



TESOL/AL Times

Summer 2010

Volume 10

Highlights:

2...Interview with
Michael Kieffer

4...Run-down of the
TESOL/AL
Roundtable's Events

5...Alumni Update

8...End of the
Year Gala Summary

9...Summary of the
APPLE Lecture

The 2009-2010 Completed Dissertations

Congratulations to the following for completed dissertations:

Appropriateness and Relevancy of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) for Bangladesh: A Perspective from Bangladeshi Rural Secondary School English Teachers

Ruhma Choudhary

Investigating Articles as Expressions of Definiteness in L2 English

Monika Ekiert

Investigating the Simultaneous Growth of and Relationship between Grammatical Knowledge and Civics Content Knowledge among Low-Proficiency Adult ESL Learners

Jee Wha Kim

The Impact of the First Certificate of English (FCE) Examination on the EFL Classroom: A Washback Study

Michael Perrone

Unaccusativity and Neurocognitive Indices of Second Language Acquisition: an ERP Study

John D. Purdy

Special Mention

Doctoral Student **Kristen diGennaro** won a 2009 *International Research Foundation for English Language Education Doctoral Dissertation Grant* for investigating differences in the writing ability of Generation 1.5 and international second-language students.

Denise Osborne won the APPLE Award for an applied linguistics student for her MA paper *The Production of Rhotic Sounds by Brazilian Speakers of English*.

Amanda Gardner won both the APPLE Award for a TESOL student and the Fanselow Award. Ms. Gardner's MA paper was entitled *Revising Integrative Motivation: L2 Motivation Research and Learner Context* and she won the Fanselow Award for a unit plan based on *Jonathan Livingston Seagull*.

Full details about the APPLE and Fanselow Awards ceremony can be found on page 8.

TESOL/AL's Newest Member on Teaching and Research

By Staff Writer

The TESOL/AL times sat down with Dr. Michael Kieffer on a warm day at the beginning of May. Although most students were gone for the summer and the halls were quiet, Professor Kieffer was in his office, hard at work. During the interview he explained his views on teaching and research.

1. You've done research in the past with morphology and literacy. Is that something that you're still interested in?

It is. My research starts with the problem of reading comprehension difficulties and essentially the large number of students who are second language learners who encounter comprehension difficulties.

We've done studies where in urban schools it's close to half or 60% of second language learners who are struggling with reading comprehension, many of whom have been learning English for many years. I'm particularly interested in that problem in the upper elementary and middle school grades because, in part, that's where comprehension demands become more difficult. So, in some cases these difficulties emerge because students are reading more challenging text and what makes the text challenging is essentially the language demands. They often can read the words accurately and

fluently. It's not a problem of having to decode the text. It's a matter of comprehending the discourse structure. So I start with the problem of reading comprehension rather than starting with an interest in a particular aspect of language, an interest in morphology, for instance.

“We need to think about language diversity when we think about everything we do.”

In vocabulary, we have a lot of research suggesting that not only is vocabulary essential to reading comprehension, but that second language learners are much more likely to have limited English vocabularies. It's probably the most common source of difficulty in adolescence, at least. We know that most words are acquired incidentally. I became interested in the underlying skills that can accelerate that process. I became interested in morphology, not in the way that I think SLA sometimes is interested in morphology. I'm interested in it as a set of tools for acquiring a wider range of vocabulary and a wider range of word forms. That's something that I think I'm going to pursue and continue.

2. Is there anywhere that you see trends in literacy research?

I think one trend is no longer thinking about reading comprehension without thinking about comprehension of what--of what kind of text and of what kind of knowledge--and what

The first Teachers College, Columbia University Roundtable in Second Language Studies (TCCRISLS) will be held at Teachers College October 1-2, 2010.

This first TCCRISLS provides a forum to address issues specifically related to the acquisition of Chinese as a second language.

A plenary talk will be given by **Dr. Nick Ellis**, Professor of psychology at the University of Michigan and **Dr. Boping Yuan**, Senior Lecturer in Chinese Language and Linguistics Fellow and Director of Studies in Oriental Studies, Churchill College, Cambridge.

