

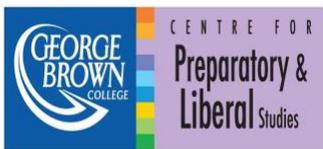


**School of ESL and Immigrant Education
George Brown College**

The Scholarship of Teaching and Learning at The School of ESL and Immigrant Education

Learn something; share something!

Summer 2022



Learning and Sharing Continue

Dear Colleagues,

It is a privilege to be able to know about, learn from, and share colleagues' varied professional and scholarly activities at the School of ESL and Immigrant Education. Through this summer issue today, I am delighted to bring the contributions of our colleagues to you. This issue is, in fact, an ode to our colleagues, who continue to inspire us in transitional times with their commitment to override pandemic paralyzes and help us lead when prioritizing student success and well-being despite insurmountable problems.

In the current issue themed "Learning and Sharing Continue," we present the opportunities colleagues at the School of ESL and Immigrant Education have creatively been involved in when supporting each other and promoting student learning. We bring in Plamen Kushkiev, who generously and bravely shares his diverse teaching experience across countries and his learning moments when carrying out his research. As a teacher and researcher, he helps us navigate and explore teacher identity and how it may evolve as teacher embraces change in tumultuous times. Through his work, Plamen supports us in our attempt to identify the importance of implementing appropriate pedagogical practices through technology use when working with EAP learners in order to promote learner interaction and learner agency. Similarly, Andrea Rankin, Andreia Arai-Rissman, Ruari MacLeod, and Val Pletch share their inspiring journey through their reading club, wherein they regularly collaborate to share their reading and navigate ways to bring research into practice and learn in the process. Their formation of the club and their collaborative approach have culminated in their commitment to learning and sharing for their professional development and have shown that learning and sharing activities should never stop. In addition, this issue also highlights members' professional and scholarly work at the School of ESL and Immigrant Education.

Determined to overcome what many psychologists call pandemic "cave syndrome," we gradually and cautiously continue to move to a return-to-school phase for our in-person classes. Our determination to continue to rise to the challenge, our unique way of scanning the world for opportunities and innovative ideas in times of chaos and confusion and our recently developed digital curriculum that honors learner variability have helped us appear uniquely poised to thrive in a post-pandemic EAP.

I invite you to engage in this issue, reflect on our work, and limitlessly celebrate together the accomplishment and innovation we have made possible at the School of ESL and Immigrant Education.

Thank you for your readership.

Raj Khatri
Co-Chair, SoTL-ESL



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Member Highlights

We are pleased to congratulate the following members at the School of ESL and Immigrant Education on their important contributions to our SoTL-ESL community:

Presentations

- Bartosik, Anna M. (2022, July 18-20). *Learning in the open: A netnography of Twitter chats for English language teachers* [Conference paper presentation]. Social Media and Society Conference, Toronto, ON, Canada
- Gill, Bhupinder, & Kucanin, Erna. (2022, May 25-27). *Fostering a community of practice through an antiracism and UDL book club* [Conference presentation]. College Association for Language and Literacy Annual Conference, Ottawa, ON, Canada.
- Kucanin, Erna. (2022, May 14). *VR in curriculum* [Panel discussion]. VirtuaTELL Spring Conference, New York State TESOL, New York, NY, United States.
- Kucanin, Erna, & Morrison, Ryan. (2022, May 25-27). *Web 3.0 EdTech tools and EDI: Affordances and challenges in language and literacy programs*. College Association for Language and Literacy Annual Conference, Ottawa, ON, Canada.
- Petrunic, Ana-Marija. (2022, June 28-29). *Universal Design for Learning: Tensions in Critical Curriculum Collaborations and Co-construction* [Virtual symposium]. Leadership for Professional Learning Symposium, Dublin, Ireland.
- Sharmaine, Itwaru. (2022, June 7-10). *Decolonizing higher education pedagogy* [Conference presentation]. Society for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education Annual Conference. Ottawa, ON, Canada.

Research Publication

- Bartosik, Anna M. (2022). *Learning to stay ahead of the curve: A netnographic analysis of professional Development in English language teacher chats on Twitter* [Doctoral dissertation, University of Toronto]. ProQuest Dissertations Publishing. <https://tspace.library.utoronto.ca/handle/1807/123569>

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Learn & Share Corner

Journals and Newsletters

Check out these journals and newsletters for the latest developments in the field.

