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Editorial

We welcome in the new millennium some changes to the organisational structure of Prospect. These are one of the outcomes of broadly based discussions with a number of people who have been closely involved with Prospect for many years, and a readership survey which we conducted last year, and to which many of you contributed. This review of Prospect seemed timely, given the new structure for the AMEP Research Centre which was introduced in the year 2000.

One of the major outcomes of this review process was a restructuring of our editorial support. In place of the Editorial Committee and Reference Panel, there is now a single Editorial Board. The terms of office of the members of the Editorial Committee and Reference Panel therefore came to an end in December 2000, and we would like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank all members of the Committee and the Panel for the great contributions and very valuable support that they have provided to the journal over the years of their affiliation.

The new Editorial Board, which we introduce with this issue, consists of ten members. There are three members from each of the three following categories (i) AMEP research staff, (ii) international members and (iii) Australian members. These nine positions will rotate on staggered three year terms, with one position from each category changing every year. The tenth member is from the Department of Immigration and Migrant Affairs, our funding source. It is with great pleasure that we welcome the new Editorial Board: Geoff Brindley, Anne Burns and Alan Williams are the AMEP research centre staff members; Kathi Bailey, Rod Bolitho and Alister Cumming are the international members; and Jenny Hammond, Ian Malcolm and Penny McKay are the Australian members. Annie Sturgess will continue as the DIMA representative.

Many of you will have contributed to the readership survey, which was widely distributed to subscribers, past subscribers, libraries, practitioners and participants at the AMEP Conference which was held in Melbourne in November 2000. A primary concern of the survey was to try to evaluate how useful you find the different types of articles which Prospect publishes. We also wanted to find out what ideas you had for special sections which could be included in Prospect, your reactions to the annual special issue, and what aspects of Prospect you felt could be improved. We give a very brief report on the results of this survey below, ahead of a longer report which will be available next month.

Asked to comment on the usefulness of the different types of articles which are published in Prospect, our readers and subscribers cited research articles and practical articles as the most popular, with book reviews following closely. Many also found theoretical articles and review articles of
particular interest. A further question focused on the topics of the articles. Adult ESL is clearly the most popular general focus, but there was also considerable interest in articles on instructional models, professional development and practical ideas for teaching, as well as issues related to curriculum, testing and evaluation. This provides us with valuable feedback which we can use to assist the normal review process and shape the direction of *Prospect* in the future.

The survey also confirmed to us that many of you find our annual special issue valuable, and ideas about possible topics for future special issues were almost as numerous as the responses we received! This certainly suggests that we have a readership with a very diverse range of interests, whom we will endeavour to keep interested by maintaining the special issues to address a wide range of topics.

One point to emerge strongly from the survey was that many of our readers would welcome a section which deals with practical teaching ideas, and we therefore plan to introduce a section of this type into the journal with Volume 17 (in 2002). In the next issue of *Prospect*, we will be publishing details of how you can submit contributions to this. In the meantime, we would urge you all to be making mental notes of practical classroom ideas which have worked for you, and which you would like to share with others. It will be crucial that these have been successfully trialled in the classroom by you and, hopefully, by at least one other colleague as well. We hope that this will be a section which many of you will feel comfortable contributing to, and we look forward to receiving a deluge of exciting teaching ideas!

The survey has proved to be a very valuable resource, are we are heartened to feel that we are on the right track, and that the journal and its contents are valued. We are sure the changes to the editorial organisation will be beneficial, and look forward to introducing the new ‘Practical Teaching Ideas’ section into the first issue of *Prospect* next year.

Turning to this issue, we are delighted to be able to publish, by popular request, the transcript of Ian Malcolm’s plenary address to the first national AMEP conference held in Melbourne last November. Tackling the topic of culture and communication, Malcolm reviews some recent research in Australia which illuminates various aspects of cross-cultural communication and the language classroom.

Asha Tickoo’s study of the marking of the past tense in students’ essay writing addresses a question close to many teachers’ hearts: why do some students use some verbs accurately and not others? The close analysis presented in the article reveals that, while some students are consistently accurate, others are not. Tickoo suggests that this tendency comes from the influence of their first language, Cantonese, which marks verbs central to the narrative action, but not those which are subsidiary. Anne Rida and Marion Milton report on a study which investigates why Muslim women do not take up their entitlement to English classes within the Adult Migrant
English Program as frequently as other groups of migrants. On the basis of interviews with twenty-three Muslim migrant women from a number of different ethnic backgrounds and three ‘key informants’, they conclude that this group may be discouraged from accessing these classes for reasons associated with some of their cultural and religious traditions, and their traditional support networks. Some practical recommendations are suggested to help such women find out about and attend classes more easily.

