



# Newsletter

Term 4 (November) 2021

[atesolact.org.au](http://atesolact.org.au)

## Join ATESOL ACT

- ◆ Earlybird rates available for 2022!
- ◆ Recruit 2 new members and join for free [atesolact.org.au/join](http://atesolact.org.au/join)

## In this issue

- ◆ Tips for teaching online
- ◆ News from your President and hard-working committee

## Contributions welcome

- ◆ We'd love your stories, teaching ideas and opinions  
[secretary@atesolact.org.au](mailto:secretary@atesolact.org.au)

## Our next event

- ◆ Join us on December 2 for a [social picnic](#)
- ◆ AGM on Thursday 24 March 2022

## From the President

**Helen Moore**

Well, what a year it's been!! We thought we'd put COVID and lock-downs behind us. But no! Back it all came worse than before.

Like all our colleagues in the teaching profession, your ATESOL ACT Committee has made heroic efforts to stay on top of professional and personal commitments. But like everyone else, the truth is that we are tired and looking towards the year's end.

Nevertheless, we're also proud of what we and teachers in *all* sectors (early childhood, schools, adult and tertiary settings) have achieved.

Your association has offered four well-received professional development events: Exploring the Many Voices of Australia through Literature, the Role of Home Languages in Mainstream Schooling, an open meeting on proposed reforms to the Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP), and Functional Grammar – Making Language Come Alive for English language learners.

For next year, we're planning events that include exploring the resources of the National Museum of Australia, enhancing teachers' skills in accessing information on English grammar, and a panel on what's needed for those looking to become an EAL/D teacher in school and adult settings.

If you're not already aware of it, please check out how to access – at members' rates and often for free – our sister-*TESOL* associations' fantastic on-line Professional Learning activities around Australia. Just sign up on the ACTA website to receive notices about these events: [Events | Australian Council of TESOL Associations](#) For example, on 4th November, VicTESOL is offering PL entitled "Towards a model for a hybrid delivery of EAL". You can also join in the on-line celebration of 30 years of *TESOL in Context* on Monday 8<sup>th</sup> November for free, which includes the launch of a special issue on EAL/D in Indigenous contexts.



I've been working hard through ACTA (your national Council), first, in regard to the proposed AMEP reforms (news about which we now await with interest!) – see the ACTA submissions at [Advocacy | Australian Council of TESOL Associations](#) – and then to support our ATESOL NT colleagues in advocacy for remote Indigenous students. If you're interested, take a look at the news section on the ATESOL NT website: [News & Views - ATESOL NT](#). As you'll see, they've had some impact in the media. This story is continuing!

Also on the ACTA front, the **ACTA Schools Working Group** (which includes ATESOL ACT Committee members) has been very active. They are preparing a "Strategy" document to be used for advocacy in the run-up to the next election. Another great development is the formation of the **ACTA Early Childhood Consultancy Group**, also including ATESOL ACT Committee members. This group includes an impressive line-up of educators in both Indigenous and migrant-background contexts around Australia.

If you're interested in becoming involved in advocacy at the national ACTA level, please get in touch with me.

To celebrate the end of lock-down and the end of the year, we're planning **an afternoon picnic on Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> December at 4pm**. You'll get a separate notice about this very soon! We hope to see as many members there as possible. You can bring a friend! Light refreshments will be on the house!

Hope to see you soon!

Helen



## From the Editor

**Mei French**

Welcome to our newsletter for 2021 – our first in a while, and hopefully the first of many.

We are aiming to provide some light professional reading and to keep you up to date with your association – what we have been doing, and plans for the future.

This issue we feature *Three Tips for Staying Connected when Teaching Online*, written by our committee member and experienced online teacher Barbara Rogstad. We also have updates from our working parties. We'd love to publish your original contributions as well – your own tips for teaching, reviews of resources, discussion of issues, or reflections from teachers and learners of English as an additional language in the ACT. Please contact me at [secretary@atesolact.org.au](mailto:secretary@atesolact.org.au) with your contributions.

It's a great time to renew your membership, as we have earlybird discounts for 2022 registrations, and a special offer if you recruit new members. Members receive discounts for events, and there is plenty already planned for 2022. Visit [atesolact.org.au](http://atesolact.org.au) to find out more.