- [The Canadian Journal for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning](#)
- [The Electronic Journal for English as a Second Language](#)
- [TESL Canada Journal](#)
- [TESL Ontario CONTACT](#)

Upcoming Conferences and Workshops

- [Alberta TESL](#) (October 14 15)
- [TESL Ontario Virtual Conference](#) (October 26 – 28)
- [Ontario Universities Council on Quality Assurance](#) (October 27 – 28)
- [TESOL Worldwide Calendar of Events](#)

Scholarship of Teaching and Learning

- [Scholarship of Teaching and Learning \(SoTL\) Canada](#)
- [International Society for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning \(ISSoTL\)](#)
- [Society for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education \(STLHE\)](#)



The SoTL-ESL News

Interview with Plamen Kushkiev

Plamen Kushkiev has worked in the field of ESL, TESL training, and EAP since 2007 in Bulgaria, Egypt, UAE, and Canada. He is passionate about EAP teacher learning and engages in continuous development as a college professor and teacher-researcher. Plamen is currently completing his Doctorate in Education from a university in the United Kingdom with a primary research focus on EAP teacher identity, EAP pedagogy, and socio-political aspects of teaching EAP, particularly in the context of public colleges in Ontario.

"My research interest in this construct is serendipitous, yet timely because it was necessitated by the sudden onset of the global pandemic in March 2020. The dramatic and unpremeditated shift to online teaching created a discursive space to reflect and make sense of who I was *being* and *becoming* as a second language teaching professional while negotiating an identity of an online EAP teacher."

Thank you for joining us today for sharing your insight through our SoTL-ESL Newsletter. Could you please briefly tell us about your professional background in the EAP/ESL field?

I have always been fascinated with learning foreign languages and exploring multilingual individuals' ability to communicate in different languages. I initially worked as an interpreter, with assignments in the Arabic, Bulgarian and English languages, for nearly two years while studying and traveling in the Middle East. In 2008, I started a full-time teaching position at a college in Abu Dhabi and thus entered the field of English language teaching.



During my seven-year tenure at the college, I taught all levels of general and spoken English, IELTS, TOEFL and business communication courses. I was later promoted to the post of an English lecturer which involved facilitating two college-level credit courses at the college. At the same time, I was also engaged in developing course materials and adapting assessment tools for elective courses, including critical thinking, study skills, and history and culture of the UAE.

In Canada, my TESL experience is quite diverse as I've taught courses at LINC centres, visa schools, public universities, and

colleges in Toronto as an EAP and communication professor. As well, I've worked as a TESL trainer and practicum supervisor in both virtual and in-person teacher training courses. However, I've found home in EAP teaching as I derive immense professional satisfaction and motivation working with EAP learners and doing my part in helping them with their educational journey in Canada.

My current doctoral research is therefore grounded in my professional context within the remit of EAP and is focused on exploring my perceptions of evolving EAP teacher identity during the forced pivot to emergency remote delivery and post-COVID-19 EAP-specific pedagogy.

As I have learned, EAP teacher identity as pedagogy is one of the areas that you are interested in. Would you briefly tell us about this particular interest and how it has influenced your EAP teaching in the process of supporting our students in their academic endeavours at the School of ESL and Immigrant Education?

My research interest in this construct is serendipitous, yet timely because it was necessitated by the sudden onset of the global pandemic in March 2020. The dramatic and unpremeditated shift to online teaching created a discursive space to reflect and make sense of who I was *being* and *becoming* as a second language teaching professional while negotiating an identity of an online EAP teacher. As several scholars, including Brian Morgan, Gary Barkhuizen, and Tom Farrell, have suggested, who we are as individuals and teachers is how we teach and interact with our learners and all other agents.

In a sense, this research topic has chosen *me* because of the need to understand what informs my pedagogical realisations, and how I can make my teaching more meaningful and transformative. Our teacher identity is negotiated in interaction with our learners and our perceptions of non-human elements of our practice such as Web 2.0 tools and LMSs. This perspective decentres the teacher as the sage on the stage and creates a space to re-imagine the power dynamics in the EAP classroom. I believe it is a step closer to a more humanistic, differentiated, and inclusive EAP teaching practice. Gaining a deeper understanding of what informs our pedagogical decisions fosters our continuous re-conceptualization of how to facilitate the learners' induction into the academic community.