A two-day pre-conference workshop on task-based language instruction will be held on Wednesday, September 29, and Thursday, September 30.

The conference is sponsored by the Applied Linguistics Program, Department of Arts & Humanities, Teachers College, Columbia University.

For registration information on the conference and the workshop, visit:

<http://www.tc.edu/tccrisls/>

The TESOL/AL Times is the yearly newsletter of the Teachers College TESOL and Applied Linguistics programs.

Faculty Advisor:
Howard Williams

Editor for 2010:
Michael Vlahovic

The XVIIth Annual Sociocultural Theory and Second Language Learning Research Working Group meeting will be held at Columbia University October 21-23.

This group is comprised of scholars from all over the world who share a common interest in Sociocultural theory and language learning. Once a year they come together to discuss their understandings of Vygotsky's works and their applications to second language learning.

The meeting is organized by Teachers College's Center for Multiple Languages and Literacies and the Programs in TESOL/Applied Linguistics, Columbia University's Department of Spanish and Portuguese, and Barnard College's Department of Spanish and Latin American Cultures.

Organizing committee:
Carolyn Fuchs, Teachers College, Columbia University

JoAnne Kleifgen, Teachers College, Columbia University

Juan Pablo Jiménez-Caicedo, Columbia University

Guadalupe Ruiz Fajardo, Columbia University

For more information visit:

<http://sctresearch.org/>

the domain is that you're learning in.

I think there's growing awareness of language diversity as something that's true of virtually every urban school. We need to think about language diversity when we think about everything we do. What that means is that the responsibility of teaching language learners gets distribut-

“ I think there's a need to respond more directly to the problems of practice and less on what we, as researchers, find interesting. ”

ed more throughout a school. It's less the ESL teacher's job. It's more of everyone's job. I think the job of an ESL teacher is changing in a lot of places so that in some sense they are supporting content teachers. Their job is much more about being a resource for other teachers and doing much more work where they're co-teaching than it is where they're just pulling students into a room and just doing language teaching. I think that ties into this idea of thinking about content the areas, and literacy and language in the content areas.

Research-wise, there's a huge trend toward mixed-methods. There's a trend toward acknowledging that what we're studying is too complicated to study in any one narrow way, so we need to use a combination of methods. I think there's a need to respond more directly to the problems of practice and less on what we, as researchers, find interesting and

more on what teachers, administrators, and students are most struggling with. Part of the pragmatism--that looking for practical solutions--that leads to us being less wedded to doing a particular methodology or a particular set of methods. I think what people are realizing is that if we are too wedded to "This is my methodological approach,"

then we're not going to be able to answer these bigger questions, and not be able to get into saying, not just "Does it work? But how does it work? And can you do it?" I think the big trend is towards a lot less rigidity about the methods that someone is trained in or the methods that come from a particular discipline and more thinking about how can we combine these in ways that are going to answer the complex questions we're getting at.

3. What do you get most excited about teaching when you teach at the graduate level?

For me, I think the most exciting moments come when students bring up a question or issue that I haven't thought of before--usually related to student second language learner's academic achievement in some way. I'm particularly interested in the complexities of reading comprehension, but also in relation to how students are thinking about the content areas,



Dr. Kieffer

how students are learning in science, and math, and social studies as well. Content-wise, I'm fascinated by the intersection between language learning and content learning, and general development--so how children develop as learners, as thinkers, as language users. I think the most interesting moments, teaching-wise, come for me when students bring up a new perspective or a new issue that I haven't thought about or haven't thought about in that way. That's something that I really enjoy here, is that I feel like students are always challenging me to push in a new direction or to think in a new way.

4. Do you find a lot of those surprises in class?

I do. I think that what students bring is sort of "Okay, but what does that mean for this other setting?" Or "I have *this* student who is struggling in *this*

way." And so you have to move from these big theoretical understandings [and say], "Now let's deal with what's going on with this particular student." I think that's having to do that thinking work and working with students to figure out what's really going on there.