The final two articles deal with aspects of teacher training and the resources available for independent professional development. The first, by Thomas Farrell, addresses the socialisation of teachers into the profession through their experiences on the practicum component of their teacher training course. The second, by Stephen Lambacher, offers an overview of resources to teachers who are keen to improve the way in which they tackle pronunciation issues in the classroom. This topic is very timely for inclusion in *Prospect* since the teaching and learning of pronunciation emerged as a significant issue for many teachers during the survey of AMEP providers’ needs conducted by the AMEP Research Centre at the end of last year. Pronunciation has therefore been earmarked for special research project funding over the next two years, and we look forward to receiving publications emerging from these projects.

In this volume we have three book reviews. Mary Jane Hogan reviews the Cambridge *Dictionary of language testing*, and argues that this work provides definitions of the most common terms encountered in language testing in an accessible way which allows teachers to increase their understanding of this important area of their professional lives. Paul Moore finds that Peter Skehan’s *A cognitive approach to language* offers valuable suggestions in many areas of language-learning research and pedagogy, as well as providing a critically appraisal of much second language acquisition research. In the final review in this volume, Jackie Springall evaluates a recent publication devoted to the particular issues involved in teaching adults, *Teaching adult second language learners* by Heather McKay and Abigail Tom.

Gillian Wigglesworth
Lynda Yates
Notes on contributors

**Tom Farrell** is an assistant professor in English Language and Literature at the National Institute of Education, Singapore. His research interests include teacher education/development, reflective teaching, teacher beliefs and TESOL methods.

**Mary Jane Hogan** has been an examiner for the IELTS test of English language proficiency since 1990, and has written and edited several books of test preparation materials. She is the current IELTS Chief Examiner, Australia.

**Stephen Lambacher** is an assistant professor at the University of Aizu, a computer science university in Aizu-Wakamatsu, Japan where he teaches English for Specific Purposes in the Center for Language Research. His main interests lie in second language (L2) speech acquisition and the use of computer-assisted language learning for pronunciation training.

**Ian Malcolm** is Professor of Applied Linguistics and Co-Director of the Centre for Applied Language and Literacy Research at Edith Cowan University, Western Australia. For many years he has taught and administered languages, linguistics, ESL/EFL and TESOL in university contexts across Australia and overseas. He has conducted extensive research with Aboriginal colleagues into Aboriginal English discourse and bidialectalism.

**Marion Milton** is a Senior Lecturer in Language and Literacy Education at Edith Cowan University, Western Australia. She teaches in both undergraduate and postgraduate teacher education programs, and also runs professional development for teachers. She has previous experience working within a state education department on curriculum and research projects. Her research interests include English as a second language in children and adults, meta-linguistic awareness and literacy acquisition, literacy difficulties, and workplace literacy. She has recently completed a major National research study into provision for children with learning difficulties in literacy and numeracy.

**Paul Moore** is currently working as a lecturer at Hokkaido Tokai University in Japan while doing a distance research degree in linguistics through Macquarie University.

**Anne Rida** is a lecturer with the Adult Migrant English Program at Central TAFE in Perth. Her interests lie in migrant minority groups and issues of access and equity for these groups, particularly access to English language classes and supporting services. Currently, Anne is Principal Researcher and Coordinator on a project to create a Migrant Women's Information Task Force which was funded by the Western Australian Department of Training. Apart from researching the English language needs of migrant Muslim women, Anne has also coordinated and delivered a number of information sessions targeting Muslim women in Perth.
Jacky Springall has taught English as a second language with AMES Victoria since 1988. She has also taught ESL theory and methodology units in the Graduate schools of Education at both La Trobe University and RMIT. She is currently working in Flagstaff AMES in the Education Services division involved primarily in the AMEP settlement program.

Asha Tickoo is an Assistant Professor in the TESL/Applied Linguistics program at Southern Illinois University, Edwardsville. His areas of specialty are discourse, pragmatics and L2 acquisition. In his work, he examines both the macro- and micro-level text features of ESL writing, and assesses those aspects of ESL lexico-syntax that are directly impacted by discourse-pragmatic principles.