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The SoTL-ESL News

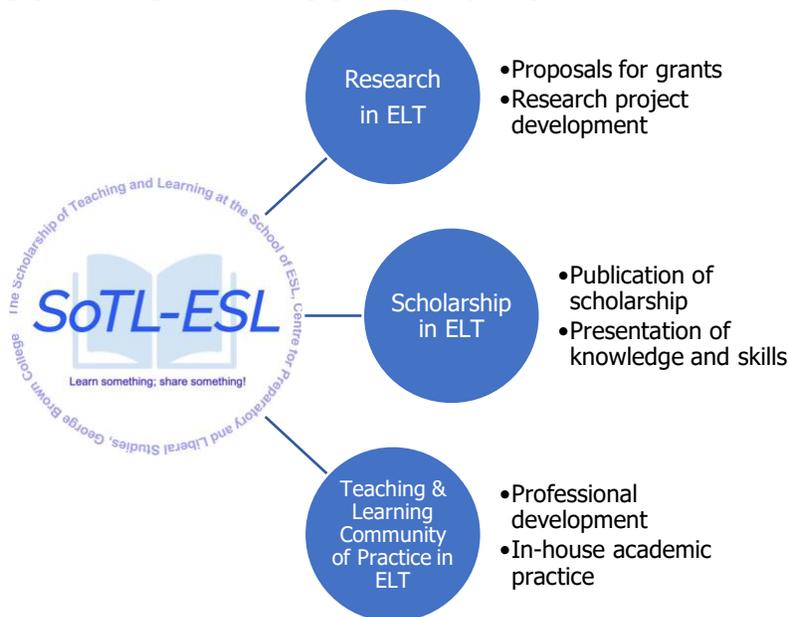
What does the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning at the School of ESL and Immigrant Education (SoTL-ESL) mean?

The Scholarship of Teaching and Learning at the School of ESL and Immigrant Education (SoTL-ESL) was launched on November 4 of 2019 at George Brown College's School of ESL and Immigrant Education in order to enhance student learning through scholarly works among faculty members teaching English for academic purposes (EAP). Honouring the core values of SoTL and the nature of English language teaching and learning at the School of ESL and Immigrant Education, SoTL-ESL is defined at the School of ESL and Immigrant Education as the systematic study of teaching and learning in the English language teaching (ELT) field (*Research in ELT*) that involves the public sharing of the study findings and promotes scholarship among ELT teachers (*Scholarship in ELT*) in order to improve instructional practices and maximize learners' language learning. In addition, SoTL-ESL provides ELT teachers with opportunities for professional development (*Teaching and Learning Community of Practice in ELT*) at the School of ESL and Immigrant Education.

Building upon Felten's (2013)* principles of good practice in SoTL, SoTL-ESL includes inquiry into ELT that is methodologically sound and learner-focused, incorporates an awareness of the challenges unique to the ELT field, is conducted in partnership with learners in GBC's context, and is publicly available for critique and application.

*Felten, P. (2013). Principles of good practice in SoTL. *Teaching & Learning Inquiry: The ISSOTL Journal*, 1(1), 121-125.

SoTL-ESL: Three Domains



The SoTL-ESL Committee

Raj Khatri and Ana-Marija Petrunic (Co-Chairs)

Sharmaine Itwaru (*Research in ELT*)

Jeff Brown (*Scholarship in ELT*)

Maria Glass and Andrea Rankin (*Teaching and Learning Community of Practice in ELT*)

Invitation to submit articles

SoTL-ESL is now accepting feature articles for its future issues. Faculty members are encouraged to submit their articles that have a maximum length of 1,000 words, including references. Articles previously published will not be accepted for re-publication. Review of articles submitted can take from 3 weeks to 2 months. Articles may address research work in ELT or may highlight practical tips and strategies in ELT, instructional methods, materials, and resources, technology in ELT classrooms, curriculum design, universal design for learning in ELT or assessment strategies in the field of TESOL and applied linguistics.

