

# PROSPECT

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# Editorial

It is with great pleasure, and some trepidation, that we introduce our first volume of *Prospect* as editors. Anne Burns has done a fantastic job as editor over the last ten years, and so, while we are excited at the opportunity to take over in this role, we are also mindful of the somewhat daunting task of following the high standards set by our predecessors. During the period that she has had this responsibility, Anne has extended the tradition of excellence established by Jill Burton. Under her skilful leadership, these years have seen *Prospect* flourish and gain in influence and recognition, both within Australia and internationally. The high regard in which the journal is now held among TESOL practitioners and researchers alike is due in no small part to Anne's ability to inspire and motivate other professionals in the field. At a time of extensive change in the TESOL profession, Anne has been able to ensure that *Prospect* continues to attract high quality contributions from both teachers and researchers, and to provide a forum in which current trends and new directions can be actively discussed and debated.

We value greatly the breadth of experience that Anne has brought to her role of editor, and the vision and commitment she has brought to *Prospect*. Her help and guidance as we have worked through our first edition have been invaluable. We will endeavour to uphold the high standards she has set, and we hope that we will prove ourselves equal to the interpersonal and technical challenges of editing a journal of this quality, breadth and appeal. We wish Anne all the best in her new directions.

## **This issue**

This volume of *Prospect* includes articles on a range of topics which will be of interest to both teachers and researchers. In an article which contributes to the recent upsurge in interest in the teaching and learning of pronunciation, Kerr provides a useful reminder of the importance of speech mechanisms other than the lips and the tongue in the production of intelligible speech in English. Drawing on techniques used in speech pathology, she describes a program to help learners from language backgrounds which encourage resonance in the back of the mouth, such as Vietnamese and Chinese, to change the focus of resonance to the front of the mouth, which is more common in English. This article reinforces the need to take support for pronunciation beyond the mere drilling of individual phonemes, and offers concrete activities for practitioners to try out with their own students.

Another article which is of practical relevance to teachers is the paper by Lewis and Basturkmen. For those interested in the assessment of learning outcomes, this article highlights differences in task outcomes as perceived by three different groups: material writers, teachers who use the tasks, and

the learners who undertake them in the classroom. The findings of the study indicate that there are differences in perceptions between these groups. This highlights the importance of ensuring a clearer correspondence between our aims as teachers, and the students' understanding of the purposes and outcomes of a particular task.

The next two articles, by Cargill and by Thompson, both focus on English use in academic discourse, but each examines the academic English from a different perspective. Cargill reports on a study of spoken academic discourse in postgraduate supervision meetings between research students and their supervisors. Her close analysis of four such conversations offers important insights into aspects of communication that may remain implicit, and which may therefore contribute to miscommunication and misunderstanding. She demonstrates how the transcriptions of conversations such as these can be used to raise issues of how speakers can more accurately present themselves through talk. Although the article concentrates on a specific area of discourse in a particular setting, the communication difficulties highlighted and the analytical approach adopted to tackle these are equally relevant to teachers working in non-academic teaching contexts.

Thompson focuses on the academic discourse used as the basis for programs in English for Academic Purposes (EAP). At a time when many nations are confronting issues of reconciliation with indigenous populations, Thompson's critique of the rigid notions of 'academic discourse' are timely. She argues that acceptance of the traditional expectations of academic discourse ensures the 'invisibility' of those whose writing conventions do not conform to 'western' academic conventions. From the perspective of critical literacy, she argues that approaches to selection of texts for reading classes need to be reconceptualised in the light of the potential for literacy to perpetuate or to change social relations. The discussion of her own work in EAP classes on Australian and post-colonial society, in which she makes use of both indigenous and non-indigenous texts, provides a useful illustration of how teachers can be more inclusive in their approach to academic discourse.

The final article in this volume addresses an important issue for English language teachers of immigrant communities: the role they can play in the maintenance or death of a learner's first language. Shameem argues that ESOL teachers need to be aware of the precise nature of the language backgrounds of their students in order to tailor language support more closely to their needs, and to be in a stronger position to support their first language. She argues the importance of obtaining this kind of information within a framework of the empirical findings on bilingual education, and proposes a form for this purpose. The use of this form is demonstrated using the case of a community which has been misrepresented and disadvantaged in New Zealand, that of Indo-Fijian teenagers in Wellington.

