed more than 15 years ago that ‘designers and instructors need to choose for themselves the best mixture [of learning theories] for their online courses’ (p. 239), and Chapelle (2009) stressed that it has long been a common practice of language teachers. Indeed, many of the best practice examples of TALS programs in Australia are essentially based on theory ensembles (Chanock, 2013; Conroy, 2010; Drury & Jones, 2010; Mort & Drury, 2012; Nallaya & Kehrwald, 2013; Wingate & Dreiss, 2009). Despite the longevity, the literature is less clear on how such an ensemble might be constructed, and the Australian examples are more exemplary than explanatory.

The theoretical design module provides developers and practitioners with a map for constructing such an ensemble. It comprises five concentric circles: learning and teaching, e-learning, language, literacies and discipline, with each of these five domains representing an integral component for pedagogical consideration.

Learning and teaching is at the core of the ensemble, and establishes the developer’s explicit understanding of how learning occurs and is facilitated. These notions may be rooted in a pedagogical school of thought (e.g., behaviourism, cognitivism, etc.) or
instead take the form of a set of design principles (e.g., ‘learning occurs best through active interaction’). Moving outwards, the next domain is that of e-learning. While the whole of the ensemble may be thought to emanate from these assumptions about learning, it cannot be ignored how digitally-based technologies have fundamentally affected the learning process. Tuman (1992) correctly predicted more than 20 years ago, ‘computers will reshape not just how we read and write and, by extension, how we teach these skills’ (p. 8), and Kerr (2016) observed that the user experience is now ‘so powerful and so subjective that [language] learning principles will inevitably play second fiddle’ (para. 23). It is thus essential that developers consider early in their project how learning occurs and is facilitated within a digital environment.

Outside of this core are the inter-related domains of language, literacies and discipline. Language refers to the theories, practices and techniques of learning and teaching English as an additional language, while literacies would relate more to higher order aspects of language study, such as academic study skills, academic socialisation, academic literacies, as well as digital literacies. The outermost circle of discipline is optional, depending on the context, and would include discipline-related and/or discipline-specific language (e.g., English for specific purposes, discipline-specific genres, etc). The boundary between these three areas of language study is often fuzzy, and there is often a considerable degree of overlap.

The theoretical design module is flexible in that developers may choose to work from the ‘inside out’ or the ‘outside in’, but the ultimate goal is to construct a coherent theory ensemble that remains felicitous to itself at all levels. For example, a socio-constructionist position for learning and teaching should not be adopted alongside a structural approach for language as the resultant dissonance would likely degrade the efficacy of the program (Hubbard & Levy, 2016; Hyland, 2016). Intentionally, the module itself is non-dogmatic, accommodating any learning and teaching theory or approach, nor does it make an argument for adopting one theoretical approach over another. This inherent trait makes the whole framework conducive to a wider variety of institutional contexts, including those that may be particularly constrained by, for example, budget, time or access to software.

**Educational design**

Educational design provides a ‘bird’s eye view’ that ‘ensure[s] educational rigour through the integration of appropriate learning theory into the learning materials and events being designed’ (O’Reilly, 2004, p. 725). The educational design module of the framework illustrates this overview as a continuous cycle between the processes of instructional design and learning design. These two terms are often used interchangeably, but while instructional design ‘involves directing students
to appropriate learning activities’ (Merrill, Drake, Lacy, Pratt, & Group, 1996, p. 6), learning design ‘captures the pedagogical intent of a unit of study’ (Lockyer, Heathcote, & Dawson, 2013, p. 1442). Simplistically put, instructional design focuses on the teaching event, and learning design focuses on the learning event. Seemingly at odds, instructional design and learning design often work well in tandem, and it is important for TALS developers to consider the development of their program from both sides of this divide (Clerehan et al., 2003; Clifton, 2017; Lockyer et al., 2013; O'Reilly, 2004).

Learning design may take a variety of different formats, but Lockyer et al. (2013) list four common elements: ‘identifying the key actors involved (teachers and students), what they are expected to do (learning and teaching tasks), what educational resources are used to support the activities, and the sequence in which the activities unfold’ (p. 1442). Clifton (2017) defines the aim of learning design as ‘to describe pedagogic intentions in a particular learning context’ (p. 277), and is thus descriptive of the learning and teaching process. Instructional design, by contrast, is generally much more restrictive, and it is more prescriptive in achieving specific learning outcomes. While there are number of famous instructional design models (ADDIE, Dick and Carey, and Rapid Prototyping), most incorporate at least five basic steps: analyse, design, develop, implement and evaluate. Regardless the method adopted, the learning and instructional design processes should aim to define program objectives and expected learning outcomes, as well as maximise user engagement.

Quality assurance

Ensuring the quality of a TALS program is by no means straightforward, and in many cases, developers have avoided any forceful assertion that their program actually improves academic language proficiency. As Clerehan et al. (2003) state, ‘measuring the amount of learning that has occurred within a language and academic skills framework – even at the end of a face-to-face session – can challenge ingenuity’ (p. 19). On the other hand, it seems highly likely that many institutes do little more than measure the number of site visits to gauge the success of their TALS program (Leslie-McCarthy & Tutty, 2011). While Skinner, Mort, Calvo, Drury, and Garcia Molina (2012) sardonically observe that a program that does not attract students must be considered ‘unsuccessful’ (p. 548), success cannot be determined by the level of student traffic alone. Therefore, rather than rely solely on summative assessment and site traffic data, it would be better to adopt a whole-of-program, systematic quality assurance scheme.

The literature details a number of approaches to quality assurance for TALS and TALS-like programs. Clerehan et al. (2003) implemented a plan that spanned the
entirety of their program’s development cycle and drew on data collected from student feedback, peer reviews and the monitoring of online activities. Mort and Drury (2012) adopted a similar approach employing the monitoring of online activity, student surveys and focus groups to determine ‘how students were using the site and most importantly what they were learning’ (p. 6). Sims (2001) stressed the need for continuous evaluation as opposed to an end-of-project summative review as means for a technology-enhanced educational product to ‘be more likely to achieve the educational and learning goals’ (p. 2). He suggested a number of factors that should be considered in the evaluation, including strategic intent, content, learning design, interface design, interactivity, assessment, student support, utility of content, and outcomes, and in his *Eight Dimensions of E-Learning*, Khan (2005, p. ix) established a broad set of evaluative categories: institutional, management, technological, ethical, interface design and resource support.

The evaluative elements of a TALS program suggested above seem to fall broadly into two categories, *learning and teaching* and *educational technology*. Quality assurance for *learning and teaching* could consider learning content, assessment and feedback, while *educational technology* could examine ongoing resource management, user technical support, the user interface and the user experience. Researchers and developers would need define evaluative areas that are the most practical and accessible for them to measure. Quality assurance may be accomplished either quantitatively or qualitatively, and could be based on any combination of user surveys, focus groups, systematic reviews, external benchmarks, formative and summative assessments and learning analytics. Ideally, it should determine the degree to which the stated learning outcomes and program objectives are achieved and the degree to which users engage with the learning content.

**Conclusion**

An unpublished desk audit commissioned in 2014 by EnglishHELP at Griffith English Language Institute (GELI) identified over 230 TALS programs across Australia, New Zealand, the United States, Canada and the United Kingdom. These materials differed widely in their scope, design and target audience, but shared a commonality of purpose in providing supplemental language and academic skills guidance to EAL students. At present, the approach to TALS is haphazard with no overarching guidance available to developers. Although there are programs that are exceptional examples of well-planned, theory-informed design, they do not provide well-defined frameworks for other programs to follow. This paper has therefore presented a short introduction to a TALS framework that practitioners can utilise to develop and evaluate their own TALS programs.
References


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English-only policy in an ELICOS setting: Perspectives of teachers and students

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Contrary to growing multilingual theories of language learning, beliefs in the advantages of monolingual instruction in English teaching are widespread and often result in an English-only approach that rarely takes into account the perspectives of the parties involved. This article reports on a study that explored perceptions of a strict English-only policy and its impact on students and teachers in an Australian English Language Intensive Courses for Overseas Students (ELICOS) setting. In a mixed-methods approach, data from a student survey and group interviews with teachers revealed a discrepancy between generally positive beliefs about the policy and a mixed impact of its implementation in practice. The study also highlighted the limitations of framing a linguistic strategy as an official policy, including the potential for conflict between the teaching staff and the students. The findings have implications for language policy decisions in the wider ELICOS sector and support research on multilingual pedagogy and first language use in English teaching and learning.

Introduction
The role of the first language (L1) in additional language teaching has attracted considerable interest over the last years. Numerous research articles and several volumes have supported the idea that languages are inseparably connected in the mind of the speaker, have a mutual effect on each other and one cannot be suppressed while learning another (V. Cook, 2001, 2003; V. Cook & Wei, 2016; Cummins, 1991; García & Wei, 2014; Herdina & Jessner, 2002; Levine, 2003, 2013; Littlewood & Yu, 2011; Palmer, Martínez, Mateus, & Henderson, 2014; Turnbull & Dailey-O’Cain, 2009a). By now, second language acquisition (SLA) researchers and applied linguists tend to agree on the importance of the existing linguistic resources
of language learners. However, these research findings have not significantly influenced mainstream English language teaching (ELT) methodologies. The prevailing viewpoint still maintains that English can and should be learnt without referring to the languages students already know, and if teaching happens mostly or exclusively in English, the language will be acquired more efficiently. At times such beliefs serve as a foundation for a classroom-based or institution-wide English-only policy (EOP). This article reports on a study that explored the impact of such a policy on students and teachers in an ELICOS college in Sydney, Australia.

**Multilingual turn**

The monolingual principle is ingrained in the philosophy and methodology of ELT and dates back to the late nineteenth-century Reform Movement in linguistics (Butzkamm, 2002). It prescribes the target language (TL) as both the object and the medium of instruction, while native speaker-like competence is viewed as the ultimate goal of second or additional language learning. As a result, the learner’s L1 use is regarded as a fall-back option and a sign of TL incompetence (Turnbull & Dailey-O’Cain, 2009b). These ideas are still prevalent in many ELT settings today. For example, the stronger versions Communicative Teaching (CLT) and Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) methodologies bear features of monolingual theories that view languages as separate and unconnected, to be learnt by immersion and without mixing. This, in turn, reinforces beliefs about the benefits of maximum English exposure and the drawbacks of translation as a pedagogical tool. Meanwhile, the myth of the native speaker lives on in language classrooms, textbooks and study-abroad marketing material (Kramsch, 2014). In this climate, it has been argued, non-native English teachers are expected to behave as English monolinguals (Llurda, 2005; Medgyes, 2017). Admittedly, in Australian ELT, there has been a movement away from such native-speakerism, but hiring practices still negatively influence the validity of non-native teachers as shown in a recent employability study by Phillips (2017).

Gradually, the normative versions of language are being scrutinised, not least due to the so-called ‘multilingual turn’ in SLA and applied linguistics research. Described in detail in May’s (2013) volume, this new perspective recognises the fluid and hybrid linguistic repertoires of bi- and multilingual speakers. Substituting the view of languages as discrete entities, the ‘trans’ lens is gaining importance in applied linguistics research (Canagarajah, 2018; Hawkins & Mori, 2018; Kramsch, 2018; Wei, 2018). Monolingualism is questioned as the default for human communication, and nativeness is no longer seen as the superior form of language knowledge (Belz, 2002; Houghton & Hashimoto, 2018; Ortega, 2013). Recent works on multilingualism specifically in Sydney (Chik, Benson, & Moloney, 2019; Pennycook & Otsuji, 2015) highlight the diversity of linguistic practices that international English students
encounter on arrival to the city. Pedagogically, the multilingual perspective has led to the renewed interest in translation (Calis & Dikilitas, 2012; Carreres, 2006; G. Cook, 2010; Liao, 2006; Sadeghi & Ketabi, 2010), as well as an abundance of code-switching and translinguaging research (Levine, 2011; López & González-Davies, 2016; Ndhlouvu, 2015; Otheguy, García, & Reid, 2018). Across the world, studies lend support to pedagogically appropriate L1 use in additional language classrooms, including in Asia (Carless, 2008; McMillan & Rivers, 2011; Rabbidge & Chappell, 2014), the Middle East (Sa’d & Qadermazi, 2015; Storch & Aldosari, 2010), North and South America (Brooks-Lewis, 2009; Sampson, 2012), and Australia (Grasso, 2012; Storch & Wigglesworth, 2003). The latter study, for instance, investigated how English learners in an Australian university used L1 as a mediating tool in complex pair work tasks, for task clarification and management, and for explaining lexical items and grammar. In short, what used to be perceived as a sign of deficient language proficiency (for example, mixing languages within one speech act, i.e., code-switching) is now seen as approximating real-life language use outside the classroom and in an international workplace. Researchers today are likely to view ELICOS students as essentially bi-/multilingual speakers who draw on their existing language knowledge while adding English to their linguistic repertoires.

**Multilingual students, monolingual teaching**

A recent discussion on an Australian ELT forum suggests that despite the new research directions and individual teachers’ concessions regarding student L1 use, the majority of today’s English teaching institutions implement some form of English-only or English-mostly policy (AusELT, n.d.). As noted by Shvidko, Evans and Hartshorn (2015), such decisions are rarely based on empirical research representing students’ perspectives and can, in fact, undermine the optimal environment for language learning. Van Lier (1996) argues that a strong monolingual approach adds artificiality to a language classroom. Moreover, according to Levine (2013), it introduces tension to the teacher-students relationship and potentially obstructs the very objective of language instruction, i.e., the learners’ participation in bi- and multilingual language communities outside the classroom.

Prescriptive policies not only dictate language use to students, but also influence teachers’ views on L1 use. Macaro (2001, 2009) sees the latter on a continuum (Figure 1), at one end of which the language classroom is a virtual TL environment with no place for students’ L1. This ‘virtual’ position sustains the bias towards monolingualism and the native speaker ideal. The other two beliefs admit the utility of L1 to various degrees. The ‘maximal’ position espouses the maximum TL exposure principle. It largely disregards the pedagogical value of L1 but allows its limited use for immediate classroom needs, e.g. for clarifying vocabulary and tasks or explicit
teaching of grammar. Finally, the ‘optimal’ position justifies L1 use in enhancing language learning, and strives for multilingual pedagogy that conceptualises multiple language proficiency as complex and independent from native-speaker norms. Arguably, this position has not yet gained acceptance among language educators.

Figure 1. Teachers’ positions on L1 use, based on Macaro (2001, 2009)

Undoubtedly, the prevalence of the English-only approach does not result simply from the enduring monolingual beliefs in ELT, but also from practical considerations such as managing a multilingual English classroom. In addition, as English has become a valuable commodity worldwide, the competitive ELICOS market in Australia encourages providers to seek ways to teach the language more efficiently and in a cost-effective manner (Stanley, 2017). In this climate, notes Canagarajah (1999), beliefs in maximum TL exposure become pedagogical common sense. What compounds the problem is that international students do not infallibly encounter multiple opportunities for English use while in Australia, and they do not feel as included in the English-speaking community as ELICOS marketing materials may lead them to believe (see, for example, Baik, Naylor, & Arkoudis, 2015; Benson, Chappell, & Yates, 2018; Chappell, Benson, & Yates, 2018; S. Wilson, 2018). To compensate, maximising English practice within the classroom appears justified. Finally, as noted by Matsuda (2012), the lack of resources and teacher training makes it difficult to implement the multilingual view of English students in practice, so teachers tend to continue working within the monolingual and native speaker-centred space.