Member Insight

Academic Article Reading Club: A Collaborative Approach to Learning and Sharing in ELT

By Andrea Rankin, Andreia Arai-Rissman, Ruari MacLeod, and Val Pletch

The Academic Article Reading Club (AARC), part of the PD programming within SoTL-ESL's *Teaching and Learning Community of Practice in ELT* at the School of ESL and Immigrant Education, has been running monthly meetings since January of 2022. The reading club is one of the many ways we, at the School of ESL and Immigrant Education, strive to create communities of practice. By promoting scholarly conversations among colleagues and helping each other to apply research to improve classroom practices, AARC supports faculty members in their effort to stay current in research within the field of TESOL and applied linguistics. As members critically engage in reading journal articles, they inevitably reflect on their own teaching practice, how it has changed over their careers, and the ways they can advance in the field to support student learning.

Some thoughts from our members:

Andrea Rankin (Coordinator, Faculty and SoTL-ESL Committee Member): Starting a journal article reading club as a path to build community and bridge the gap between research and practice has been on my 'to-do' list for years. Once we start teaching, many of us do not have time to keep up on current research or may even feel that the language and the field of research are inaccessible to classroom teachers. For the first meeting, I spent hours poring over the article to come up with worthy discussion questions. As teachers often do, I overprepared for our first meeting thinking it should be like a post-grad seminar, which is probably what delayed me from starting the club. I was quickly reminded that teachers have a lot to share. The preparation turned into a pre-reading and post-reading question, and everyone coming prepared to discuss one or two passages from the article that resonated with them. In this small community of teaching and learning practice, we are all benefitting from each other's expertise and experience and how our discussions on the research can inform our teaching practice.

Andreia Arai-Rissman (Faculty): The Academic Article Reading Club has been a fantastic opportunity to be part of a supportive community of teaching practice. The fact that we meet once a month provides an opportunity for us to critically read and explore the content, which, in turn, allows us to become aware of new methods, strategies, and studies in our field. The discussions are lively and informative, and members critically read and share their content connections to other areas of expertise and teaching experiences. For me, the most meaningful part is to listen to colleagues' perspectives, reflect upon my teaching practice, and apply new strategies to build inclusive, engaging, and effective classrooms.

Ruari MacLeod (Faculty): We have read and discussed a number of journal articles during our Academic Article Reading Club meetings. One of the articles was *An Exploration of Language Teacher Reflection, Emotion Labor, and Emotional Capital* (Gkonou & Miller, 2021), which examined the *emotional capital* teachers bring to their practice, and how they may cultivate that through their interactions with students and colleagues. One of the main ideas (as I understood it) is that educators - like other professionals - come to identify with their peers partly through shared ways of communicating and describing the work that they do. This can include ways of reacting to situations - emotional responses to things that happen at work - and learning which reactions are appropriate or inappropriate in their specific professional context. The idea is that teachers learn how to manage their emotions as part of their professional practice, and it is influenced by the institutional ethos (among other things). This process is especially interesting because it can be regarded as a central component of teacher identity formation as well as an element of socialization that can occur within communities of practicing educators.

Val Pletch (Faculty): I love learning. When I was doing my master's degree, I enjoyed reading about theories and discussing them. I know I became a better teacher after sharing my ideas and learning how others implemented theories into their classrooms. After I graduated, I really missed that community to connect, learn, and share. When COVID-19 hit, I wanted to stay connected with colleagues in order to share our online trials and tribulations. As time passed, my new virtual reality became more and more normal. Unfortunately, that also meant, at times, feeling somewhat isolated. When I heard about AARC, I knew I wanted to participate. I was craving learning, sharing, and connection.

Our AARC topics have included teacher feedback, teacher reflection, plagiarism, corporate storytelling, and acquiring vocabulary. The hour-long meetings fly by, and I leave with new perspectives and ideas to incorporate into my teaching.

For our next meeting, we are branching out into the podcast world to discuss *Mindful Technology* from the *UDL Think* podcast.

I am so grateful that this positive AARC community was initiated. It has provided us with the opportunity to learn, share, reflect and expand our teaching knowledge.