# Three Tips for Staying Connected when Teaching Online

## **Barbara Rogstad**

I've been teaching exclusively online since the pandemic began in 2020. Prior to COVID, I was a casual teacher/tutor for German and English and a full-time business consultant and organiser for Amnesty International Australia. I had been flirting with the idea of getting a CELTA for a few years by this point, figuring that, if nothing else, consolidating my skills would be beneficial. I started my training in February 2020. Two weeks into my 10 week program we went into Lockdown and were told we would be doing our teaching hours online.

No one knew what to do.

Since completing my training I've worked exclusively online, from my own desk in my own home. I have watched as language centres and language coaching services have ditched their physical venues in favour of only offering online instruction. The loss of these venues has had the added effect of saddling the teachers with the responsibility of creating and maintaining our connections with colleagues and that energy exchange we as teachers thrive on. We no longer have access to the staffroom, watercooler chat, or afterwork social hour to help us recharge after a long day or a particularly difficult student.

Here are three things I have learnt since 2020 to stay sane and connected while teaching online.

### **Nest into your teaching space**

We nest into our physical classrooms, this should be no different for our digital/remote teaching space. Making any space your own will automatically help you feel more at ease. Change up your virtual background to match your lesson topic or theme. Dress up your desk or the wall behind your webcam so looking at them makes you smile. I'm known amongst my students and colleagues as the teacher with the fairy lights, funky coffee mugs, and visiting cats. These are all things I would have in my office at a school (okay, maybe I would have to settle for mere photos of my cats) and I've made a point of including them in my home teaching space.

### **Create a watercooler space with your colleagues, and USE IT**

I set up a Discord server (way easier than it sounds, I promise) for all the instructors at one of the companies I contract with. We started with a general chatroom and one live audio chat room. People dip in and out throughout the day, posting questions, comments, and offering words of encouragement or possible solutions to questions other people have posted. It works very much like a staff room, and the live audio channel lets people speak directly to each other, with video stream if they want. There is someone who has even arranged a weekly morning tea live stream. There is no obligation to join for any length of time, or at all in fact. But this offers a drop-in space for participants to connect in an informal setting for a few minutes. Without this space I would have never connected with any of the other teachers at this company. My social interactions would have been limited to my family and any friends I had pre-pandemic.

### **Make some of your digital engagements informal alongsides**

Sitting and staring at a screen is intense, and frankly, boring after a while. Think about how you socialise in person - you don't sit still, staring at the other person and talk, do you? We play games, we go for a

walk, we cook. Linking back to the morning tea livestream on Discord, timing is such that one participant is always on their drive to work when they join. After a few weeks of joining them on their drive and hearing updates about the journey, there was a noticeable void during the two-week stretch that this participant wasn't able to join the drop-in. Other people have baked scones, others are completing household chores while joining the drop in. By doubling up these informal chats with other more mundane tasks, the pressure is off to have a set agenda or a robust conversation and the focus becomes more genuine organic connections.

## Working Parties

### Adult EAL

#### Tania Hadlow

The adult EAL working group got off to a great start and had some productive meetings early in the year and welcomed 3 new committee members – Tania, Barbara and Arika. Unfortunately, a couple of members have had to withdraw, but planning continued in term 3 to prepare for a combined professional/social event that would allow ATESOL ACT sponsored presenters at the ACTA conference to try out their papers on a friendly audience. We were also considering presenters and a possible 'how to ace an interview' PD session. Then along came the lockdown and the postponement of the ACTA conference, so both plans have been deferred to 2022. Meanwhile, at the national level, proposed reforms of the AMEP have been centre-stage. We have provided support for and feedback on ACTA's advocacy in this space and put a hold on the plans. In term 4 we're continuing to get together to plan for next year and the AGM.

### School EAL/D

#### Janica Morella

The schools working party is continuously looking for ways to support teachers in preschool, primary and secondary schools who are teaching students with English as an additional language. The goal is to share practical strategies that we know benefits these students. On reflection, the schools working party has been successful in providing professional learning (PL) online during remote learning time both locally and nationally; as well as accessing and sharing those being organised by our state peers.

Our most recent success was a PL around Functional Grammar and ways to improve and extend our students' writing. In 2022, our first professional learning will be hosted by the National Museum of Australia discussing migration and identity and considerations for teachers in the classroom – the first of many to come. Please join us to not only extend your teaching strategy repertoire, but also to share your skill set with others.