To sum up, a discrepancy exists between applied linguists and SLA researchers’ positions on L1 use in language teaching and the practicalities of running ELICOS in Australia. Research has questioned the primacy of the monocultural and monolingual
speaker, traditionally enforced by the disciplinary mechanisms such as EOPs. Despite some ELICOS colleges and teachers admitting the value of L1, by and large the sector is yet to recalibrate its methodology to reflect the newly acknowledged value of the bi- and multilingualism of international students.

**Study setting and participants**

The study aimed to explore views on monolingual instruction in an ELICOS college (hereafter, the College) in Sydney, Australia. The setting was chosen for its strict EOP that applies in class, at break time, and during extra-curricular activities. At all proficiency levels, translation is discouraged, and instruction is expected to be exclusively in English. Students seen using English outside class times enter a weekly draw to win a small financial prize. Those found speaking their native language receive a penalty ranging from a verbal warning to suspension. The main research question in the study was: How does the EOP impact students and teachers in the College? To investigate that, we examined perceptions of the EOP by the academic management, students and teachers. This article reports the findings based on the views of the teachers and students.

Participant self-selection was the primary sampling strategy. Sixty-seven students at intermediate level English proficiency (CEFR B1) and above were recruited via notices. Ten ELICOS teachers volunteered for the study. All members of the academic management received a written invitation to participate, and three chose to do so.

Student participants came from 13 countries, with the majority from Brazil (34%), South Korea (21%), Japan (16%) and Colombia (12%). Most of them (85%) were aged between 18 and 30 years old. Over half (56%) were at CEFR B1 (Intermediate) level of English proficiency, CEFR B2 (Upper-Intermediate) students comprised 39%, and the rest were CEFR C1 (Advanced). Ten different L1s were recorded among the students, while 15 respondents stated they can speak one or more languages in addition to their mother tongue and English.

Half of the English teachers in the study had over ten years of experience. Six teachers classified themselves as native speakers of English. One participant did not speak any languages in addition to English, while the remaining nine could speak 11 different languages among them, including French, German, Bengali, Hindi, Polish, Italian, Japanese, Afrikaans, Portuguese, Greek and Spanish.
Table 1. Teachers’ Demographic Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Years of teaching experience</th>
<th>Native speaker of English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher A</td>
<td>1-5</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher B</td>
<td>10+</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher C</td>
<td>10+</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher D</td>
<td>1-5</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher E</td>
<td>10+</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher F</td>
<td>10+</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher G</td>
<td>10+</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher H</td>
<td>6-9</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher I</td>
<td>6-9</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher J</td>
<td>1-5</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Study design and instruments

The study used a complementary mixed-methods research design in order to explore various perspectives on the same phenomenon. The details of data collection and instruments used can be seen in Figure 2.
First, an online questionnaire (included in Appendix) recorded the students’ overall attitude to the EOP. Five-point Likert scales\textsuperscript{1} were used to collect their perceptions of the policy impact and to explore attitudes to L1 use. Open-ended examples of personal experience with the policy were also recorded. Data from the closed-ended items were analysed quantitatively using IBM SPSS Statistics 21.0. The open-ended items were analysed qualitatively using QSR International NVivo 11. Several coding techniques were used (Descriptive, Versus, In Vivo), as suggested by Saldaña (2013), to get various perspectives on the data. Recurring topics were identified, which were then grouped into categories or themes, such as \textit{EOP Implementation}, \textit{Emotional Impact}, or \textit{EOP and Language Learning}.

Concurrently with the questionnaire, the first round of semi-structured group interviews was conducted with the teachers. This format encouraged collaboration and suited the study aim of seeking a collective view of the EOP. Teachers’ beliefs about the policy were explored, as well as their perceptions of how it impacts them and the students. The transcripts of first teacher interviews were analysed in the same manner as the students’ qualitative responses. Following that, the results of the initial data analysis were presented at the second round of teacher group interviews, with an aim to encourage comparison between participants’ perspectives on the EOP. Such procedure encouraged interaction and critical discussion of collective and individual language practices in the College. The final interview data were pooled with the initial qualitative data set and analysed with an emphasis on comparisons across the respondent categories.

**Findings and discussion**

The study findings show points of comparison and divergence between the teachers’ and students’ perceptions of the EOP, as well as wider themes, such as the impact of the policy implementation in its current form. One of the major observations was the discrepancy between beliefs about the EOP, its aim and effectiveness on the one hand, and on the other, its more tangible impact on the parties involved. In theory, the policy was believed to promote language learning, motivation and communication opportunities for students. Examples of its application in practice, however, highlighted the possible negative impact.

**Beliefs about the EOP**

Overall, the teachers agreed with the College’s view of the EOP as a means to expedite English learning. Justifications for the exclusion of other languages tended to emphasise the benefits for the students, for example:

\textsuperscript{1}\textit{1}=Strongly disagree, \textit{2}=Disagree a little, \textit{3}=Neither agree nor disagree, \textit{4}=Agree a little, \textit{5}=Strongly agree
[The English-only policy] can only be beneficial for getting them ready and up and running for life in a country that speaks that language.

(Teacher B)

Similarly, students reported generally positive attitudes to English-only. On a scale from 1 to 10, they gave the EOP an average rating of 8.82. Those who had received a reward for speaking English rated it slightly higher (a mean result \(M\) of 8.97 out of 10) than those who had been penalised for using another language (\(M=8.29\)). Students also believed the policy contributed to their motivation to learn English, helped them reach their learning goals, while providing opportunities to establish new friendships, as seen in Table 2.

Table 2. Students’ Beliefs about the EOP

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements? (1 Strongly disagree – 5 Strongly agree)</th>
<th>Average score (Mean)</th>
<th>Agree a little + Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The English-only rule is important for learning English successfully</td>
<td>4.48</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The English-only rule helps me make friends from other countries</td>
<td>4.39</td>
<td>87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The English-only rule helps me learn English in class</td>
<td>4.33</td>
<td>87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The English-only rule prepares me for using English outside the College</td>
<td>4.30</td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The English-only rule helps me practise English when not in class</td>
<td>4.24</td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The English-only rule increases my motivation to learn English</td>
<td>4.06</td>
<td>79%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Qualitative findings tended to corroborate the above. In the open-ended part of the questionnaire, students linked the EOP to language learning.

I agree with the English-only rule at the school because we come from other countries just to learn how communicate in English, and this rule is essential to achieve that.

(P61, B2, Colombia)

The teachers also expressed beliefs about the benefits of the policy for learning. They were more specific in detailing the advantages of increased exposure to English,

\(^2\)Students’ responses are referenced by participant number, CEFR proficiency level and country of origin. Participant wording is preserved.
including aural and oral practice, vocabulary acquisition and improved fluency and pronunciation.

The students noted greater opportunities for communication through a shared language. For example, the EOP was believed to foster a community ‘without language exclusions’ (P31, B1, Brazil), while encouraging students to achieve common goals.

I like [the EOP] because it makes it easier to communicate with people from other countries that have the same goal as me, which is to learn English, and it's a really good way to make friends.

(P62, B1, Mexico)

The teachers agreed, but unlike some students who sought to make same-language friends as well they emphasised cross-linguistic friendships based on English as a lingua franca. In summary, both teachers’ and students’ ideas about the effectiveness of the EOP tended to revolve around its contribution to the latter’s English skills (although this was expressed vaguely), as well as opportunities for communication and relationship building.

English-only in practice

While the idea of the EOP was perceived positively, many teachers highlighted the difficulties of its application. When evaluating the policy, the teachers referred to it as ‘a very good idea’, ‘useful’, ‘motivational’, and ‘holistic’, but also ‘elusive’, ‘utopian’, ‘mixed’ and ‘an ideal’. In particular, the interviewees mentioned the difficulties in implementing English-only equitably. For example, the full scope of the policy, including the system of rewards and penalties, was considered applicable to higher-proficiency students. Conversely, lower-level students were reportedly granted some concessions in terms of L1 use because they were perceived to experience communication difficulties and stronger emotional impact associated with the EOP.

Similarly, student opinions about EOP implementation did not demonstrate their unequivocal support, as seen in Table 3. Although the respondents preferred teachers to be strict about the EOP in class (with a mean result [M] of 4.03 out of 5), they appeared less certain about the possibility of learning English without referring to their own language (M=3.61). They were also undecided about speaking their own language(s) outside of class times (M=2.91), in contrast to the official restriction on languages other than English. Interestingly, the majority of the respondents agreed or agreed strongly that they would like to achieve a native-like level of English (M=4.51), which might explain the relatively low value attributed to their first language(s) while in Australia (M=2.82).
Table 3. Students’ Beliefs about EOP Implementation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements? (1 Strongly disagree – 5 Strongly agree)</th>
<th>Average score (Mean)</th>
<th>Agree a little + Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I want to learn to speak English like a native speaker</td>
<td>4.51</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers must be strict about the English-only rule in class</td>
<td>4.03</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can learn English without using my own language</td>
<td>3.61</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It should be ok to use my language during break time</td>
<td>2.91</td>
<td>34%*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I want to use my language while I’m in Australia</td>
<td>2.82</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Another 28% undecided.

When asked about whether and when they use L1 in class, the majority of the students (84%, $M=4.30$) agreed that they can follow class instructions in English. Over one third of the students (37%) believed they did not need L1 in class, which conforms to theories of monolingual language teaching and learning. Table 4 details students’ other uses of L1.

Table 4. Students’ Responses to Q14. ‘It should be ok to use my language in class when . . .’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>It should be ok to use my language in class when...</th>
<th>Number of respondents</th>
<th>Percentage of respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I don’t know some new words or phrases</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I want to compare English to my L1</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t understand the task</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I need help from other students</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Thus, more than a third of the students would potentially consider translation a useful language learning tool, while a quarter of them relate their existing language knowledge to that being acquired. Such findings lend support to the integrated views of bi-/multilingual linguistic systems. Meanwhile, the teachers’ position mostly reflected the ‘maximal’ classroom approach to L1. They noted how occasional student L1 use was unavoidable, particularly at lower levels of English proficiency, but it was not endorsed or integrated into their teaching methods.

**Impact on students**

Some students’ comments revealed the emotional impact of the EOP, especially when it was implemented indiscriminately, as in the case of a student reminded to speak
English in the middle of a distressing phone call from home, even though it took place in an empty classroom. The student found the teacher’s instructions rude and subsequently rated the EOP 5 out of 10. At the same time, strict adherence to the policy resulted in communication breakdown for lower level students, while fellow students were hesitant to offer common language assistance for fear of punishment.

When I had a meeting for university pathway students after class, one Korean guy came in who has poor English skills and he couldn’t understand what teacher said. I could help him in Korean but I wasn’t allowed to speak my own language at that time.

(P9, B2, Korea)

Throughout the interviews, the teachers appeared well attuned to the psychological and emotional impact of the EOP on students. They mentioned how the inability to express oneself clearly might cause frustration for less proficient students, while being subject to disciplinary action for not adhering to the policy could cause them to feel embarrassed, patronised or infantilised. Sensitivity in reminding the students to speak English only was considered crucial in preventing resentment towards the policy. In many cases, the teachers demonstrated considerable empathy, for example:

Imagine how difficult it must be for them to communicate knowing, ‘Oh we will be punished if we’re using . . .’ So I can’t imagine what must be going through their mind, it must be really very, very difficult.

(Teacher F, reviewing student questionnaire responses)

Other teachers encouraged their students to speak English by using humour, reminding them about the benefits of the policy, sharing stories of their own English learning success, and discussing their own experiences as bi-/multilingual speakers.

So I told them a few times that translation, if you’re not a native speaker . . . it never stops, so don’t worry about it. And this helps them so much because it just opens their eyes and they say, ‘Okay, my teacher has to translate in her head as well.’

(Teacher G)

While some teachers expressed strong support for the policy, others were less certain about its unequivocal suitability for all students. One teacher, for instance, critically evaluated the assumed connection between the EOP and language learning.

The students who love [the policy], are they actually improving within English? The students that break it, are they hindering their English? If there was a way to see the actual [connection] – it’s impossible.

(Teacher A)

1A startling example of policy adherence was given during a teacher interview. When a student experienced a medical episode in class, another student felt compelled to ask the teacher’s permission to offer help in L1.
In summary, the students’ and the teachers’ beliefs about the aims and benefits of the EOP at times contrasted with the reports of its actual functioning. This observation concurs with Shvidko et al. (2015) who claim English-only policies are often based on commonly held beliefs about language learning rather than empirical data. Fortunately, teachers in the study were aware of the possible difficulties students may have with the EOP and tried to offset its negative impact in a number of ways.

**Impact on teachers**

Another main category of findings concerned the impact of the EOP on teachers at the College. Overall, the interview participants tended to view the policy application as their job and an obligation towards the students and educational agents. As Teacher B put it, ‘it’s not fun, but some of us have to do it.’ At the same time, some believed it put additional demands on their time and limited available instruction methods.

> It’s frustrating sometimes, and I feel bad that I’ve tried everything and still I just cannot make [a student] understand, and I don’t have any options like translation or asking friends.

(Teacher F)

A prominent issue for the teachers was the requirement to enforce English-only not only in class, but in other parts of the College. Most respondents, including teachers of lower-proficiency classes, claimed to be at ease teaching without recourse to translation, dictionary use or other L1 student practices. Outside of class times, on the contrary, the majority felt uncertain about how to uphold the EOP. Many agreed, for instance, that they would not interrupt a student’s phone call conducted in L1 (thus, casting the example above as an exception). Social conventions appeared to take precedence over the requirement to monitor students’ language use on campus. As a result, some teachers reported feeling uneasy, uncomfortable, guilty, as well as unsure about the multiple roles expected of them.

> I think everyone’s asking a lot from teachers to be both helpful, friends, disciplinarians, name-takers . . .

(Teacher A)

One teacher admitted to wondering about failing professionally when unable to provide an explanation in English, which may be indicative of the pressure on teachers when English-only is both enforced by the College administration and expected by the fee-paying customers, i.e., students.

A minority of teachers felt pessimistic about sustaining the English-only ethos throughout the College and noted a reactive approach to its implementation outside class.
What usually occurs is just teachers walking around going ‘Hey, speak English, hey, speak English, hey, speak English, hey, speak English.’

(Teacher A)

[The students] just refuse, and they become really upset and angry with you when you ask them not to speak their native language. [. . . ] I’ve tried so many times, it does nothing to them like seriously, nothing. They don’t care.

(Teacher G)

Such a sense of resignation may also speak to the perception of the out-of-class EOP as a major addition to the teachers’ workload. As noted by Teacher B, ‘It should not be the be-all and the end-all of this position.’

Overall, the teachers in the study agreed in principle on the benefits of upholding the EOP. However, the requirement to implement the policy as currently dictated by their professional duties may have led to negative impact on some teachers, which reduced their motivation to monitor students’ language use outside of class times.