5. So it's the practical applications?

Yeah, but also if the big theory doesn't address this situation, then maybe there's a problem with the big theory as well, right? So maybe there's an aspect to the complexity that we're missing. For instance, we often assume certain levels of second language learners' competence. Because a lot of research has been done with adults, we assume completely mature human beings that have this range of abilities in their first language. And then to say, "What does this look like with a student who has

interrupted schooling? What does this look like for a five-year old, who is still going through a lot of processes of conceptual and general cognitive development?" So then having to say, "We don't actually know all of the answers here, but what do we know to say in that situation based on the theory and based on some good practices?" To me that's practical application, but it's also saying that if the theories have an implicit assumption that a second language learner is fully fluent in their first language, what does that mean about creating some theories about a more articulated understanding of second language learners who are in the process of learning two languages or in the process of losing a first language?



TESOL/AL Roundtable Invites Speakers to TC

By Denise Osborne

What a wonderful year we had! The TESOL/AL Roundtable worked hard to promote events as well as bring together faculty and graduate students to share ideas and discuss topics of interest. And have fun!

The academic year started with a Welcome Back Ice Cream Social, organized by our president, Cristina Berry. In October, Jeanie Faulkner, business manager/treasurer of the New York State TESOL was invited by Cristina to talk about ways to promote involvement with NYSTESOL. And we had much more to come!

In April, two professors from outside TC were invited to talk about their research areas: Professor Seunghun Julio Lee, assistant professor of Linguistics and TESOL at Central Connecticut State University, and Professor Ricardo Augusto de Souza, professor of English at Federal University of Minas Gerais, Brazil. Yeah, the Roundtable went beyond TC's borders this year.

The idea of inviting these two professors was serendipitous. I met Professor Lee at a conference. Professor Lee approached me and we started talking about my presentation. In a moment of spontaneity,

I asked him if he would be interested in coming to TC to talk about his area of expertise, interlanguage phonology and he generously accepted. From that moment on, we started exchanging e-mails and planning the event.

Professor Lee came one day in April for two consecutive events: a lecture on speech perception in L2 phonology by learners of English and a 4-hour



Professor Lee describes the tools he uses for phonetic analysis.

workshop in which he gave us a general introduction to PRAAT (free phonetic analysis software). This event was a great success! The talk was attended by not only TC students, but graduate students from other institutions, such as the CUNY Graduate Center and Temple University (Pennsylvania) as well.

At the end of April, Professor Souza came from Brazil to talk about his research on Portuguese-English bilinguals' processing of induced action predicates. I met Professor Souza in November last year when I went to Brazil to present at a conference and invited him to speak at TC.

Our last event was organized by Robyn Emerman, who invited Susanne Marcus to talk about teaching English language to learners with disabilities. We ended the academic year with a friendly farewell event at which the new members were elected.

The Roundtable not only provides a forum where students can promote TESOL and applied linguistics events, it also provides an opportunity for making contact with interesting people and greater academic en-

agement on the part of the student body.

I would like to thank Professor Williams for being there and for giving us his priceless support! Thanks also to Roy Mateus who assisted and guided us during the year. For the new members, we wish you all the best!

Denise M. Osborne

Treasurer of the TESOL/AL Roundtable

On behalf of the TESOL/AL Roundtable 2009-2010 members:

President- Cristina Berry

Vice President- Robyn Emerman

Treasurer- Denise M. Osborne

Secretary- Tara McHugh

Faculty Liaison- Laura Kieffer

Member – Farah Akabar



Alumni Update

Where they've been and where they're going...

We asked alumni about what they've been doing and about their plans. We asked recent grads (they're alumni too, right?) about their memories from TC and plans.

Christopher Murphy, Class of 2004

Christopher Murphy is teaching in Niigata Prefecture, Japan, at International University of Japan (IUJ). Niigata is roughly 90 minutes from Tokyo by bullet train. Students come to the university to study courses in either the Graduate School of International Relations or the Graduate School of International Management. Interestingly, more than 2/3rds of the students at IUJ are non-Japanese, coming from over 50 different countries. IUJ is an English-medium graduate school. For this reason, he teaches courses related to academic English reading and writing, English for professional communication, and English for thesis writing. As a result of the significant linguistic and cultural diversity at IUJ, he has become more interested in issues related to Sociolinguistics and World Englishes. In addition to teaching at IUJ, he co-organizes a local conference for languages in the North East Asian Region (NEAR).