This volume concludes with two reviews of recent publications, both of which will be of interest to language specialists. The first is by Helen de

Silva Joyce, and focuses on an area of language teaching which the pendulum of change has once again brought into critical focus, the teaching and learning of vocabulary. The second review by Alan Williams is equally topical, and deals with ways of understanding, exploring and promoting communication in the second language classroom. Once again, we would like to encourage readers of *Prospect* to contribute reviews for publication, and draw their attention to the Publications Received page, which lists books available for review. This listing includes publications of general interest to all teachers, as well as those of particular interest to teachers in specific settings, and includes both practical teaching materials and reference works. Please contact us if you would like to review one of these, and we will send you the publication of your choice.

Preparations are now well under way for the First Annual National AMEP Conference that will be held in Melbourne from 17–19 November 2000. This is shaping up to be a very exciting event offering an excellent opportunity for AMEP teachers and researchers to get together and exchange ideas. We look forward to seeing many *Prospect* readers there.

**Lynda Yates**  
**Gillian Wigglesworth**

## Notes on contributors

**Dr Helen Basturkman** is a lecturer at the Institute of Language Teaching and Learning, The University of Auckland, New Zealand. Her areas of specific interest are classroom interaction and discourse analysis. **Marilyn Lewis** is a senior lecturer at the same institute. She edited *New Ways in Teaching Adults*, which formed the basis of this study. Her area of specific interest is language teacher education.

**Margaret Cargill** is a language and learning lecturer who has worked in the USA, Switzerland and Tonga and since 1991 has held a joint Faculty/Advisory Centre for University Education position at The University of Adelaide. She developed and now teaches within the Integrated Bridging Program for international postgraduate students. She works with staff and with students of all language backgrounds, and is committed to developing tripartite collaboration as a model for enhancing the postgraduate experience for students of language backgrounds other than English and their supervisors. Her research focuses on cross-cultural postgraduate supervision.

**Helen de Silva Joyce** is Manager of NSW AMES Program Support and Development Services. She has been involved in language and literacy education for over 18 years. Within this field she has specialised in workplace language, spoken language and literacy, and in 1998 was involved in a NCELTR Special Project which investigated the reading practices of students from three different language groups.

**Joan Kerr** completed her Graduate Certificate in TESOL (Deakin) in 1994 and has since gone on to the Graduate Diploma and Masters. She works primarily as a Speech Pathologist in adult rehabilitation, but also works as a sessional ESL teacher in ELICOS classes at the Gordon Institute of TAFE, Geelong. In private practice she sees clients for work on accent modification and also presents workshops and seminars to ESL teachers on the subject of pronunciation generally. She has presented on this subject to conferences of Speech Pathology Australia (1997,1998), the ELICOS Conference in Melbourne (1998) and seminars of the Vision Association, and has published in the *Australian Communication Quarterly* (June 1999).

**Nikhat Shameem** is Programme Manager of the English Language Programme at the Senior College of New Zealand. Her current research interests include language maintenance and shift of minority and endangered languages, ESOL programme design and development, and language testing. She has taught applied and sociolinguistics at Victoria University of Wellington and University of Auckland.

**Celia Thompson** has taught EFL and ESL in Europe and Australia for many years. She currently teaches EAP at the Centre for Communication Skills and English as a Second Language at the University of Melbourne. Her research interests include plagiarism and cultural identity, critical pedagogies and project-based approaches to learning.

**Alan Williams** is a Lecturer in TESOL in the Institute for Education at La Trobe University (Bundoora). He is involved in TESOL Teacher Education, and in research and professional development activities for the AMEP Research Centre. Alan has been a teacher of ESL in Australia and Canada, and has been involved in TESOL teacher education in South East Asia. He has research interests in content-based language teaching, the teaching of culture in TESOL, and a general interest in TESOL policy, curriculum and methodology.