**EOP as an external mechanism of control**

According to the questionnaire, some students believed the system of penalties for non-compliance with the EOP was too strict and inflexible. At the same time, the constant need to monitor students’ language use may have led some teachers to assume a surveillance perspective, strikingly obvious in the metaphors of policing in the following examples (emphasis added).

You know that as soon as they leave the building, as soon as they leave the classroom, they’ll try to speak their language, so you have to keep an eye on them.

(Teacher E)

If it’s a higher level speaking with a lower level, then you try and speak to the higher level student and say, ‘Come on, help your friend.’ But if it’s higher level speaking with each other [. . . ], then you can crack down on that a little bit more.

(Teacher B)

The most frequent surveillance metaphors are presented in Table 5, which shows how often and in how many interviews they appeared.
Table 5. Metaphors of Surveillance in Teacher Interviews

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word and derivatives</th>
<th>Number of interviews</th>
<th>Frequency count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Enforce, enforcing,</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>enforcement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forced, to force,</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>forcing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catch, catching,</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>caught</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police, to police,</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>policing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patrol, to patrol,</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>patrolling</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comply</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conform</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carrot, stick</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Such language is indicative of a wider organisational discourse and may imply a perceived confrontation between the academic staff and the students on the matters of L1 use. Although critical discourse analysis was not the original focus of the study, the observed language of ‘us vs. them’ may influence the dynamics of student-teacher relationships. It has been argued that metaphors tend to shape social realities and guide future actions (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003). Therefore, the discourse of policing, if continued, may generate animosity between teachers and students and undermine the educational process. Moreover, the practice of ensuring policy compliance via external pressure precludes any attempts to appeal to the students’ own agency in determining their language use.

Limitations

The study findings are limited to a single research setting, characterised by a restrictive language policy, and may not be generalisable to other Australian ELICOS institutions. For validity purposes, students of lower English proficiency were excluded from the investigation. However, they might feel the impact of the English-only rule more strongly than their more proficient colleagues. It is also possible the participant sample was affected by self-selection bias. Overall, however, the study aimed at exploring the phenomenon of EOP impact in depth, rather than achieving representativeness.

Conclusions

The study has demonstrated that contrary to the contemporary SLA and applied linguistics research based on the premises of language interconnectedness, monolingual practices endure in ELICOS settings. Both students and teachers in the study positively perceived the notion and the purpose of the EOP. In particular,
the policy was believed to enhance English learning by providing an immersive language experience, while creating a common-language environment that facilitates communication and relationship building. Such views are comparable to Macaro’s (2001) classification of L1 use: the main premise of the EOP was creating a ‘virtual’ English-only classroom and campus, while in practice the teachers favoured ‘maximal’ exposure to English.

The College’s methods of EOP implementation, on the other hand, had a varied impact on both the students and teachers. For students, the benefits of the policy were outweighed at times by the feelings of frustration, isolation or uncertainty accompanied by missed opportunities to use L1 for ‘scaffolding’ (Thomsen, 2003) and collaborative learning. Teachers were primary upholders of the EOP in class, despite the limited instruction methods, but felt conflicted about implementing the policy in out-of-class interactions. Some noted the ineffectiveness of current measures to enforce English-only, which in some instances contributed to the discourse of surveillance and the perceived opposition between students and teachers. The study findings can serve as an empirical base for reassessment of the College’s approach to language policy.

**Implications**

The study has several implications for ELT in Australia. First, it highlights the impact of ‘strong’ CLT methodology and alerts ELICOS teachers and managers to the contradictions of ‘the plurilingual student/monolingual classroom’ phenomenon (J. Wilson & González Davies, 2017). The findings call for the view of international English students as language learners with unique needs and preferences. It would be fruitful to involve them in a negotiation of an ‘English-mostly’ approach as suggested, for example, by Rivers (2011), to substitute English-only positions. This would take into account individual learning experiences and aspirations, while appealing to the students’ agency and autonomy. Adopting the ‘optimal’ teaching stance that draws explicit connections between languages would also give teachers more choices methodologically.

To increase awareness of the recent multilingual turn in SLA and applied linguistics within ELICOS, the sector would benefit from a series of professional development activities in which teachers and other college staff are able to discuss and identify new ways to use L1 in ELICOS settings. Such activities could lay the foundations of ELT methodology that promotes the view of ELICOS students as bi-/multilingual speakers expanding their linguistic repertoires. This change in perspective is required
as a starting point for developing teaching approaches and resources suitable to the realities of modern-day communication, as well as the Australian and international workplace.

This article reports on research conducted while holding a Research Training Program Scholarship Award provided by the Australian Government.

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APPENDIX: STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE

Section I. About you
Q1 What is your current class level?
   - Intermediate 1
   - Intermediate 2
   - Upper-Intermediate 1
   - Upper-Intermediate 2
   - Advanced 1
   - Advanced 2
Q2 How old are you?
   - 18-25 years old
   - 26-30 years old
   - 31-35 years old
   - 36-40 years old
   - 41-45 years old
   - 46-50 years old
   - 51 years old or more
Q3 Are you...?
   - Male
   - Female
Q4 What country are you from?
Q5 What was the main language(s) of your childhood home?
Q6 In addition to English and your own language, can you speak any other languages?
   - No
   - Yes (Please specify)
Q7 How long have you been living in Australia?
   - Less than 3 months
   - Between 3 and 6 months
• Between 6 and 12 months
• Between 12 and 18 months
• Between 18 months and 2 years
• More than 2 years

Section II. About the English-only rule in the College

Q8 Do you know about the English-only rule in the College?
• Yes
• No

Q9 Have you ever got a reward card for speaking English in the College?
• Yes
• No

Q10 Have you ever got a penalty for speaking your own language in the College?
• Yes
• No

Q11 What is your opinion about the English-only rule in the College?

Move the slider (1=IT'S A VERY BAD IDEA to 10 =IT'S A VERY GOOD IDEA)

1 2 3 4 5 7 8 9 10
References

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**Section III. About your experience with the English-only rule in the College**

Q12 How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

*Please read the statements carefully and select one answer per statement.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly disagree (1)</th>
<th>Disagree a little (2)</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree (3)</th>
<th>Agree a little (4)</th>
<th>Strongly agree (5)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The English-only rule is important for learning English successfully</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The English-only rule increases my motivation to learn English</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I speak only English in the College so I don’t get in trouble</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When I first started in the College, it was difficult to speak only English</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The English-only rule helps me learn English in class</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The English-only rule helps me practise English when I’m not in class</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The English-only rule helps me make friends from other countries</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The English-only rule prepares me for using English outside the school</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can follow class instructions in English</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is easy to communicate with my teacher in English</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is easy to communicate with other students in English</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Section IV. About your own language

Q13 How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Please read the statements carefully and select one answer per statement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly disagree (1)</th>
<th>Disagree a little (2)</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree (3)</th>
<th>Agree a little (4)</th>
<th>Strongly agree (5)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I want to use my language while I'm in Australia</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can learn English without using my own language</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It should be ok to use my language during break time in the College</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel stressed when someone tells me not to use my language in the College</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I encourage other students to speak English only in the College</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I want to learn to speak English like a native speaker</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The College’s teachers must be strict about the English-only rule in class</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q14 It should be ok to use my language in class when... (Choose all that apply)

- I don’t understand the task
- I don’t know some new words or phrases
- I need help from other students
- I want to compare English to my own language
- I don’t need my own language in class
- Other (Please specify)

Section V. Final questions

Q15 (optional) Write a personal example or a story about your experience with the English-only rule in the College.

Q16 (optional) Do you have anything else to say?
From feedback to backfeed: 
Increasing student engagement with feedback

Bianka Malecka
UNSW Global

Developing strategies to encourage students to backfeed, i.e., engage in the process of mindful reflection and analysis of the meaning of feedback seems to be a genuine need to fast-track their learning. Technology has a vital role to play in this process as it makes backfeed accessible to staff and students so that a longer-term picture of learning can emerge. Using Learning Management Systems (LMS), online platforms and collaborative technologies to provide feedback and backfeed makes it more dialogic and gives students a voice in the process of feedback communication, a voice that they may be deprived of when not given an opportunity to interact with feedback. This paper explains the concept of backfeed and provides examples of strategies to integrate it in the classroom.

Introduction
Most ELICOS centres have a systematic approach to providing feedback to students (NEAS 2018), in line with best practice in higher education, and many utilise evaluation forms addressing key task criteria, provide synchronous and asynchronous feedback through Learning Management Systems (LMS) and facilitate self and peer feedback. While the value of timely feedback, whether formative, summative, corrective, confirming, written or oral is no longer contested, there seems to be insufficient focus on what happens after students receive feedback. After all, feedback needs to demonstrate effects and its utility ultimately depends on whether students engage with it. This is not often the case, however. In his study on teacher written feedback to ESL thesis writers, Bitchener (2018) reports that students often struggle with understanding teachers’ intentions and find feedback difficult to interpret. The emotional responses to feedback, such as disappointment, surprise and possible rejection of feedback due to receiving too many comments and/or harsh criticism, have also been reported (Mahfoodh, 2017). My classroom observations also seem to suggest that feedback is often misunderstood, skim-read or simply ignored. It seems, therefore, that there is a need to reconceive feedback in order to ensure
that it proves useful to students and initiates further action. This paper, therefore, aims to explain the concept of ‘backfeed’, interpreted as a process of reflection on the meaning of feedback, and present strategies to enhance student engagement with teacher feedback.

Background

In November 2017 I undertook an action research project to investigate students’ preferred mode of feedback to written tasks. As a UEEC (University English Entry Course) writing teacher (responsible for 8 hours of weekly writing lessons including Writing Skills, Writing Practice, Writing Workshops and Consultations), this research focus seemed particularly pertinent. Since writing teachers produce an average of 216 feedback reports in 10 weeks, ensuring that these reports contain relevant information to facilitate student growth and improvement is crucial. Another factor worth investigation is ensuring teachers’ time spent typing reports is worthwhile. In order to collect responses from a large cohort of students, I invited all UEEC students (rather than limiting the numbers to my class only) to respond to a Moodle survey of their experiences with written feedback. I also held informal interviews with fellow writing teachers to investigate their idiosyncratic approaches to feedback as well as modifications of existing evaluation forms. Altogether, data collection included 77 responses from students enrolled in UEEC XX (20 weeks) and UEEC XV (15 weeks) courses and six teacher interviews (for a visual summary of this action research, see Appendix A).

Among the findings from this investigation, a number are worth noting here. When asked about the type of feedback received most often, the majority of students mentioned three forms of feedback: criteria-based evaluation forms; teacher’s comments on paper as well as on Moodle; and grades with comments. This is consistent with UEEC curriculum requirements. As for suggested improvements to feedback, seven students suggested marking strengths as well as weaknesses while 10 students mentioned providing increased opportunities for one-on-one oral feedback. These responses reflect some interesting points that have been raised in recent literature on feedback. The first one is around increasing student motivation and self-esteem through positive encouragement. Positive feedback should be as specific and clear as any negative feedback provided. Hyland and Hyland (2001) emphasise that positive comments need to be sincere and closely related to actual text features since oftentimes L2 learners dismiss them as mitigation devices intended to minimise the impact of criticisms. The second point relates to communication of, and around, feedback and, more specifically, the choice of face-to-face forum to provide an opportunity for a direct dialogue between teachers and students (Anderson, 2014).
In terms of students’ perception of the most valuable essay feedback, 34% of respondents wanted teachers to correct their errors, 24% would like to have their errors underlined, 16% valued teacher’s use of error correction code (intended to identify the type of error, without correcting it) and only 5% viewed evaluation sheets as helpful in their progress. These answers were a catalyst to questioning my current marking practice – I have been a believer in correction code and an advocate of descriptive evaluation sheets and these two forms of feedback were at the bottom of students’ preferences. Action research reflection, however, does not always confirm one’s teaching practice but sometimes may challenge it and dealing with negative reactions may trigger new ideas (Burns, 2009). The discrepancy between what type of feedback is beneficial for our students and what they value can stem from a myriad of factors. It may be a result of previous learning experiences where students were not given enough opportunities to receive feedback; feedback may be seen as a commentary on both the work and the person who produced that work and interpreted as posing a threat to individual’s sense of competence and self-esteem (Anderson 2014); perhaps the metalanguage used in comments or correction code is not understood as not enough preparation was done prior to students receiving feedback. There might also be sociocultural factors involved such as alleged reticence or passivity of some groups of learners. Having reflected on these possible explanations in relation to students in my own class, I was inclined to believe that the reason why they have not appreciated my feedback to the extent I wanted them to was because they were not sufficiently involved in interpreting and working with it. In other words, it seemed that feedback was a stand-alone practice, not incorporated into the wider system of activities. This is how I arrived at **backfeed**.

**Backfeed**

Backfeed is understood as a process of reflection and analysis of the meaning of feedback. Whether or not a feedback comment acts effectively as a thinking device is likely to depend not simply on the form in which it is cast, but also on the work that students are expected to achieve with this feedback (Anderson, 2014). Backfeed, therefore, involves teacher’s formulation of tasks specific to feedback analysis and student’s active involvement in those tasks. The tasks are intended to show correlation between student’s work and teacher’s comments, alert students to deficiencies and gaps in their work and engage them in critical thinking. It is believed that this reflection is beneficial in learning transfer. Backfeed relates to the concept of feedback literacy (Sutton, 2012) in that it seeks to create opportunities to enable student uptake of feedback. The focus on learning through backfeed is also important from a theoretical perspective. When external feedback is provided, it never operates alone but adds to learner-generated feedback, at times confirming, supplementing or
conflicting with it (Nicol, Thomson & Breslin, 2014). Engaging students in backfeed tasks might develop their ability to cope with discrepancies between external and internal feedback and, with time, reduce the need for external feedback. This, in turn, might develop students’ capacity to make evaluative judgement, which is defined as ‘the capability to make decisions about the quality of work of self and others’ (Tai, Ajjawi, Boud, Dawson & Panadero, 2017). Another important aspect of backfeed centres around the dialogic and participatory notions of feedback (Dawson, Henderson, Mahoney, Phillips, Ryan, Boud & Molloy, 2019). Such feedback can be facilitated when there are ample opportunities for interaction around learning. Backfeed refocuses one-way interaction towards dialogue which may be embedded within the curriculum.

As most ELICOS courses are delivered in a digital environment, it seems only natural to integrate backfeed into this space. Digital environments offers benefits for both students and teachers. For students, backfeed through LMS can offer management of self- and peer-feedback, more opportunities for practice and quick access to remedial tasks while for teachers it can offer instant records of prior feedback data and student responses to it. While this paper does not focus on technology, it will provide some ideas on the tools that may be used to introduce backfeed.

**Examples of backfeed tasks**

There are many backfeed activities that can increase students’ engagement with feedback. The two tasks introduced below were used with students studying UEEC XX, XV and X courses between March and June 2018. As this was the first attempt at incorporating backfeed into my classroom, each task was modified a few times and only the final versions are included in this paper.