### Mentoring

#### Helen Moore

We didn't manage to get this Working Party off the ground this year, partly because of the pressures resulting from Year 2 of COVID 19. We will give thought to how we can get this initiative underway next year. So watch this space!

## Communications

### Barbara Rogstad

The Comms Working Party has been working enthusiastically this year to refresh the ATESOL ACT website and revive our connections with our Members and Friends. Tania, our Social Media Coordinator, has done an excellent job growing engagement with our Twitter followers and on the Facebook group. (Be sure to join us for the last Thursday of every month on Facebook to swap tips, tricks, or thoughts about teaching!)

Moving forward, the newsletter will be coming to our Members and Friends once per term. Readers will notice an updated design and layout as well as new topics such as "Looking Forward", old favourites like "Event Reports", and a new feature showcasing the amazing knowledge of our TESOL educators.

Finally, a big THANK YOU to everyone who participated in the Website Survey earlier this year. From these responses we are hard at work updating the website to better provide the information our Members and Friends have indicated they need the most. At the moment, most of the changes are taking place behind the scenes, but more obvious changes will become clear in the near future.

Exciting things are coming down the pike - if you haven't connected with us on social media, bookmarked the website, or signed up for the newsletter yet, make sure you do to avoid missing out!

### Stay connected to ATESOL ACT!

<https://twitter.com/ATESOLACT>

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/545614015481708>

<https://www.atesolact.org.au/>

<https://atesolact.us3.list-manage.com/subscribe?u=610d6933c3ef8fee46690offe&id=53a70ca542>

## Membership

### Sarah Warren

The Membership Working Group has continued to discuss different ways to engage in these virtual times. We have communicated and discussed some of the impacts that the changing COVID health restraints have had on EAL/D teachers in ACT schools. This has included fragmented programs due to lockdowns, staffing changes to cover mainstream classes and the inability to network and engage with face to face professional learning. We have been interested to learn more about the different sectors of our membership, particularly TESOL students and preservice teachers. We are planning to check in through a short survey to plan for future events in 2022. We have joined in with Adult/Schools Working Groups to hear about the changes in these sectors and efforts members have made on behalf of their students in challenging circumstances. Our current focus has been to identify ways to encourage and support existing members with upcoming Early Bird Membership and planning for a casual end of year social event.

#### Membership categories

	Regular	Earlybird
Institutional	\$80	\$72.00
Full Member	\$55	\$49.50
Part time or unwaged	\$35	\$31.50
Student (no voting)	\$0	\$0.00

#### Benefits include

Discounted member's rate at events  
Voting at meetings and AGM

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# ACT Education Directorate: review of EAL/D Students Policy and Procedures

The ACT Education Directorate is seeking feedback on proposed new EAL/D Students Policy and Procedures. ATESOL ACT encourages any of our members involved with schools to consider the draft documents and give feedback. ATESOL ACT is also considering the best way to compile input from our members so that we can submit a response as an association – please keep an eye out for notice of this.

The message from the Directorate is below:

The ACT Education Directorate (the Directorate) plays an important role in ensuring schools can deliver educational services which embrace diversity and promote greater equity in learning outcomes in and across ACT schools. The review of the English as an Additional Language or Dialect (EAL/D) Students Policy and associated Procedures supports the Directorate's commitment to equitable access to education for all school aged children in the ACT.

The EAL/D Students Policy provides a framework for supporting students' English language acquisition in ACT public schools recognising the diversity of student need in the context of English language acquisition. The procedures set out the requirements for EAL/D students' English language acquisition and support ACT public schools to implement the English as an Additional Language or Dialect Students Policy.

The EAL/D Students Policy and Procedures is due to be reviewed with a planned introduction of a revised EAL/D Students Policy and Procedures to be implemented in the 2022 school year. The Directorate is inviting stakeholders to provide feedback on the drafted EAL/D Students Policy and Procedures.

The consultation will collate feedback using Google Forms. The consultation will be open for 6 weeks with feedback from stakeholders submitted by COB Friday 10th December. Participation in the consultation may begin by selecting the links below:

- [EAL/D Students Policy Feedback Form](#)
- [EAL/D Students Procedures Feedback Form](#)

Should you have any questions relating to the consultation process, please contact the EAL/D team at [EALD@act.gov.au](mailto:EALD@act.gov.au).

Save the date!

**ATESOL ACT AGM**  
**Thursday 24 March 2022**

Workshop topic and venue to be advised