For more information, you can visit the NEAR conference website at <http://www.iuj.ac.jp/near/>.

Julie Matsubara, Class of 2006

Julie Matsubara has recently completed four years of teaching at Kanda University of International Studies in Chiba, Japan. During her tenure at the university, she gained valuable experience in research through projects in EFL which have been presented and published. For example, in one study she replicated a pronunciation study in which she observed the effects of a pronunciation lab on students' views of their own production. In addition, she acquired some experience in leadership by taking on the role of research project coordinator. As for the future, Julie will be starting a PhD program in Linguistics at Northwestern University in the fall of 2010. Her main interests still lie in second language phonology, continuing on from her TC Applied Linguistics MA essay, which was published in the 2006 TC Working Papers in TESOL & Applied Linguistics. In the meantime, Julie is planning on enjoying every drop of her vacation until the start of her doctorate.

Alumni Update

Where they've been and where they're going...

Lauren Park, Class of 2008

For the past two years since graduation, Lauren has been a lecturer in the General English Programs at Sogang University and Dongduk Women's University (Seoul, Korea). She has been given the opportunity to teach a variety of English courses to students of various levels and says that living as a teacher for two years has taught her that teaching is not as simple as merely delivering knowledge. It is a much more complicated job that requires you to be quick-witted, observant, and discerning every minute.

During the past two years, she has come to realize that what she observes in her students can become useful findings and resources to her colleagues if she become a more competent researcher in the field of SLA. Now that she sees where she falls short, she has decided to take a big leap in her career. In



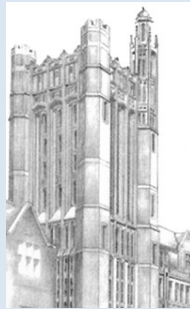
Lauren Park poses for a picture.

September 2010, she is going back to school as a Ph.D. student in Linguistics at Georgetown University. She states that she remembers studying at TC wasn't always pleasant, but she knows it was those struggling moments with books and papers that helped her become a better student and a better teacher. She is excited to go through another long training process where she can hopefully learn to become a qualified scholar in SLA.

On Graduating from Teachers College

By Qiong Wang

At first, I was feeling quite uncomfortable with T.C. and New York City. Living alone in a suite in Whittier facing two streets forced me to put up with the sirens, howling by day and night. I seemed to be sleeping on the street for a long time. But two things comforted me and strengthened my tie with T.C. and Columbia.



One was that I touched base with a remote cousin whose family lived in New York. His wife Hsiao-ying attended T.C. some 30 years ago in the same program and stayed in the same dorm building as I did. She still remembered her supervisor, Prof. Horowitz.

Each time when she visited me at T.C., she would virtually be MY guide, instructing me

through the maze-like six buildings and telling me what she did at that time. I was totally AMAZED! She was from Taiwan and I am from Mainland China. We couldn't have met in my home country but finally got connected by T.C. and NYC. No more appropriate way to describe about this legacy than a Chinese saying: yuan—the magic binding, which tied both of us with T.C. Even though I cried when our suite was bothered by nine mice and I dared not to cook but asked my classmates to buy ready made food, I still felt it must have been my pre-programmed tie with T.C., feeling the thicks and thins together.

Right before the end of the spring semester, I bumped into a graduating student activity and was asked to register for T.C. and

Columbia alumni. At that moment, a bitter-sweet feeling oozed from my heart. I was about to leave T.C.; however, I could be her tiny representation in Beijing, China, helping with interviewing prospective students, attending alumni seminar (I just got an invitation to meet TC President Fuhrman in Shanghai this June 21st). It is truly a commencement that fully begins an "engagement" with T.C. and Columbia.



Qiong Wang was in the MA Applied Linguistics program. She plans to go on to Ph.D. studies in assessment.

Graduates at a Glance

Lisa Lee
MA TESOL General Track

I will be teaching English at Sogang University in Seoul, Korea.