**Consultation log (Appendix B)**

UEEC students attend weekly (UEEC XX and XV) or fortnightly (UEEC X) one-on-one consultations with their teacher to discuss their weekly tasks and receive oral paper feedback. Teachers may use editorial, corrective or facilitative feedback and often clarify any problematic points with students. This is a valuable time to get more insight into students’ thinking processes and provide guidance if necessary. Consultations also offer an opportunity for students to initiate a dialogue about their writing issues. What I thought was lacking from these meetings was evidence that students read and reflected on the feedback and would be held accountable for it.

A consultation log allows the teacher and student to identify any problematic areas and provides space for students’ action and reflection. It is a tool to monitor and regulate students’ actions toward the learning goals and, in Hattie and Timperley’s terminology, is an example of self-regulation which involves ‘self-generated thoughts.
and actions that are planned cyclically’ (Hattie & Timperley, 2007). Students are advised to bring the log the following week to discuss any points that may have arisen during their independent study. Some UEEC teachers have incorporated a consultation log and one has commented that ‘it keeps the feedback manageable, trackable and gives students a chance to go home, reflect and note any questions.’ Other teachers have pointed out that an electronic consultation log might be more helpful as sometimes students forget to bring the soft copy to their session. This is a valid point and I intend to liaise with the TELT (Technology Enhanced Learning and Teaching) unit at my centre to explore the best software for this.

When asked about the value of a consultation log, students responded that it helps them to avoid making the same mistakes the following week (‘I know what I should do in the next week’). Before each weekly writing task, I would ask the students to look at the problems identified in the previous week, for example incomplete sentences, informal register etc. and then proofread their writing with these problems in mind. During consultations, we would read the text together and I would often notice that last week’s problem areas would not recur but instead new mistakes would appear.

**Revision memos (Appendix C)**

In my teaching context, I have often noted that students who consistently redraft their weekly writing tasks based on feedback often show improvement in their writing. However, I have never required any self-reflection from students but merely asked for reworked drafts, believing that the process of rewriting automatically evokes critical thinking and reflection. The frequency of the same errors in both drafts and later in the same text types, e.g., argument or discussion essays, led me to question the effectiveness of rewriting alone. Even though there are many reasons for the recurrence of errors, one explanation may be insufficient engagement with teacher’s feedback on the first draft. Hence, another backfeed task – revision memos.

When asked to reflect on their revisions, students are more likely to make thoughtful choices and recognise that their papers improve in the process. Revision memos are written documents student writers complete after they revise a piece of writing. Assigning revision memos before submitting the second draft is an attempt to help students look more critically at their work and recognise their strengths and weaknesses. It has been noted that self-reflective writing heightens students’ awareness not only of what they learn but also how they learn (Bardine & Fulton, 2008). This backfeed task ultimately provides a new form of feedback for students and teachers by allowing teachers to gauge each individual student’s writing process and revision strategies.
Students were asked to submit a short revision memo together with the second draft of their text. They were required to respond to the feedback from the first draft and relate the changes made. Both revision memos and the second drafts were posted on a discussion board in Moodle. In order to accurately assess the effectiveness of revision memos in improving students’ engagement with feedback, more formal research needs to be conducted. However, introducing this backfeed task to my students has been beneficial in teaching them about the process approach of writing and also ensured that the feedback provided was internalised.

**Some thoughts on technology**

As most ELICOS colleges use different Learning Management Systems, there can be many ways of introducing backfeed, such as through Moodle, Blackboard or Canvas. Many teachers use Google Docs for rewrites and this platform is very useful for data sharing. Recently, the university has introduced the Student Relationship Engagement System (SRES) to monitor students’ writing progress. The SRES, which has been developed at the University of Sydney, is a web-based software that allows teachers to collect and analyse student data. The system gives flexibility to coordinators in terms of which data is most relevant for gauging student success so, for our purposes, students were scanning their weekly tasks, accessing teacher’s evaluation and receiving coloured progress bars. There is a possibility of integrating backfeed tasks into the SRES but since this has been a pilot project, this has not yet been tested.

**Conclusion**

This paper has aimed to explain how backfeed can have the potential to increase students’ engagement with feedback. Assigning backfeed tasks encourages students to focus on feedback comments, reassess their strengths and weaknesses and reflect on progress. It allows the teacher to monitor students’ growth and provide direction in further learning. Technology has an important role in supporting effective backfeed practice since it offers students a level of flexibility in accessing and archiving feedback. The two backfeed tasks discussed here – consultation logs and revision memos – are relatively easy to implement and do not require excessive teacher’s input. As with all diagnostic tasks, regular monitoring of students’ engagement with backfeed tasks is advisable. When integrated into the curriculum, backfeed can help create feedback-literate students striving for continuous improvement (Carless & Boud, 2018) and prepared for the processes of effective lifelong learning.
References


Bianka Malecka currently teaches a Direct Entry course at UNSW Global in Sydney and is a PhD student at the Centre for Research in Assessment and Digital Learning (CRADLE) at Deakin University, Melbourne. She has been an English language instructor in tertiary institutions since 1997, having taught Direct Entry programs, Cambridge Exam preparation courses and EAP.

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SOFTF, SOCM OR AWCM?
IN SEARCH OF A PERFECT FEEDBACK MODE
IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING

ESSAY
FEEDBACK

SYNCHRONOUS
Face to Face (FTF)
• weekly 1:1 consultations with the writing teacher
• peer/ group feedback of in-class writing tasks
Computer Mediated (CM)
• peer/ teacher online chat (WeChat, socrative)
• self-correction through automated writing evaluation software (e.g. MY Access!, Cambridge English Write and Improve)
• real time audio or video chat (Skype)

ASYNCHRONOUS
Face to Face (FTF)
• teacher corrective and formative feedback (correction code, teacher corrections with comments, comments, rubrics, grade)
• peer/group feedback during Writing Workshop
Computer Mediated (CM)
• recorded audio or video feedback (e.g. SoundCloud, iPhone camera)
• online peer/teacher comments and corrections through Moodle, Wiki, Padlet, GoogleDocs

STUDENTS’ PERCEPTION OF THE MOST VALUABLE ESSAY FEEDBACK

- TEACHER CORRECTS MY ERRORS 34%
- TEACHER UNDERLINES MY ERRORS 26%
- TEACHER GIVES ME A GRADE 19%
- TEACHER USES CORRECTION CODE 16%
- TEACHER COMPLETES AN EVALUATION SHEET 5%

BIANKA MALECKA
UNSW Institute of Languages
### APPENDIX B: CONSULTATION LOG

**UEEC XX 12**
Consultations Log
Name: _________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 2</th>
<th>Problem areas</th>
<th>Action taken</th>
<th>Questions?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Avoid repetition <em>(use synonyms)</em></td>
<td>• Review grammar books from library.</td>
<td>• English logical thinking about writing skill.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Subject - Verb agreement</td>
<td>• Read and learn some academic words.</td>
<td>• Correct academic words.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Do not use “meanwhile”</td>
<td>• Review do not use “meanwhile”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Too many sentences <em>(limit to 2 clauses)</em></td>
<td>• Review do not use long sentences, reading but I am OK.</td>
<td>How to use “—” hyperlink.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Spelling of “cannot”</td>
<td>• Review use “cannot”.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**APPENDIX C: EXAMPLE OF A REVISION MEMO**
COLLEGE ADMINISTRATION

Administration software for Language and Vocational Programs

- Admissions
- Agent Management
- Classing
- CRM
- Assessment & Results
- Reports & Statistics
- Integrated Financials
- Marketing Analysis
- Accommodation Arrangement
- Integrated Email
- Airport Transfers
- Student Portal
- Bulk SMS Messages
- CRICOS, AVETMISS & USI
- Teacher Portal
- Student Surveys

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Mission: ENGAGE!

Gamifying goals to launch student engagement beyond the classroom

CEARA McMANUS & HENNO KOTZÉ

Introduction
Ask any teacher what their biggest challenges in the classroom are and, inevitably, they will say keeping their students motivated and engaged in their learning. Many ELICOS teachers in Australia, who often teach on intensive Direct Entry pathways programs, struggle to keep their students motivated in class and engaged with the world outside the classroom. Deci and Ryan’s seminal Self-Determination Theory (SDT) states that ‘conditions supporting the individual’s experience of autonomy, competence, and relatedness are argued to foster the most volitional and high-quality forms of motivation and engagement for activities, including enhanced performance, persistence, and creativity’ (2019). Thus, you could argue that without autonomy, competence, and relatedness, low levels of motivation and engagement persist. It follows that if you can show students that what they do in class is related to the outside world (i.e., the benefit of using English outside the classroom walls), give them autonomy in choosing how they ‘connect’ their language learning with the various communities surrounding them, and tap into their competencies to help achieve this, it would foster student engagement and lead to greater motivation and enhanced language learning performance and persistence.
We conducted an action research (AR) classroom project whereby we turned students’ goals into a gamified activity to see if that would boost student engagement (and, hence, motivation and performance). This article will outline the background, design and impact of the project, and provide some tips or implementing similar student engagement interventions in any classroom.

**Key terms in the project**

**Gamification**

Gamification refers to employing elements of Game Theory and game design thinking to non-game applications to encourage participation and increase performance. In the EFL/ESL context, this refers to imbuing activities with friendly competition and game elements such as points, teams, and leaderboards. Various studies have shown that the use of games and competitions encourages students’ desire to improve and fosters strong motivation, boosting student performance in given tasks (for example, Burguillo, 2010; Dickey, 2011; Harris & Reid, 2005).

**Goal-setting**

Goal-setting, for the purpose of this project, was based on research into communicating goals and expectations as a way of improving motivation and outcomes in ELICOS (see McManus, 2015).

**Student engagement**

In this AR project, student engagement included the following features and activities:

- using English outside the classroom (with classmates or others)
- getting involved in different communities (on campus or beyond)
- connecting the language and topics from their English classes to the ‘outside world’, i.e., noticing language in use, or finding examples in the news, on public transport, in the supermarket, etc.
- bringing examples of language used outside the classroom back into the class for discussion and review.

**Tools used in the project design**

**Goal-setting posters**

As part of the initial goal-setting activity, we used two posters: ‘Aussie Goals’ and ‘English Goals’. Students listed the goals they wanted achieve within the given time period (in this case, three weeks) on these posters. Examples of Aussie goals included eating crocodile, going scuba-diving, going to a music concert, etc., and English goals included activities such as reading one graded reader or news article per week, watching one movie in English, joining a conversation club, etc.
**GooseChase**

To gamify the experience and to assist students in achieving their goals, we used GooseChase (http://www.goosechase.com/edu), a digital scavenger hunt platform and app. GooseChase allows game creators to design tailored scavenger hunts with ‘missions’ (i.e., goals) which participants need to complete within a given time limit. Each mission is allocated a set number of points based on its difficulty and evidence is submitted via an in-app GPS check-in at a location, via text input, or through a video/photo submission. Games can be set up for individuals or for teams. GooseChase combines various gamified elements such as a leaderboard, in-game messaging, points, and teams, resulting in a highly engaging and collaborative experience.

**Other options**

We also experimented with Padlet (www.padlet.com), Flipgrid (www.flipgrid.com) and paper-based board games – all of which include game elements that can motivate students to achieve their goals and engage with English outside the classroom. For further examples and more details of alternative tools, refer to the English Australia webinar on this project (Kotzé & McManus, 2019).

**Project protocol**

**Scaffold**

Before setting goals, have an explicit conversation with your class about motivation, engagement, community involvement and SMART goal-setting. Be explicit about what these are, why they are important, and how they can lead to improved performance. Explicit scaffolding of the rationale for the game is essential for the uptake of the project.

**Set goals**

Do a goal-setting activity. Goals need to be SMART (Doran, 1981) so they can be turned into missions. Thus, make sure your students understand how to set SMART goals. Use posters that require students to set ‘English Goals’ for their language skills, and ‘Aussie Goals’ for things they can only achieve while in Australia (see above). Put the posters on the wall and refer to them often.

**Create missions**

The gamified activity you create should include not only the student-set ‘English’ and ‘Aussie’ goals but also teacher-set goals. Teacher-set goals should connect classroom language and topics to the outside world, showing students how the two are related. For example, if you are studying fashion in class, set a mission for students to interview locals about their fashion tastes and habits. You could use any of the tools mentioned above to gamify them. With GooseChase, each mission
takes around 2-5 minutes to create, but once made, they go into the ‘Mission Bank’ for use in future games.

**Check in and share evidence**

Talk about the goals with your class regularly. Dedicate some class time to discuss the evidence of the goals they have achieved, such as photos, videos, records of conversations or realia, as well as looking at the leaderboard, if applicable.

**Reflect**

Include at least one form of reflection on learning. This could take the form of a poster, a short video, a letter to the teacher, or a survey.

**Impact**

In our reflection survey, the feedback was overwhelmingly positive regarding gamifying goals to boost student confidence to engage in English beyond the classroom as can be seen by these responses to the question *Which missions set by your teachers did you enjoy and why?*

‘I think maybe communicate with local and do a team challenge with my weekly team. This may make me braver and exercise speaking and have more communication with my classmate.’

‘Talking to a native speaker was a good challenge I think. At the beginning, I had a little shy. But I tried to talk with them. It really help me to practise spoken English.’

‘[My teacher] ask us to do different challenges every week. I feel really proud and confident after I finish it.’

**Top tips for gamifying goals**

If you would like to try this out in your own class, and keep the following tips in mind:

- designing games with varied missions increases engagement. Some students might be more study-driven and some might be more culture-driven; therefore, guide them towards setting a variety of goals, and try to include missions which are relevant in terms of time and distance. For instance, base a mission around a festival, like Halloween, or a campus/city event.

- missions should be designed on a spectrum of difficulty, with some being quite easy to achieve to encourage initial buy-in from all participants.

- missions should be designed with the evidence in mind. Consider which evidence will be most appropriate for each goal (e.g., a photo, GPS check-in, a text submission).
• don’t be discouraged if not all students wish to participate fully; others will require little or no persuasion as they are intrinsically motivated. Gamification (leaderboard, missions, points, etc.) will boost engagement and encourage reticent students to participate more.

• there need to be plenty of free activities to ensure equity.

• some students are extrinsically motivated by a reward or incentive, but this is not generally the case, so don’t feel like you need a prize for ‘the winner’.

**Final thought**

If you give your students a certain level of autonomy (let them set their goals), tap into their competencies (their tech-savviness and English skills) and relate their missions to the outside world by connecting these with what’s happening in class, they will become more motivated to engage with English and in English. Not only will this positively impact their language performance but also foster a feeling of success and confidence about interacting with people in English outside of the classroom.

**References**


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Intercultural activities for EAP in Australia

THUY DINH

English proficiency and intercultural competence (IC) significantly impact international students’ academic success, psychological well-being and study/life satisfaction (Young, Sercombe, Sachdev, Naeb & Schartner, 2013). IC, however, has been under-explored in EAP programs which aim to foster the literacy and communicative skills required in higher education and daily communication in host countries (Douglas & Rosvold, 2018).

My experience as an ELICOS teacher and learning skills advisor shows that students sometimes come for consultations without knowing what to ask, how to phrase their questions or how to practise politeness strategies. This is an example of a lack of intercultural competence. Miscommunication may emerge in and out of class as a consequence of being unaware of cultural differences and communication strategies across contexts. It therefore may lead to students’ dissatisfaction and a negative attitude towards the host education and culture.