References

- Gkonou, C. and Miller, E.R. (2021), An exploration of language teacher reflection, emotion labor, and emotional capital. *TESOL Quarterly*, 55(1), 134-155. <https://doi.org.gbcprx01.georgebrown.ca/10.1002/tesq.580>
- Nave, L. (Host). (2022, August 24). *Mindful Technology with Jenae Cohn* (No. 68) [Audio podcast episode]. In *Podbeam*. <https://thinkudl.podbean.com/e/mindful-technology-with-jenae-cohn/>

Interview with Plamen Kushkiev

Continued from page 3

“As my research, which I have recently carried out as part of my doctoral studies, suggests, one essential aspect of a fully virtual EAP pedagogy is the risk of assuming the position of power and disrupting the power (im-)balance in teacher-learner relationships while we engage in our own teacher learning.”

As an EAP Professor at the School and Immigrant Education, would you briefly tell us about your role and how you have engaged in supporting students, particularly at the time when most of the instructional and curriculum activities continue to be online?

I am grateful to all teaching and administration staff members at the School of ESL and Immigrant Education who supported us during the week of the transition to emergency remote delivery in March 2020. It was an intensive week of active learning, hands-on sessions and brainstorming how to support our EAP learners to continue their studies despite the unexpected shift to a fully virtual delivery of the program. It was important to maintain the human connection with students and colleagues despite our being physically apart.

My position is that technology, although pivotal for *effective* EAP teaching, should complement sound pedagogical practices that are tailored to the needs, expectations, and developing competencies of the learners. Teaching online has helped me to re-vitalize my teaching approach by adapting pre-pandemic communicative lesson frameworks to be used during the synchronous lessons. I was also engaged in continuous and rigorous training in Web 2.0 tools and utilization of suitable software, approved by the College, which helped me to facilitate classroom and asynchronous peer interaction and maintain *normalcy* in the virtual classroom. It was critical that learners were, in fact, supported as they were also navigating an unexpected or uncharted territory of studying and being assessed thoroughly in an online environment within our EAP program. Therefore, my aim was to emulate our pre-pandemic classroom reality as much as possible.

As my research, which I have recently carried out as part of my doctoral studies, suggests, one essential aspect of a fully virtual EAP pedagogy is the risk of assuming the position of power and disrupting the power (im-)balance in teacher-learner relationships while we engage in our own teacher learning. My research results indicated that I started to de-humanize my teaching while being actively involved in developing my technological and pedagogical interactional competencies, so the learners were placed at the receiving end of instruction as somewhat passive recipients of new knowledge. Online teaching may result in increased teacher talking time, less peer interaction and assigning a peripheral role of the learner. In order to address these concerns, my main pedagogical goal since we shifted to virtual instruction has been to foster learner interaction, diversify their methods of expression and help them to exercise their learner agency during the synchronous sessions and when completing the course assignments.

In addition to your teaching EAP, you continue to professionally engage at the same time in and outside of GBC. Could you share your insights into how we, faculty members at the School of ESL and Immigrant Education, can continue our professional development opportunities and stay current in the field while supporting student success at the same time?

In light of my response to the previous question, I'd like to emphasize the importance of prior teacher experience and accumulated pedagogical knowledge. I had been learning how to make my teaching more communicative and learner-centred for over a decade before the pandemic disrupted most social activities that we used to take for granted. The research study I conducted has also indicated a critical need to reflect, critically and systematically, on my pedagogical realisations and teaching principles. However, I was never taught how to engage in reflection or reflective practice despite the ubiquitous presence of this term in the literature and teacher training courses.

I believe as EAP teachers, we are essentially teacher-learners, but this also suggests we *know* what it is that we should focus on to enrich and diversify our teacher and pedagogical knowledge base. Learning how to reflect is an important step in the direction of relevant teacher learning. Our instructional practices in the classroom can provide an excellent source of data and can effectively form or turn into action research, capable of informing transformative action.

Writing and producing oral reflections about our teaching performance can generate useful data to identify specific areas and aspects of our practice which may need adaptation, improvement, or re-vitalization, particularly in the context of indigenizing and adopting a more inclusive and dynamic curriculum. Collaborating with fellow EAP professors on elements of EAP specific teaching methodology can be a significant step towards a more *effective* teacher learning. I think we owe it to our students to be(come) expert teacher-learners!

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