Memories:

I will miss teaching in the CEP. Teaching in the

CEP was one of the highlights of the TESOL program. I will also miss studying with my classmates. We had pulled through the challenging TESOL courses by forming study groups. I will also miss my TESOL courses, which had challenged me to become an analytical thinker and an effective teacher. As I look back to the memories of the TESOL program, I am thankful to have had such great classmates and professors. Everyone in the TESOL program has helped to make the experience at Teachers College a memorable one.

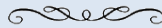


Amanda Gardner
MA TESOL K-12 Track, Peace Corps Fellows

I plan to keep on truckin' in the DOE.

Memories:

Summer fun in Grammar and Phonetics! My memories of those air-conditioned, brain-[w]racking hours with Prof. Williams will remain evergreen.

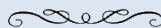


Denise M. Osborne
MA Applied Linguistics

I will study for my Ph.D. at University of Arizona (Tucson) in a interdisciplinary program called Second Language Acquisition and Teaching, SLAT. I want to study interlanguage phonology. I will also teach Portuguese at the same university as part of my scholarship package.

Memories:

Before Professor Williams' classes, phonetic symbols and the English sounds were a challenge to me. But in Professor Williams' classes, I started understanding what had been always a mystery for me. There were some moments in his class when I felt as if I had experienced an epiphany, such as when I perceived certain cross-linguistic phonological differences between Portuguese and English (e.g., /h/ sound is a rhotic sound in Portuguese, but not in English). And then, what had frightened me started to enchant me! Thank you, Professor Williams!



Ai Mizoguchi
MA Applied Linguistics

I plan to get a PhD in Linguistics, and to be an English educator in Japan.

Memories:

Solving conundrums in class with Prof. Williams.

AL Alumna Designates Part of Estate as Scholarship in Honor of Dr. Leslie Beebe

Applied Linguistics and TESOL may not be the best funded of disciplines, but there are those who try to make that a little different. Dr. Tomoko Takahashi has recently designated one quarter of her estate to go to a scholarship in honor of Professor Leslie Beebe. Although the money will not be available to students for some time, Dr. Takahashi sets a wonderful precedent.

Dr. Takahashi is Provost & Vice President for Academic Affairs and the Dean of the Graduate School at Soka University of America. She graduated with an EdD in Applied Linguistics from TC in 1984.

Alumnus Wins ILTA Best Article Award

Former doctoral student and lecturer Elvis Wagner has won the 2008 *International Language Testing Association Best Article Award* for his article "Video listening tests: What are they measuring?" published in *Language Assessment Quarterly*, Vol. 5, No. 3. The article was a write-up of part of his dissertation at Teachers College and involved participants from the CEP.

Dr. Wagner graduated from TC in 2006 and is currently an Assistant Professor in Curriculum, Instruction, and Technology in Education at Temple University.

Alumni Update

Where they've been and where they're going...

Maria Fisher MA TESOL General Track

I am the lead instructor for a program organized by the International Affairs Department. We have brought 19 Chinese high school graduates to TC, and they will study English, SAT I and II test prep, and general-

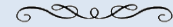
ly improve all the skills necessary to flourish in a US college environment. They will apply for

admission in 2011 to the colleges of their choice.

Memories:

When I started teaching in the CEP I immediately identified the Advanced Study level as the most satisfying to me, and began to develop theme-based curricula within that supportive and creative environment. It was just those courses, and my confidence developing useful materials for a college-level instructional environment, that got me this exciting job. So my general thought about our degree program is that following your passion is always the right course, and it ultimately prepares you

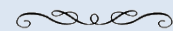
for satisfying, important work.



Stephanie Yang MA TESOL K-12 Track

I will be a middle school English Teacher at Grace Christian Academy (Taipei, Taiwan).

Memories: Grammar trees, hanging out with my cohort, my student teaching kids.



End of Year Gala Full of Surprises

By Staff Writer

The exclusive TESOL/AL End of Year Gala by far surpassed all other parties this year in grandeur and surprises. It was attended by the who's who of the TC TESOL and AL programs and was the place to go to see and be seen. While high on everyone's list were sampling the cuisine of Howard Williams, resident chef and syntactician, and checking out the latest in designer evening wear, the true highlight of the evening was no doubt the awards ceremony.