This article suggests that intercultural awareness and communication strategies be implemented and addressed in EAP classes as an integral part of the academic success of overseas students. Based on the theoretical frameworks of intercultural communicative competence (see Byram, 1997) and my own experience, I would like to share the following activities that have been positively evaluated by my colleagues and students.

Activity 1: Conversation analysis

This activity aims to expose students to various possible scenarios between people of different backgrounds and roles in their immediate contexts. Some possible scenarios can be between international students and counsellors, academic staff, librarians, or other students (i.e., academic contexts) or between international students and shop assistants, bank tellers or host family members (i.e., everyday or social contexts). The activity encourages their analysis, interpretation, and reflection.

Students are given conversations with clear contextual information regarding who is conversing with whom in which circumstance. Resources include conversations available in coursebooks, conversation analysis research data, and the real experiences or observations of teachers and students. They work in groups and
analyse the conversations in various ways, for example: whether they illustrate failed or successful intercultural communication, what issues of communication are highlighted in the conversations, whether they have had similar experiences and how they would improve the conversations.

Example:

This is a conversation between a learning skills advisor (LSA) and an international student at a university library in Melbourne in an individual consultation. The student came to ask for support for her essay.

**LSA:** I think your essay needs some improvement.

**Student:** Why?

**LSA:** As you see, there is no topic sentence and evidence to support your argument. Don’t you agree?

**Student:** No.

**LSA:** Ok let me clarify . . .

**Student:** I don’t understand.

- Do you think the student is being polite/impolite? Why?
- The student uses short responses such as ‘Why?’ and ‘No.’ Why do you think this is the case?
- Have you ever been in a similar situation in which you provided short responses or received short responses? Why was it the case? Can you give an example?
- Do you think this is an example of successful communication? If not, how would you repair it?

My students’ feedback suggests that this type of activity provokes numerous discussions and prepares them for similar scenarios in their real life. It also raises their awareness of politeness strategies and encourages them to reflect on their performance and modify their communication strategies in future intercultural situations.

**Activity 2: Inter-cohort dialogue**

This activity attempts to connect alumni and current students in my class. I organise some sessions in which some of my past students who did well in their studies are invited to come and talk about how their journey has been through ELICOS, the
transition to university, and their university life in general. Students are then divided into different groups and each group discusses with an alumnus about a particular topic, such as life at university, joining different clubs to grow academically and culturally, and making friends in Australia.

Both alumni and current students find it very helpful and inspiring. The alumni have a platform to share their experiences and the current students have a chance to learn from experienced students. This activity also provides an opportunity for authentic communication in English. Students practise asking questions, clarifying their points, asking for clarification, giving examples and expressing their viewpoints. Another advantage is reinforcing the information I provide in class, as they see the same points being made by experienced students.

**Activity 3: Lingua-scape portfolio**

This activity aims to raise students’ awareness of the sociolinguistic landscapes of Australia with Australian English, other varieties of English and other languages in signs, posters, banners, and daily communication.

Students are asked to take photos of the signs, posters or banners and take note of words and expressions that are new to them, reflective of the multilingualism and multiculturalism of Australia, and useful for their communication with different speakers in Australia.

They then make portfolios, share them with their classmates and present them in class each week or in the middle and at the end of the course. Afterwards, they have a discussion on what they find interesting and draw out implications for their communication in a multicultural context.

Some interesting examples of lexical innovations my students came across in the street, in restaurants and on their campuses include *sushi burger, showrooming, bromance, ancora imparo* (which is originally an Italian expression meaning ‘Yet, I’m learning’ in the Monash logo) and expressions that are salient in communication in Australia such as ‘*How are you going?’ ‘How have you been?’ and ‘Cheers*’. They also discussed how these examples helped sharpen their sensitivity to linguistic creativity and multilingualism and enhance the employment of various strategies such as asking for clarification. One student reflected positively that without this activity, she would not have learned to pay attention to linguistic expressions evident in signs, logos and banners, such as the *ancora imparo* at Monash which is present across campuses but is not necessarily understood by international students. This activity in general has helped them to reflect on the diverse use of English.
Activity 4: Cultural topic box

This activity attempts to expose students to different cultural topics by talking about and suggesting them. Students are encouraged to ‘donate’ topics to the cultural box each day, each week or whenever they feel like. They need to show their teachers their suggested topics before they put them in the box. Some example topics are home décor, Instagram, gift giving and social clubs.

So far I have collected nearly 60 topics from students and use them as a warm-up or revision activity. Each student picks one card in the box and talks with a partner, then they change topic and talk to another partner, and so on. The activity can run for 20-30 minutes depending on time and the teachers’ preference. After having talked to different classmates, the students are asked to share with the class what they think is the most interesting.

To me, it is fascinating to hear what students share. For example, on the topic of gift giving in different cultures, they shared that clocks and green hats should not be given as gifts in Chinese culture because the former represents death and the latter refers to marital infidelity. They also talked about how to receive gifts and whether to open them in front of givers in their countries compared to in Australia.

My students have said that they find this activity not only fun and interactive, but also revealing about different aspects of life. They have reported feeling more confident in discussing different topics, more enthusiastic to talk about their own culture and more inquisitive about the culture(s) of others.

Conclusion

Student feedback on these activities suggests that they help students develop better cultural awareness, a more positive attitude to and knowledge of different cultures, and facilitate reflective and communicative strategies. Such awareness, knowledge and skills will positively impact students’ academic performance and life satisfaction.

References


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When dealing with tenses in the classroom, teachers generally focus on the concept of time. When asked to teach present, past and future tenses, the idea we tend to convey is that past tense refers to the past, present tense to the present and future tense to the future. This approach is not only simplistic but also misleading. It is misleading because the present, past and future tenses can each be used to describe actions beyond the time frame they represent. It is simplistic because it implies that meaning is generalised and fixed. This is not the case as when speakers build meaning; they are influenced by the world around them.

In this article we will first outline how diversifying our approach to teaching tenses might help with the problems mentioned above. Instead of looking at tenses from the point of view of time, we can focus on tenses from the perspective of temporal, social and psychological distance. We will then suggest a lesson plan that demonstrates a practical application of such an approach.

**Tenses as distance**

**Temporal distance**

When I say, *I train on CELTA courses*, I’m describing an event that is ‘near’ to me, a daily routine. However, when I say, *I trained on a CELTA course in the US last year*, the event is ‘far’ away from my current reality. I need to transport my mind back to the moment in time when that event occurred.

**Social distance**

Consider *Pass the salt, please* vs *Would you mind passing the salt, please?* The past tense in the second sentence is being used to signal respect and politeness (Willis, 2003), while the first sentence uses an imperative (a present structure) to show directness as the speaker feels closer to the interlocutor. This reinforces the idea of present tense = near/close vs past tense = far/distant (Batstone, 1994).
However, it is important to be careful with generalisations. If a roommate you’d
been living with for several years said *I was wondering if you could be so kind as to
pick up the socks, please*, is the speaker trying to show respect and politeness or are
they being sarcastic and impolite? (Chong, 2018). As teachers, we must remember
that language is always, first and foremost, contextualised.

**Hypothetical distance**
Tenses can also be used to signal the distance between the ‘here and now world’
(present = near) and the world of imagination and dreams (past = far) (Thornbury,
2001), for instance: *If you’re late again, you’ll lose your job,* or *I wish I had more time.*

**Psychological distance**
John:  Hey what’s the name of that actor your mum used to love?
Joe:  Sam Waterston? Yeah she loves him…
John:  She would’ve loved this new show.”

In the above conversation the ‘near’ tense shows how Joe’s late mum is still part of
his current mental world; she’s still psychologically close, relevant to him.

John:  Are you still going out with that guy you work with?
Sam:  No, we broke up. He was too jealous.

Here, the ‘remote’ tense is used to show the speaker feels psychologically away from
the person being discussed. He is no longer relevant to her current mental world.

**Classroom application**
The following section outlines a lesson whose main aim was to clarify reported
speech, but it also demonstrates how the notion of psychological distance could be
clarified in the classroom.

1. **Lead-in: Set the topic of ‘gossip’**
Students discuss the following questions: What do people gossip about? Is it good
to gossip? Why? / Why not?

2. **Context/scenario setting**
Introduce the main characters appearing throughout the lesson. *Nina, a teacher at
International House (IH), invites her new colleague, Nancy, to dinner. She wants to
introduce Nancy to her colleagues and ex-colleagues: Hugh, Phil, Alex, and Lucas.*

3. **Reading task**
Students read the text about Hugh, Phil, Alex, and Lucas, and answer the questions
(see Figure 1).
There is a reason why all the characters are male and that they have the same number of years of experience. The information regarding where they live now and the number of years of teaching experience is also essential in terms of understanding the concept of psychological distance in reported speech (see Figure 2).

4. Highlighting target language

Briefly review traditional reported speech rules. Students transform examples of direct speech into reported speech by following these rules (See Figure 3).
Explicitly ask students to reflect on how odd and inaccurate the reported sentences sound when following the rules rigidly. For example, if Nina were to report Lucas’s statement using the conventional rules, the reported sentence would be *He said he had been a teacher there for 5 years*, which suggests his job there is over. However, Lucas is still a teacher at IH, which means that the present perfect tense should not change to past perfect. Similarly, the adverb ‘here’ should not change to ‘there’. Through this exercise, students start to notice the implications of psychological distance.

5. **Target language clarification (meaning, form, and pronunciation of reported speech)**

Show students a map illustrating the location of the four characters in order to review the information they previously obtained from the reading text. It is crucial for them to be fully aware of where these characters are now and whether they are still working at IH Sydney.

6. **Collaborative guided discovery task**

Students match four images with Nina’s four reported statements (see Figure 4). This checks students’ understanding of when it’s necessary to follow the rules or not. Following this task, clarify the target language explicitly by highlighting the ineffectiveness of simply following fixed rules. Ask students to consider the context and whether the characters are still part of the speaker’s (Nina’s) current mental world – whether she still feels the characters are psychologically close and relevant to her. Ask concept checking questions such as (for Sentence 3):
Is Phil still a teacher? (No)

So what tense do we need here? (Past perfect)

Where is he now? (Sydney)

Is Nina also in Sydney? (Yes)

Do we need to change the adverb? (No)

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Match the sentences (1-4) with the pictures (A-D)

1. He said he has been a teacher here for 5 years. B
2. He said he had been a teacher there for 5 years. C
3. He said he had been a teacher here for 5 years. D
4. He said he has been a teacher there for 5 years. A

Figure 4. Guided discovery sentences

7. Restricted practice

Set a similar context showing Nina’s desire to gossip about her female colleagues (see Figure 5). Students re-write a given sentence using reported speech based on four different images. Provide feedback on this task and further clarification on the notion of psychological distance. Use questions such as (for Sentence A):

Is she still a teacher? (yes)

So what tense do we need here? (Present simple)

Do we need to change now to then? (No)

Why not? (because she’s still teaching)

Is she in Sydney? (No)

Is Nina in Sydney? (Yes)

Do we need to change the adverb? (yes, here to there)
8. Less restricted practice

Having understood the concept of psychological distance through the guided discovery and restricted practice tasks, students are instructed to: *Tell a new partner about an interesting rumour involving someone you know.* The task’s objective is to encourage students to use reported speech fluently and consider context when applying the rules.

**Conclusion**

Although several of the concepts discussed on this paper are already present in published coursebooks, they only seem to appear in isolation (e.g., hypothetical distance and conditional clauses; the use of present simple in news headlines, etc.). Instead, we should make students aware of a common grammatical thread, which might enable them to formulate more useful generalisations (Batstone, 1994). This can be achieved by consistently contextualising the language being presented to them and providing sufficient practice opportunities in the classroom to help students solidify practical usage.

Raising students’ awareness of these concepts can also help them develop intercultural communication skills, which in time also helps them become more effective and efficient communicators.
Yanina Leigh has been teaching and training in the ESL field since 2000 both in Australia and overseas. Throughout her career, she has been involved in teaching, course design, and management positions. Her passion for learning languages and intercultural communication has brought her to the world of teacher training, a world she has been exploring since 2010.

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Over the past 25 years, Mark Hancock has truly been at the forefront of a wave of changes in English language teachers’ awareness of pronunciation and how to teach it. Author of *Pronunciation Games* (1995), *English Pronunciation in Use* (Cambridge University Press, 2003, republished as *English Pronunciation in Use* [Intermediate] in 2017) and now the innovative *Pron Pack 1-4* (reviewed in this issue), which won both an ELTon and an English Speaking Union prize in 2018, he offers a unique perspective on the importance of pronunciation and how it can be tackled by teachers and materials writers. As 2019 is also the year that the English Australia Action Research Program focuses on the teaching, learning and assessing of pronunciation, it seems timely to discuss his journey and some of the issues at stake in pronunciation teaching today. Enjoy!
1. *Pronunciation Games* has now been a stalwart on staffroom shelves for over 20 years! How did you come to write this book and why do you think it has remained so popular?

At the Cultura Inglesa (a chain of language schools) in Rio, I had some non-teaching hours and was asked to make some pronunciation materials. Ideas from these later evolved into *Pronunciation Games*. Pronunciation materials can easily be bitty and over-detailed – a lot of hard classroom tooth-pulling with no obvious pay-off. I think *Pronunciation Games* avoided this, making pronunciation teaching feel more accessible and fresh.

2. It has often been said that pronunciation is ‘the Cinderella of language teaching’ (Underhill, 2010), a neglected skill. Why do you think this is, and do you think attitudes have changed? Or are changing?

One reason for neglect is that pronunciation is hybrid: in part, it is a skill – along with speaking and listening, and in part a language system – along with grammar and vocabulary. This makes it hard to pin down.

Another reason for neglect is that teachers (and students) often equate pronunciation work with accent training. They perceive the purpose to be sounding more ‘native-like’. But why would you need this, in communicative terms? People can (and do) make themselves understood without sounding like a ‘native’ – indeed, many teachers are living proof of this themselves. And then, many teachers who speak English as a mother tongue may not speak the right kind of ‘native’ – the kind prescribed in the books. This is off-putting. I’ve heard teachers say things like, ‘I don’t teach pronunciation because I’m Scottish’.

I do think attitudes are changing though, with an increased tolerance of accent variation and emphasis on intelligibility as the goal. No doubt the English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) movement associated with Jennifer Jenkins has played an important role in this evolution.

3. Is it harder to create materials for some aspects of pronunciation rather than others? Which ones, and do you think this can lead to a lop-sided focus from teachers?

There is no doubt that it is easier to create materials where there is a clear and briefly expressible contrast. For example, there is a clear contrast between the vowels in *bit* and *beat*, or the stress in *protest* (n.) and *protest* (v.). Understanding contrasts in other areas of pronunciation such as intonation, however, often requires so much analysis of the context that the material can become top-heavy – too much pain for too little gain.
In coursebooks, the situation is taken to the extreme. The syllabus is crowded, and getting more so as ELT takes on board other content areas. There is almost no space set aside for pronunciation, and what little is there is obliged to fit in with the language or topic of the lesson it is embedded into. In this context, the writers will tend to grab the lowest hanging fruit, such as the -ed endings in a lesson on the simple past tense. How could this not lead to a lop-sided focus?

4. Congratulations on the awards PronPack 1–4 has won! Can you tell us about something about the thinking behind the development and organisation of these books?

I think the PronPack series updates and extends from Pronunciation Games. It updates in the sense that it is more flexible with regard to accent and more ELF-aware, plus it has audio material and online support. It extends in that Books 1 and 4 explore activity types which are not present in Pronunciation Games.

The four books in the series differ from one another not in level, but in activity type and purpose. Book 1 is mainly concerned with physical articulation while Book 2 focuses on mental understanding of patterns. Book 3 is concerned with the role of pronunciation in communication while Book 4 focuses on remembering the sound of the language. I use a mnemonic of four Ms for this: Muscle, Mind, Meaning and Memory.

5. In what other ways do you feel research on English as a Lingua Franca should inform our approach to pronunciation in the classroom? Are there certain phonemes or aspects of pronunciation that we should focus more or less on?

I think your word ‘inform’ is right. The research can’t dictate what we do because it will always be incomplete – absence of evidence is not evidence of absence. I think the most powerful thing which ELF research can do is develop and refine our intuition on what kinds of pronunciation feature are essential for intelligibility and which are markers of specific accents, and optional in terms of intelligibility. Many features of connected speech exist because of the natural laziness of the mouth, and obviously these are optional – if somebody wants to articulate more precisely, this will not make them less intelligible, but probably more in fact. This intuition is very much supported by ELF research, and the exclusion of features like weak forms from the ‘core’.

Another intuition is that the more common and widespread an accent variant, the less likely it is to be unintelligible. For instance, replacing ‘th’ sounds with alternatives such as /f/ or /t/ is so common that it must be intelligible. Switching the /l/ and /r/ sounds on the other hand is relatively restricted to specific global areas and is therefore more likely to be problematic. I think the implications of this are not so much about what
we teach, but rather how we respond to our students’ speech. I would encourage them to aim for ‘th’ but let them settle for /f/ if they prefer. On the other hand, I wouldn’t encourage them to settle for /r/ instead of /l/.

6. Teachers sometimes worry that they don’t speak the ‘right’ variety of English and lack confidence in their own oral models. Do you have any advice for teachers with these concerns?

I think this worry is linked to an outdated vision of what pronunciation teaching is for. It is only a problem if we see our job as teaching a specific accent, such as received pronunciation (RP) or General American (GA). If, on the other hand, we see our job as helping learners to become more globally intelligible, the worry evaporates: there is no evidence that RP or GA are more globally intelligible than other accents – Australian, for example. I think we should see accent-training as an instance of English for Special Purposes (ESP) – for people in the acting profession for example. If you are not teaching in this area of ESP, and if you are an intelligible speaker of English, then your own accent is a perfectly good model.

7. Teachers also sometimes fear pronunciation because they fear phonemic symbols. Can you comment on how useful or not phonemic symbols and charts may be in pronunciation teaching?

A lot of teachers confuse phonetic and phonemic symbols. Phonetic symbols like [e] represent a specific sound, phonemic symbols like /e/ on the other hand represent a range of sounds – the vowel sound in ‘pen’, whatever your accent. That’s very different in RP and New Zealand English, but still the same phonemic symbol. I think teachers would fear the symbols less if they realised how non-prescriptive they are as regards accent.

The symbols are useful because English spelling is so unreliable as a guide to pronunciation. They aren’t essential, however. You can use typical spellings instead — I include a ‘typical spellings’ version of the sound chart in PronPack, which you can download here: http://pronpack.com/resources/pronpack-sound-charts. As I think this chart demonstrates, phonemic symbols and charts are two independent things — you can have one without the other. The value of the chart is that it shows at a glance the full repertoire of phonemes and the relationships between them. As Adrian Underhill has pointed out, a chart is like a map of the territory which can help learners to orient themselves.
As regards the symbols, I think a compromise option is probably the safest – use them, but design activities in such a way that success is not dependent on your students knowing them from memory.

8. We’ve talked a lot about pronunciation – but this isn’t your only field of interest. Can you tell us about some of the other things you are working on/interested in?

I have a broad interest in topics across the range of ELT. I like to try and understand the big picture, and that has resulted in conceptual maps like the one on motivation which you can find here: http://hancockmcdonald.com/ideas/motivation-island

However, alongside pronunciation, I would highlight listening as another specific area of interest, and this is something I have been working on in partnership with Annie McDonald. We are grappling with the challenge of trying to create material which actually teaches listening, rather than just testing it, as much traditional listening material does. **Authentic Listening Resource Pack** (Delta) was the first fruit of our efforts in this area, but we feel there is more to be done yet!

9. You have collaborated extensively with Annie McDonald over the years. Can you explain a little about ‘Hancock McDonald’ and the work you do together?

Annie and I have worked in ELT for a similar length of time, often in the same places. We have complementary mindsets – it’s probably a left- and right-brained thing – which means that we can each compensate for the other’s lacks. This has proved very useful in the writing projects that we have co-authored, such as **Pen Pictures** (OUP), **English Result** (OUP) and **Authentic Listening Resource Pack** (Delta). We started our own website, http://hancockmcdonald.com, some 10 years ago, with help from my (web) designer sister, Amanda Hancock. We wanted a place to publish our articles, classroom teaching ideas and back up materials for our conference presentations. It seemed only natural that we should also use Hancock McDonald as the launch pad for our new venture into self-publishing with **PronPack 1-4**.

10. You’ve had a long career in ELT in a range of roles. What do you enjoy most about the work you do?

Learning. They say that you learn something better by teaching it. Working out how to communicate something to other people forces you to know it in more depth yourself. The same could be said for materials writing. You wrestle with a lot of difficult data and try to cook it into something digestible for teachers and their students. In the process, you start to relate to it on your own terms: you gain a deeper understanding. I like this – both the process and the result, and it is something which is common to the various ELT roles I play: teacher, materials writer, trainer and conference presenter too.
References


Mark Hancock’s first book was *Pronunciation Games* (Cambridge University Press, 1995). Since then, he has been teaching and writing materials including *English Pronunciation in Use* (Cambridge University Press, 2003, 2017) and various coursebooks. His latest books, *PronPack 1-4* (Hancock McDonald ELT) received an ELTons award. Mark also uploads free articles and materials on https://pronpack.com and https://hancockmcdonald.com/.

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The gap between academic research and classroom practice has been widely acknowledged, with practical experience often being regarded as the most important source of professional learning for most teachers. However, rather than disregard research, I think we need to go beyond the research-practice dichotomy. Research and experience can be mutually complementary, rather than exclusive, especially if research-based pedagogy is accessible to teachers and can be applied to their teaching contexts. Teachers’ context-based practical knowledge can, likewise, be used to inform and expand academic research. Richard Badger’s *Teaching and Learning the English Language: A Problem-Solving Approach* is an attempt at achieving this consolidation.

The book is intended to provide classroom teachers with inspiration and useful tools for making their tacit theories of language, language learning and language teaching explicit so as to scrutinise those theories in the light of research. To do this, Badger, drawing on the problems he himself encountered when teaching English in Malaysia, Algeria and the UK, suggests what he calls a problem-solving approach to teaching. This approach involves three stages: (i) identifying a problem; (ii) collecting information about ways of addressing the problem; and (iii) trying out possible
solutions. This approach is therefore similar to the action research approach to professional development (Burns, 2010). What makes it distinctive is its greater focus on the problems which arise in the day-to-day of teaching, rather than on a specific area which is explored in depth. The author further characterises this approach as being built around a tripartite knowledge-based framework for language teachers, comprising knowledge about language, knowledge about learners and learning, and knowledge about teachers and teaching.

The book is organised into five parts, with several chapters in each. Part I presents some basic knowledge about language and language learning as codified in most relevant theories. While different second language learning theories are covered, ranging from Krashen’s monitor model to sociocultural theories, it is cognitive theory, in which a learner’s language reflects and grows with their knowledge and experience of the world, that underpins the book as a whole.

Part II provides fundamental knowledge that every language teacher needs, including information on lesson and course planning, and assessment design. Interestingly, the author describes how his approach can be applied to classroom teaching, contrasting the traditional lesson sequence of presentation, practice and production with a three-stage problem-solving sequence. According to Badger, this problem-solving sequence is like the framework of task-based learning (Willis, 1996), comprising the pre-task, task cycle and language focus stages. However, Badger argues that ‘problem-solving sequences exist in several forms. Many teachers do not have a separate language focus stage and address language issues at various stages throughout the lesson.’ (p. 58).

Part III discusses the teaching of different elements of language, including pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary. Although there is little new information on teaching these language features, I found Chapter 11, about learning and teaching discourse, very useful as this area tends to receive inadequate attention in many language-teaching methodology works.
Part IV focuses on teaching the four language skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing, with each of these macro skills being discussed in a separate chapter. Each of these chapters centres on the strategies needed to successfully acquire each skill and is structured around answering three pertinent questions: What is involved in each skill? How do people learn each skill in English? And how can teachers teach this skill? Part V has only one short chapter on professional development, with reflection being emphasised as the best strategy for language teachers’ professional growth.

The book has four major strengths. Accessibility is its most striking feature. The research-based knowledge is presented in an easy-to-read manner. Another strength is the research-based knowledge is carefully selected. Only the latest empirical findings which are relevant and applicable to classroom practice are provided, summarised and translated into useful, practical pedagogical tips. In addition, each chapter either begins or ends with some activities designed to help teachers reflect on their teaching or to put into practice the chapter’s essential ideas. Lastly, those who are keen to gain more insights into the ideas that are presented can follow the recommendations for further reading given at the end of each chapter.

The volume would be even more useful if the following limitations could be addressed in the next edition. First, while the problem-solving approach involves three stages, there are no specific guidelines for what teachers should actually do, and how they should do it, in each of these stages. It is not clear, for example, how teachers can identify a particular problem in their teaching or how they should collect relevant information to inform their hypothetical solutions. Further, the author does not provide criteria for teachers to use to determine whether their solutions, after they have experimented in the classroom, have been effective or not.

In addition, although teachers who need to develop their assessment literacy can find some useful information in Part II Chapter 6, I was surprised that Badger focuses on standardised tests which use multiple-choice items without mentioning the knowledge and skills required for effective formative assessment, or informal assessment of learning.

Lastly, although Part V is about professional development, it provides little new information. Self-reflection is assumed to be vital for teachers, but it is not clear how reflective practice is related to the problem-solving approach. According to what is presented in the book, teachers’ experimentation with possible solutions is the final step of the sequence. So, as stated earlier, the question of how the effectiveness of the attempted solutions is evaluated through reflection remains. Without clear guidelines or well-defined criteria, teachers’ self-evaluation could be impressionistic.
and haphazard, which would hardly lead to teachers’ reconceptualisation of their practice, especially in difficult circumstances where they have limited access to research-based knowledge and where collaboration is not the norm.

That said, *Teaching and Learning the English Language: A Problem-Solving Approach* is definitely a useful addition to the second language teacher education literature. It could be used as a course book for pre-service and in-service teacher education courses and is also appropriate for independent study by individual teachers wishing to achieve a research-based development of their teaching skills.

**REFERENCES**


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Teaching English across social and cultural contexts is characterised by diverse pedagogical practices, different levels of access to technology and countless variations in the background of teachers and students. Yet due to the prevailing currents within English language teaching and assessment, commonalities can be effectively identified, especially when it comes to the teaching of the four language skills: reading, writing, listening and speaking. These four skills are commonly taught separately, though the effectiveness of this approach is frequently debated with many practitioners shifting towards an integrated approach. The edited, research-based volume, *International Perspectives on Teaching the Four Skills in ELT*, tackles these debates through a range of culturally and geographically diverse contributions. This is a much-needed intervention into pedagogical discussions surrounding the four skills as its international scope offers new approaches and insights which destabilise the dominance of Western schools and universities in ELT discussions. Discussing the aims of the book and the critiques of skill separation in favour of an integrated approach, the editors argue for treating each skill separately based on ‘practicality, accessibility and convenience for the reader’ (p. xiii). This sentiment is echoed in their introductory chapter where the editors hope ‘readers will want to dip into examples and illustrations of practice for a particular skill that they may be able to adapt to their own teaching contexts’ (pp. 3-4).

Part 1, ‘Listening’, includes contributions focusing on teacher perceptions of listening in England and Brazil, current teaching practice in China, the development of listening courses for university students in Japan, and listening instruction at a
Canadian university based in Qatar. The section is beneficial for ELT practitioners interested in recent developments in listening pedagogy and scholarship, as well as for those hoping to enrich their teaching practice with new approaches, while taking into account possible limited resources and access to technology. For example, Renandya and Hu’s chapter, ‘L2 Listening in China: An Examination of Current Practice’, analyses teachers’ lack of access to recent research, online materials and resources, and how this frames their pedagogical practice. The authors also explore some of the reasons students struggle with listening as a skill in China, such as their limited exposure to oral language due to curriculum design which privileges literacy. The authors encourage teachers to incorporate new pedagogical practices and move on from the popular comprehension-based approach to more effective methods, which focus on both the product of listening and on the process, revealing ‘how students infer meaning when the listening output is not clear or when they lack relevant prior knowledge’ (p. 45).

Part 2 of the volume is entitled ‘Speaking’ and brings in perspectives from Cameroon primary schools, Australian ELICOS courses, Canadian university EAP courses, as well as a Russian view of teaching adults through Skype. Again, the diverse contributions offer insights into current practices and provide useful advice for practitioners teaching in a range of contexts. In her engaging chapter entitled ‘Teaching Conversational English to Adult Learners via Skype: A Russian Perspective’, Kozar describes the ways in which technology has changed how speaking is being taught, particularly through synchronous videoconferencing tools, noting that students may feel more in control learning in an online environment while based in their own physical spaces. Kozar’s contribution provides useful insights into the changing nature of the teacher-student power dynamic, not only for online teachers working in such an environment, but also for practitioners who incorporate online elements into their in-class instruction.

Part 3, ‘Reading’, looks at elementary students in the Czech Republic, university students in Indonesia, an academic reading course in Hawai‘i and adult migrants in New Zealand. The varied and nuanced contributions engage with social and cultural contexts to argue for the importance of autonomy, community, literacy and critical thinking. For instance, in their chapter entitled ‘Teaching Reading to Encourage Critical Thinking and Collaborative Work’, Murtiningsih and Hapsari explore reading activities at an Indonesian university which promoted in-depth engagement and encouraged students to develop critical thinking skills using methods such as the inclusion of a popular novel, collaborative work and discussion. The authors explore the pedagogical limitations of the predominant exam-focused approach to teaching reading in Indonesia, involving answering comprehension questions about isolated
texts, with the teacher as the source of knowledge. Moreover, the authors include a range of practical activities, which may be effectively adapted to similar contexts, and discuss their pedagogical implications.