Even Professor Williams, who doubled this evening as awards announcer (how do you get it all done, Howard?), could not conceal his astonishment that for the first time ever (and perhaps the last) both the APPLE Award for an MA TESOL student and the Fanselow TESOL Award were won by one and the

same person, MA TESOL student, Amanda Gardner. An unapologetic Professor Hruska preempted murmurs of wrongdoing and assured the audience that the prizes had been chosen by separate, blind committees. We at the Times tip our hats to Ms. Gardner for excellent work on her TESOL MA Literature Review, *Revising Integrative Motivation: L2 Motivation Research and Learner Context* and her Fanselow Award winning unit plan based on the Richard Bach book, *Jonathan Livingston Seagull*. Ms. Gardner received both awards with a grace and sincerity that brought tears to the eyes of many present.

Not to be outdone, this year's APPLE Award winning Applied Linguistics student, Denise Osborne, had her own surprise waiting for the audience. Gasps were heard from the

audience when Professor Williams announced that the TESOL/AL Web Journal would be unable to publish Ms. Osborne's MA paper, *The Production of Rhotic Sounds by Brazilian Speakers of English*. Getting published in the journal is one of the key benefits of the award. Indeed, the TESOL/AL Web Journal could not accept Ms. Osborne's paper because the paper had already been accepted for publication elsewhere. *Félicitations Ms. Osborne!*

Speculation circulated wildly at the Gala's post-party (aka The Student Senate End of the Year Bash) about how next year's Gala might surpass this year's in surprises. One EdM student ventured that someone may be able to sweep the awards ceremony and take all three awards. According to sources within the

program, that is unlikely due to current award rules that restrict awards to students based on program. An AL student cannot win the Fanselow Award, for instance, and a student from either program cannot win the other program's APPLE award, which makes winning both APPLE awards impossible. An eavesdropping adjunct from Economics and Education suggested that an MA student might be awarded a PhD based solely on his or her MA project. This scenario seems equally unlikely. Firstly,

the TESOL and AL programs offer EdDs, not PhDs. Secondly, college rules would almost certainly not permit the awarding of a doctoral degree based solely on an MA project, no matter how spectacular the project was. In any case, come Spring 2011, we will all be waiting with eager anticipation for that coveted End of the Year Gala invitation to appear on the Listserv.



The TESOL/AL Times wants to acknowledge all of those who presented at conferences this year.

The Applied Linguistics/TESOL program had more than 20 student presenters at AAAL, TESOL, NYS-TESOL and Northeast Conference.

Keep up the hard work!

The APPLE lecture

By Staff Writer



Professor Kunnan delivers the APPLE Lecture.

On February 12, 2010, Anthony Kunnan visited Teachers College and gave two presentations.

In the first presentation, attended by students in the Applied Linguistics and TESOL programs, Dr. Kunnan talked about evaluating a test by building an evaluation argument.

For the second presentation, which was open to the public, Dr. Kunnan discussed language assessment in the context of tests for citizenship and immigration.

Dr. Kunnan began by picking apart commonly held assumptions about language, its relationship to the nation-state, and its relationship to identity. From that perspective, he critically looked at tests required for immigration and citizenship in a wide range of countries. The picture that Dr. Kunnan ultimately painted is one of a world in which testing requirements for citizenship vary wildly from one country to another. For instance, the US and Korea require lan-

guage tests. Canada has no such requirement, but only offers civics exams for citizenship in French or English. Belgium has no language test, but requires language ability in German, Dutch, or French.

Dr. Kunnan, in his talk, projected an uneasiness about testing for citizenship and naturalization. "What is the impact or the consequences of language requirements?" he asked. Do they really encourage applicants to take language courses? Are these requirements ultimately beneficial for society?

With the likelihood of increasing use of tests for immigration and citizenship, he ended his lecture with a call to those in assessment and applied linguistics to conduct research on tests for immigration and citizenship. He also asked researchers to question unlawful and discriminatory practices.