Finally, Part 4 of the volume, ‘Writing’, focuses on Israeli college students whose first language is Arabic, university students in Vietnam, and learners at a private language institute in Brazil. It also examines the use of writing portfolios in Hong Kong in the chapter ‘Promoting Self-Reflection in Writing: A Showcase Portfolio Approach’ by Lam, who notes that teaching writing is a ‘complex activity . . . [involving] knowledge of how written text is composed, effective mastery of appropriate pedagogical skills, and understanding of the principles of current approaches to writing instruction’ (p. 219). Lam’s contribution outlines clearly the pedagogical implications and formative role of using a portfolio of written work for student assessment, along with its ability to promote self-reflection. This innovative approach is useful for English language teachers invested in critical thinking, and promoting learner autonomy and creativity, while operating within a product-oriented context. Lam’s recommendations on utilising a showcase portfolio approach within contextual constraints illustrate the very basis of this volume: adaptability and practicality within and against limitations.

This collection of articles features diverse contributions, addressing a variety of contexts, learner levels and pedagogical approaches. The chapters are accessible, practical and oriented towards a broad international readership. They attest to the careful and thorough editorial efforts in assembling this important work. International
Perspectives on Teaching the Four Skills in ELT is a truly international work, which expands current debates, inspires future directions of inquiry and, therefore, will be beneficial to a range of practitioners and scholars around the world.

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Language Assessment for Classroom Teachers

LYLE BACHMAN & BARBARA DAMBÖCK

Oxford University Press, 2018

REVIEWED BY MELISSA REED

Just the word assessment may cause both you and your students some anxiety. If you wanted to test your students’ understanding of a unit of work, would you know how to go about it? What kind of rubric would you use? How could you be sure that your test was fair? What should you tell the students beforehand? Luckily, *Language Assessment for Classroom Teachers* can answer all these questions, as well as many you have not even considered yet.

This comprehensive book is based on a new way of looking at assessment. Rather than being a technical tome focusing on theory and statistics, it looks at assessment as part of the holistic process of teaching and learning. It considers new research in the field, but it is written for practising teachers, not academics. It also highlights a gap in the market as many assessment design courses focus on large-scale testing, which has different requirements to those of a teacher in their own classroom.

The book is organised into four distinct sections. The first part introduces classroom-based assessment and how it fits into the learning and teaching cycle. The second delves into more detail about approaching assessment. The key question teachers
are asked to consider before beginning the assessment process is ‘Why do I need to assess my students?’ (p. 37), with the focus being on the positive consequences that will come about because of assessment. In this section, many key concepts are introduced. As an example, when interpreting students’ assessment results, five key areas to consider are: relevance, sufficiency, meaningfulness, generalisability and impartiality. Each idea is explained and examples are given. Quizzes and summary tables at the ends of chapters offer helpful reminders of these concepts.

The third section focuses on applying the knowledge learnt in Part 2 in order to begin making assessment tasks. Chapter 9, on creating an assessment from a classroom language task, showing step-by-step modifications from examples, is particularly effective. This section also includes chapters on administration procedures and rubrics.

The fourth part of the book gives extensive examples of assessments, including details on how they were created out of classroom language tasks. Each example includes assessment justification, staged instructions, a rubric and, where applicable, photocopiable forms for recording marks. At the back of the book, there is also a glossary of helpful terms, a checklist to use before you create an assessment and suggestions for further reading. It would make most sense to read the book from front to back, as the first two sections lay the groundwork for the second half, but it would be possible to skip over sections where the content is familiar to you.

It is difficult not to like this book. It has a conversational style and is easy to read, despite the number of key terms and ideas introduced. It assumes no knowledge of assessment, only teaching, so even early career teachers will find it accessible. There is also enough depth and plenty of new material to challenge those with more knowledge or experience in this area. However, some of the quizzes are quite basic, so more experienced readers may want to bypass these.

The real strength of this book is its holistic nature. The emphasis on making assessment a positive experience for everyone, by considering how you create and deliver assessments and feedback, is such an important message. Even the chapter on the administration of tests, which could be dry, looks at how procedures can increase or decrease test anxiety. In the chapter on grading students, the authors discuss research that shows that creating a bell curve of marks (where 5% of students get an A, 15% a B and so on) promotes competition and leads some students to lose motivation. It therefore recommends that for classroom teachers, grading students according to how well they have achieved the course aims, no matter how many students receive each grade, will bring about more cooperation and harmony in the classroom. The authors circulate back to the concept of beneficial consequences in
each chapter as a baseline for a good assessment, which is a vital reminder when testing can often be divorced from teaching and learning.

I would have liked to see more discussion on assessment content and the pros and cons of using different question types, but this is a minor criticism. Overall, Language Assessment for Classroom Teachers is an exceptional book for all teachers who would like to learn more about this area. It will make a useful addition to your teaching bookshelf, whether you read it all the way through, or dip in and out as you encounter questions in your assessment creation.

Melissa Reed has over 10 years’ experience teaching and managing in the industry, most recently as Director of Studies at Kaplan Sydney. She is now undertaking her Master of Research at Macquarie University in teacher-centred professional development.

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If you would like to write a review for the English Australia Journal, please contact the Reviews Editor: reviews@englishaustralia.com.au
Perspectives
Intermediate
Advanced
DANIEL BARBER, AMANDA JEFFRIES & LEWIS LANDSFORD

National Geographic Learning, 2018

REVIEWED BY MEREDITH MACAULAY

Perspectives is the most recent TESOL collaboration between National Geographic Learning and TED Talks. I’ve been a long-term fan of both organisations. As a child, I pore through issues of National Geographic, exploring the world through its descriptive articles and fascinating images. I have also been using TED Talks with my EAP students for a number of years. They have been a first foray into authentic listening texts for many students and have proven to be a popular choice for independent listening practice, as well as a resource for up-to-date ideas. You could say, then, that I had high expectations for this coursebook series.

Perspectives is a General English coursebook, offered at four levels. Though it is designed for teenagers, this fact is not made explicit within the materials I reviewed. In addition to the student coursebook, there is a workbook for students, available in hardcopy and online, a teacher’s guide and a classroom presentation tool.

Upon seeing the title, I instantly thought of words like ‘ideas’ and ‘critical thinking’, and indeed these form the essence of the book; Perspectives was designed to help learners ‘develop an open mind, a critical eye and a clear voice in English’ (National Geographic Learning, 2019). It aims to do this by exploring different angles, or ‘perspectives’, on an idea or topic, and by giving students an opportunity to respond to a theme by speaking or writing about it. The coursebooks take an integrated-skills approach to teaching language and presenting grammar by drawing it from a text. They also incorporate exam-style task types and test-taking strategies for international exams.
All levels of the series follow the same structure and have 10 chapters, each focused on a distinct theme, such as ‘A Healthy Life’ (Advanced, Unit 9). Chapters begin by presenting the theme via discussion questions and a vocabulary exercise, with an engaging full-colour, one-page photo from the National Geographic archives serving as a prompt. Following this, there are two texts: one reading and one listening. They are accompanied by well-staged exercises, including pre-listening/reading, comprehension and reflective questions, to help students effectively explore the ideas in the text.

Grammar is drawn from each text and is fairly typical of each level. For example, the intermediate coursebook introduces and provides practice on -ed/-ing adjectives, narrative forms and reported speech; the advanced coursebook reviews and builds on concepts such as the passive and introduces tricky grammatical forms like cleft sentences and inversion. Pronunciation is integrated into the grammar practice, which was nice to see as it aids students in using the target structures in their speaking. I found this section on par with other quality General English books.

The third major text in each chapter is the TED Talk. I was curious to see how each of these was exploited, particularly for lower proficiency levels. Basically, the authors have followed the principle of adapt the task, not the text, when using authentic materials. The TED Talk is introduced with a two-page spread including a photo of the speaker and a thoughtful quote from the talk to respond to. ‘Authentic Listening Skills’, focuses on strategies speakers might use to attract the audience’s attention or organise a talk. As expected, there are personalisation and prediction activities, comprehension activities which focus on different sections of the talk, and reflection questions responding to the theme. There is also a task which focuses on vocabulary in context and then provides extra practice. The TED Talk video materials can be accessed by both students and teachers for free. They include the full-length TED Talk, a version with extra material about the speaker and a version broken into
parts with extra gist questions. A DVD for classroom use is also available for purchase.

Chapters culminate with practice of productive skills. The Speaking section again exploits the theme and teaches functional language, drawing it from yet another listening. In terms of the Writing section, each chapter features a different written genre, including stories, reviews, essays, e-mails, proposals and social media updates. The task is scaffolded through a number of exercises, including analysis of a model, found in the ‘Writing Bank’ in the back of the book. This section of each chapter, to me, seemed to be a real nod to the Cambridge exams and would appeal to teachers with students hoping to pass the B2 First or C1 Advanced exams.

So how did Perspectives fare in terms of what I had expected? Quite well. Not surprisingly, I found the texts extremely engaging and I believe students will as well. Though the themes are typical of English coursebooks, they do take an unexpected turn. ‘Enjoy the Ride’, a jazzed up title referring to travel (Intermediate, Unit 2), features conversations about unusual journeys to school by international students, an article about urbexers (i.e., urban explorers), a grammar exercise introducing the concept of freeganism, and an interesting TED Talk about ‘happy maps’, which guide people from A to B via the most beautiful and interesting routes. Nearly every page has an evocative colour photo, supporting the ideas in the texts and inviting discussion. The use of real-world stories is effective and students are exposed to viewpoints from a global perspective, as well as accents from ‘native’ and ‘non-native’ speakers.

All of this content really lends itself to the critical thinking and lively communication envisioned by the authors. These are also fostered by the reflective exercises, a task called ‘Choice’, allowing students to select the task they want to do from several options, and even a specific section called ‘Critical Thinking’, which accompanies the reading texts.

Though I only had access to one chapter of the Teacher’s Guide, I found it refreshingly on-point. In addition to giving answers, there are extension activities, many clearly explained ideas for exploiting content and tips on areas such as exam preparation, grouping students and giving feedback. This makes the coursebook accessible for new and experienced teachers alike.

The only question I have about Perspectives is: which classes could it be used with? Though the audience it is pitched at (mature teenage learners of General English) may be prevalent in other countries, it is rare in Australia. However, due to its varied content, topical themes and practical activities which foster communication, I think Perspectives would really appeal to a class of young adults in a General English class.
or on study tour. It could also be dipped into by teachers looking for interesting texts or ideas to promote critical thinking, or for ready-made lessons using TED Talks. This resource is highly recommended.

**References**


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Any straw poll of IELTS teachers would almost certainly conclude that the skill the majority of IELTS students struggle with the most is writing. This is borne out by IELTS's own published data. In 2017, for example, for both the academic and general training modules, and for both male and female candidates, the average writing score was the lowest of the four skills and typically about half a band lower than the candidate's overall score (IELTS, 2018). Yet your local ESL book shop and regional library are awash with IELTS coursebooks and how-to books, in particular for IELTS writing, and a simple Google search readily produces multiple links to training websites and advice-filled blogs. But still students struggle.

Enter IELTS Simon, the brainchild of Simon Corcoran, an ex-examiner who now runs his own website and delivers IELTS preparation courses in Manchester in the UK. He posts a short update to the site every day of the week, has a video course and an e-book, and he also provides a subscription email for IELTS teachers. His objective is ‘to provide good advice about the IELTS exam, and also to help you improve your English language skills’ (Corcoran, n.d.-a).

On his website, Corcoran covers all four of the IELTS skills. The speaking, reading and listening advice is solid. Posts are typically no more than 200 words, yet each provides an essential nugget of wisdom. For example, a recent post entitled ‘IELTS Speaking: Which Part is the Most Important?’ manages, in as few as 140 words, to concisely bust some common myths that I have often heard candidates discuss, such as Part 1 of the speaking test is not important (Corcoran, 2019a).

However, when it comes to advice on writing, Corcoran inhabits a celestial realm quite by himself. He has an approach that is at once both pragmatic and (dare I say) exquisitely copiable. His ideas are clear, well structured and eminently learnable, for candidates and teachers alike.
Over several weeks, readers are led through a step-by-step process for planning and writing each of the IELTS task types. By way of example, a recent IELTS Task 2 essay series was on the topic of artificial intelligence (Corcoran, 2018). He began the series of posts by asking some general IELTS-style questions on the topic. The following week he posed an essay question and asked students to plan their response. Then Corcoran’s own plan was posted with advice that candidates should spend around 10 minutes in the actual exam producing their own versions. The next step was to produce an essay skeleton consisting of the topic sentences and thesis. This was posted the following week with advice that practising such skeletons will improve essay coherence. The next weekly post was a plan-to-paragraph entry that showed how to get from the skeleton to a five sentence body paragraph complete with arguments and examples. In the second-to-last post, a complete Band 9 model answer was delivered. (It is worth noting that all Corcoran’s writing models are at Band 9 level. Except for the purpose of error correction, what is the point of having students study lower band essays?) Finally, a list of noteworthy words, collocations and phrases that were used in the essay was posted. This entire process, which took around 6 weeks and gave students ample time to think through and follow Corcoran’s example, can be followed step-by-step on the IELTS Writing Task 2 page of the site. Multiple further examples of this process are also available.

In its layout and execution, it is difficult to overstate how elegantly simple and effective Corcoran’s advice is. Nevertheless, it has been my experience that students are somewhat loathe to do all this work. They see it as unnecessary and an exercise in time wasting, especially within the constraints of a 40 minute essay deadline. Yet, it is also my experience that the candidates who do follow Corcoran’s advice, and practise it (and practise it) until they can do it efficiently and effectively, are usually successful.

For candidates who prefer videos to reading, Corcoran has developed a number of video lessons that cover the same material as the website (Corcoran, n.d.-b). Many of these are free while others require a modest lifetime subscription – USD$9.
for individual videos, or for the complete course US$160 (General) and US$180 (Academic). Based on my viewing of the free videos, I would say that they are professionally produced and provide an excellent complement to the weekly posts. Corcoran (2019b) claims that studying these videos is a faster way to become familiar with his material than reading the website, and I would agree with that.

Many IELTS teachers lament that too many candidates seem unable to generate sufficient real content for their writing. In my experience, one of the reasons candidates resist planning their essays is that they cannot come up with ideas; they start writing and hope the content will just come. Corcoran's response to this is his e-book of ‘ideas, opinions and vocabulary’ for 24 of the most common IELTS writing topics (Corcoran, n.d.-c). Based on the free sample chapter, most students would benefit greatly from studying this. And at only £20, it is excellent value.

Despite the superiority of the website's materials, it can be rather difficult to navigate. The structure and layout is quite basic by today's standards and finding things can be a challenge. Although there are menus of all the posts organised by date and by skill type, there is so much material that keeping track of it can be a daunting task. Similarly re-finding a post that you wish to read again can be challenging. You could do what I did, and just read the entire site keeping copies of useful URLs as you go, or you could subscribe to Corcoran's teaching materials email list (£5/month for a weekly email). Each email contains a newsletter that provides a concise summary of the information that is on the website for a particular topic and some extra materials that could be used in a classroom setting.

In summary, when I teach IELTS these days, I direct candidates to IELTS Simon and suggest they acquire the e-book, subscribe to the videos, and study the writing materials. If there are better resources for IELTS writing available anywhere, I am unaware of them.

**References**


David Curtin is a teacher at Navitas, Sydney. He prefers to teach exam courses, such as Cambridge and IELTS preparation, and is intrigued by the conflict between accuracy and meaning.

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Develop EAP
A sustainable academic English skills course
https://developeap.weebly.com/
Averil Bolster & Peter Levrai, 2017

Reviewed by Nicholas Falkinder

Develop EAP, winner of the 2017 ELTons Innovation in Learner Resources award, is a freely available EAP course, which aims to help students develop the skills needed for success on degree programs at English-medium universities. The authors stress that it is a 'core' course for either pre-sessional or in-sessional classes and hence will need to be adapted to specific contexts and learner needs.

Bolster and Levrai initially created the course at the University of Macau as a 40-hour programme for all new students in their first semester of study (Bolster & Levrai, 2017). Like most EAP courses, it is designed to provide students with a general overview of the skills needed on a range of different degrees, rather than an insight into the language and tasks that appear in specific disciplines (Basturkmen & Wette, 2016). However, as the authors suggest, it could easily be supplemented by discipline-specific materials.

The course’s theme of the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals would be accessible and interesting to most students, should provoke discussion and could easily be investigated more deeply thanks to the many resources made available by the UN (Bolster & Levrai, 2017). This general topic of sustainability has also been used for units in textbooks from mainstream ELT publishers (e.g., Oxford, Cambridge, Garnet) and, until quite recently, was the central theme in the final 10-week Direct Entry programme at my own centre, where it worked well for several years.
The course materials include a 92-page booklet in PDF format, consisting of 14 units, each of which generally cover five to six pages. A strong feature of these is the use of collaborative technologies, such as Google Docs and Stormboard (a brainstorming platform for sharing source information), along with QR codes and links to a good range of useful EAP resources from Britain, America, Australia and New Zealand. From the website, teachers may also access a comprehensive set of PowerPoint slides to accompany each unit, as well as a Moodle template that can be used to set up a customisable virtual learning environment (VLE). This VLE template contains a course outline, assessment briefs and grade descriptors, as well as pre-loaded content, such as videos and discussion forums. Unfortunately, except for the first unit, no teachers’ notes or suggested answers for are provided. While the activities all seem fairly straightforward, newer teachers may need support here.

*Develop EAP* provides students with the skills they need to master many important academic literacies. Learners are guided through the development of group work skills (Unit 4) and the unpacking and planning of assignments (Unit 5) before they are introduced to research skills and the integration of sources through paraphrasing and summarising. Writing skills are developed over five units (Units 8–11 and 13) with some good coverage of academic style and vocabulary. Rather than following a genre or rhetorical approach, the course seems to be grounded in process writing as it focuses on planning, development of paragraph structure, and drafting and editing. A presentation unit draws on Bolster and Levrai’s previously published work in this area (Levrai & Bolster, 2015a; 2015b) and includes a welcome focus on both written and oral citation in academic presentations.

While some academic skills and literacies seem to be well developed in this program, there are a number of areas that, as the designers acknowledge, may need to be supplemented. The assessment tasks provided do seem to represent common ‘target language uses’ (Bachman & Palmer, 2010) of university students, by including an annotated bibliography, essays and presentations, as well as reflective tasks. However, they do not include tasks that develop or measure learners’ English language proficiency for all four macro-skills, which is often a required feature of assessment and reporting in pre-sessional EAP programs that provide a direct-entry language-proficiency pathway to university (English Australia, 2017). Another omission is listening strategies and lecture note-taking skills. While some might argue there is less need for these in our changing university learning environments (e.g., Lynch, 2011), I would argue that note-taking is still a critical skill. Finally, despite the use of sources such as the UN website (www.un.org) and the Conversation (https://theconversation.com), the claim the course could be used in any context would be better supported with the inclusion of more information on open-access materials for those working outside the university system.
Despite these potential drawbacks, this course is a welcome addition to the world of EAP. Develop EAP could not only be used on preparatory or adjunct academic English courses at English as a Medium of Instruction universities, but could also benefit less economically advantaged schools and students for whom the cost of published materials is prohibitive. For providing a free syllabus that will interest and challenge students, the authors should be commended.

References


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It comes as no surprise that *PronPack*, Mark Hancock’s set of four books of pronunciation practice activities, has won the 2018 ELTons award for Innovation in Teacher Resources. The books are truly innovative and packed with fun activities that can supplement any language lesson with effective pronunciation practice. They can be purchased as print books or e-books. This review focuses on the print versions.

The books’ design is very attractive. They have colourful covers, and when you flick through the pages for the first time, your eyes will be caught by the professional and appealing infographics and illustrations. Moreover, the ready-to-use worksheets have been laid out to be easily projected, printed or photocopied for classroom use.

Hancock follows the approach that pronunciation should be taught for intelligibility rather than 'correctness in terms of a particular accent', and that students will benefit from both production and perception tasks. He thus includes a range of activities which present pronunciation as a motor skill and also highlight the need for listening discrimination since, for example, English speakers blend sounds in connected speech (an aspect often neglected in coursebooks).

Each *PronPack* book focuses on a specific type of practice. *PronPack 1: Pronunciation Workouts* includes 13 extended drills, which focus on training students to work out their vocal articulators (the tongue, lips, jaw and vocal cords) like musicians and athletes do to exercise their muscles. *PronPack 2: Pronunciation Puzzles* appeals...
to learners with an analytical and competitive mind as it contains 12 game-like activities in the form of puzzles and mazes. *PronPack 3: Pronunciation Pairworks* offers 12 communicative activities, including information gaps and similar pair or group work tasks. *PronPack 4: Pronunciation Poems* is the musical book. It includes 18 short poems, rhymes, chants, limericks, raps and songs, which teachers can use for promoting memorable practice of English pronunciation, or as the author puts it, to ‘play-on-repeat’ (p. 5), meaning that the students will continue to practise the sounds silently as the pronunciation of the poems lingers in their heads after the activities.

Although the *PronPack* books can be used independently of one another, they also contain recommended lesson plan combinations on the introductory pages. Teachers who have access to the full set can select activities from across the collection to practise specific pronunciation features. For example, one useful recommended combination focuses on word stress and gives learners targeted practice of lexical stress using choral drills (*PronPack 1*), a discovery puzzle that shows how suffixes affect word stress (*PronPack 2*), a minimal pair discrimination game (*PronPack 3*) and a chanting and reciting activity that indicates stress patterns in longer words (*PronPack 4*).

My students and I have enjoyed many activities from across the titles. However, my favourites come from *PronPack 1*. As an articulatory approach specialist, activities which explore the sound systems of English, such as the 'PronPack Sound Chart Guided Tour' are of great interest to me. In the tour, teachers will find six versions of the *PronPack Chart*, some using phonemic symbols (e.g., Charts 1, 2, 4, 5), and others using typical spellings (e.g., Charts 3, 6). These charts also contain example words and pictures. On the charts, individual sounds are graphically displayed in two different shapes: vowels in hexagons and consonants in squares. Unlike other charts (e.g., Adrian Underhill’s Phonemic Chart), the *PronPack Chart* does not separate diphthongs from monophthongs, but integrates them into a single chart in a way that is more logical for students. Another advantage of the charts is that they have been designed not only for teachers who are cognisant of the International Phonetic Alphabet, but also for those who are less inclined to use phonemic symbols because of contextual restrictions, such as courses with continuous enrolments (e.g., General English), classes of young learners, or classes with students who use a non-Roman script and may find learning yet another ‘alphabet’ a challenge.

Another positive feature of *PronPack 1* is that the articulatory-based activities have been written in a language that is accessible to teachers with any level of classroom experience. They also come with useful diagrams, articulatory instructions and explanations, which help teachers to become more aware of their own articulators and to increase their repertoire of coaching techniques for appropriate pronunciation.
postures. ‘Stop Consonant Workout’, for instance, helps learners work on articulations such as stops, fricatives, and voiced and unvoiced consonants, and offers teachers good examples of intelligible classroom language, such as ‘there is a small puff of air from the mouth’, ‘the tongue tip touches the back of the top gum’, ‘the air comes out of the nose’ and ‘there is no vibration in the throat’ (p. 41).

*PronPack 3* was also a useful resource for my teaching. Although its exercises mainly emphasise the role of listening, the activities are engaging and helpfully highlight to students the importance of accurate pronunciation for clear meaning. Suprasegmental sounds (e.g., stress and intonation) are essential to intelligibility, so activities such as ‘Eye Witness’, ‘Response Questions’ and ‘Contrastive Shapes’, which deal with tonic stress (the strongest syllable in an intonation unit), offer teachers a starting point for giving students practice of accurately placing stress with different intentions (e.g., to express given and new, or contrastive information).

As a set, the books would be useful in any EFL and ESL teaching context. While the audio files use primarily a General British accent, this is not a problem, since the books clearly indicate that teachers are free to model pronunciation themselves. One point to consider, however, is a logistical issue for people using the print versions of the books. Although a support website with extra resources (e.g., printer-friendly PDF files of the activity worksheets, slides for presentations, downloadable MP3 files, and updated and additional materials) is available, the access to these resources can sometimes be time-consuming. To download and use the audio files in class, for example, teachers must log on to the website (www.pronpack.com), which can be a problem when the internet is not available. As antiquated as it may seem, the option of a portable CD could make the books more user-friendly.

In conclusion, *PronPack* is a perfect example of quality self-published supplementary
material for teachers of English. Each book works well as a stand-alone resource or in conjunction with the others. For many teachers around the world, class time dedicated to pronunciation is often scarce. As such, PronPack comes with creative and pedagogically sound activities, which can equip teachers with background information on pronunciation points, as well as step-by-step procedural notes which can make the teaching of pronunciation more of an integral part of their teaching practice.

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When I first encountered the discipline of Second Language Acquisition (SLA), I had little knowledge of the theories, principles and hypotheses related to this ‘broad and constantly expanding field of research’ (p. 1). I was intrigued by the theories of SLA as I was both a student of Japanese and a teacher of English at that time. However, despite my interest, I didn’t see any correlation between the theories I was studying and my teaching practice. I would have benefited from Second Language Acquisition in Action by Andrea Nava and Luciana Pedrazzini, which has been written to raise awareness of the key findings of SLA research, to make SLA theories relevant and practical, and to challenge teachers to think differently about language learning and to experiment with new ideas.

The authors of Second Language Acquisition in Action have selected eight SLA theories which they feel could help teachers with aspects of classroom practice that they may find problematic. Chapter 1, ‘Form, Meaning and Use’, highlights the first principle, which originates from Larsen-Freeman’s (2003) research into the complex and dynamic nature of lexicogrammar and its acquisition. The second chapter, ‘Comprehensible Input’, derives its title from Krashen’s (1985) well-documented Input Hypothesis and focuses on how comprehensible input affects acquisition. Chapter 3, ‘Input Processing’, focuses on two SLA principles which were codified by VanPatten (1996) in an attempt to explain how learners can autonomously use their own attentional resources to process language. These concepts, the Primacy of Meaning Principle and the First Noun Principle, have been revised by VanPatten (2004; 2007; 2015) over the years, and are said to act together to aid learners’ comprehension. Chapter 4, ‘Implicit and Explicit Knowledge’, focuses on the role that overt and tacit
knowledge play in the acquisition of an L2 (Ellis, 1994). Chapter 5, ‘Interaction and Corrective Feedback’, highlights two SLA principles, the Interaction Hypothesis (Long, 1983) and Sociocultural Theory (Vygotsky, 1987), both of which account for the role of interaction in SLA. Chapter 6, the final chapter, ‘Output Production’, focuses on the Output Hypothesis (Swain, 1985), which emerged in the 1980s and suggests that production of language, not just comprehension, is needed for effective language acquisition to occur.

The chapters have a consistent and clear structure making them easy for readers to navigate. They begin with a short introduction to an SLA principle and ask ‘Key Questions’ of readers in order to focus their attention on the main issues. In chapter 5, ‘Interaction and Corrective Feedback’, for example, one of the key questions is ‘How can collaborative dialogue between teacher and students be enhanced to support language learning?’ (p. 118). The authors address this question throughout the chapter, highlighting how interactional feedback and collaborative dialogue facilitate the learning of language. This knowledge could be extremely useful to new educators as they establish the dynamics of their classroom. More experienced educators may also benefit from re-evaluating the dialogic nature of their classrooms and experimenting with collaborative dialogue more frequently.

The second part of each chapter has been aptly titled ‘Experience’ and asks readers to reflect on their familiarity with the SLA principle at hand and its use in their teaching practice. The third part of the chapter, ‘The Principle’, explores each concept in detail. The authors have provided short quotations, diagrams and tables, which aim to emphasise and analyse the main theoretical constructs underlying each principle. The learning and teaching implications are also clearly explained in this part of the chapter as key methodological and procedural options are provided to the reader along with relevant and practical learning and teaching activities. In Chapter 6, for example, the authors have created a table which differentiates between an information gap ‘task’ and an ‘exercise’, which does not require meaningful interaction between the students. This table clearly exemplifies the benefits of incorporating the Output Hypothesis and communicative interaction into the classroom. It shows that ‘exercises’
which provide language exemplars or model dialogue merely display language rather than encourage students to use language, as happens in a task-based activity. This section is where Second Language Acquisition in Action really lives up to its promise, since Nava and Pedrazzini have successfully created opportunities for teachers to understand the application of SLA principles in their teaching.

Section 4, ‘The Principle in the Classroom’, showcases another strength of this book as it provides an opportunity for readers to explore SLA theories through the lens of practice – quite literally thanks to the inclusion of video extracts. The audiovisual materials are easily located on a website that accompanies the book. They show both native and non-native teachers of English and have also been transcribed for further analysis. Using video extracts to exemplify teaching practice is an innovative step by Nava and Pedrazzini, which sets this book apart from others. In this digital era, students appreciate and almost expect the comfort of learning through technology, and so these video extracts have been cleverly incorporated into this book to cater to the students of the 21st century.

‘Restructuring and Planning’ follows, and this section provides readers with opportunities to apply the SLA principle to their specific teaching context. Readers are able to evaluate materials and design tasks based on the SLA theory presented in the chapter. In Chapter 1, ‘Form, Meaning and Use’, the readers are invited to apply this principle to an activity on lexicogrammar using the passive form (p. 26). Readers are encouraged to evaluate the effectiveness of the activity in a teaching context and question whether the activity is meaningful and engaging. The practical focus in this section, cleverly created by the authors, really reinforces the ways in which SLA theory is relevant to the classroom. Chapters end with a ‘Conclusion’, ‘Notes’ and an opportunity for ‘Further Reading’. These sections not only create a real consistency throughout the book, but they also offer multiple references to other sources which explore the principle in question.

The SLA principles presented in Second Language Acquisition in Action have been thoroughly investigated and thoughtfully presented with the purpose of making it easy for readers to understand how these principles can assist teachers with their language instruction. I highly recommend this book to teachers for its detailed review of SLA theories and also for its success in providing strategies for transferring these principles to the language classroom. I would also recommend it to those who develop programs and create syllabi. I have been persuaded by Nava and Pedrazzini to think differently and experiment with new practices in my classroom.


Natasha Kitano has been an ESL educator for more than 20 years. She has worked with students from all over the world in various institutions in Asia and Australia. She has also been a teacher trainer for students of TESOL and has worked in both University Entry and English Language Programs at QUT, in Brisbane.

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The English Australia Journal is published by English Australia Ltd.
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April 2019

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