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Editorial - v9

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Editorial
by David T. Lind &
Alison Camacho

We submit with pleasure the Fall/Winter 2023 edition of the EnglishUSA Journal. In acknowledgment of their crucial role, we express our profound gratitude to all the authors who have contributed to this Journal. Your submissions are the foundation of our publication, and we sincerely value the time, effort, and dedication each contribution requires. It is through your work that the EnglishUSA Journal continues to thrive and serve the community of English Language Programs (ELPs) in the United States and beyond.

The year 2023 witnessed a groundbreaking collaboration between EnglishUSA and the respected international education research firm, BONARD, with the first-time publication of the Annual Report for English Language Programs in the USA. Containing 25 pages of granular enrollment data—broken down by institution type, visa type, program duration, country of origin, student age, destination state, recruitment vehicle, and other categories—the report is designed to supplement the already useful information published annually in the IIE Open Doors survey results and the SEVIS by the Numbers release. Insights derived from the new annual report will strengthen advocacy efforts by “enabling EnglishUSA to better represent and support its membership and the entire English language program community,” says Cheryl Delk-Le Good, Executive Director of EnglishUSA. The current issue contains selected highlights from the report, included in our recurring Advocacy Corner section, co-authored on this occasion by EnglishUSA Past-

President, Haviva Parnes, and President-Elect, Daryl Bish. The full report is available to members who log in to the EnglishUSA website. An executive summary has been made available to the public.

The present issue brings a wealth of insights from authors representing a broad cross-section of the ELP community. With technology playing an increasingly prominent role inside and outside the classroom, it is perhaps unsurprising that three contributions to this issue feature technology being used creatively as a tool. The first of these introduces us to the exciting field of virtual reality-assisted language learning, courtesy of Dr. Trisha Thrasher, a VR language learning researcher at the pioneering language-learning platform, Immerse. In her article, *“Using Virtual Reality to Develop English Language Learners’ Conversation Skills,”* Dr. Thrasher shares cutting edge developments and applications from her experience using this technology.

Our second technology-featured piece proposes AI as a tool to help academic authors in our field. Amid feelings of uneasiness towards AI and its increasingly powerful capabilities, Dr. Ron Martinez, faculty writing coach at the University of Oklahoma’s Center for Faculty Excellence, offers a positive take on the topic with his article, entitled *“AI as Collaborative Muse: Enhancing Pre-Writing for Academic Authors.”*

Last but not least among our technology-featured contributions, if you are among the many instructors whose students rarely seem to read or understand your syllabus, then this study might be for you! Mark Makino, an instructor at the American Language and Culture Center at Southern Utah University, shares results from a study in which a concordancer was employed to determine the frequency of key terms and word chunks in

college course syllabi, as compared with the frequency of these same items in an academic English corpus and also a non-academic American English corpus. The findings of the study, entitled *"The Purposes of First-Year Course Syllabi According to Corpus Data,"* have potential implications for instructors at IEPs who would like to ensure their students get more out of course syllabi.

In the student-centered classroom, instructors are always trying to find ways for students to draw upon each other for inspiration and tips on how to enhance the language learning process. The more students can tap into valuable insights from their peers, the more opportunities become available for co-constructing an environment of collaborative learning. This is convincingly illustrated in this issue by Dr. Laura E. Mendoza, Assistant Professor of ESOL at the University of El Paso, Texas, in her piece, *"Peer reflections in the College Classroom."*

Academic writing does not occur in a vacuum, as Dr. Adil Bentahar from the University of Delaware's MA-TESL program and Dr. Mahmoud Altalouli from State University of New York at Brockport clearly demonstrate in this issue. Their article, *"Bolstering Student Writing Through the Reading-to-Critique and Reading-to-Synthesize Approach"* reveals enlightening perspectives of students at two IEPs, after undergoing a scaffolded and highly structured synthesis approach to academic writing.

We close this edition by sharing an interview we conducted with TESOL's Director of Advocacy and Public Policy, Jeff Hutcheson. Having previously served in an advocacy role as President of the American Association of Intensive English Programs (now EnglishUSA) from 2008 to 2011, Hutcheson retraces his career and offers insights on advocacy and policy, garnered over more than three decades of service to our field.

We hope you enjoy reading this issue as much as we enjoyed putting it together. We take this opportunity to remind our readers that the EnglishUSA 2024 Virtual Professional Development Conference takes place on Friday February 24. The conference is a great opportunity to keep abreast of the latest developments in our field in a forum designed and delivered by your peers. You can register for the event on the [EnglishUSA website](#).

David Lind, Ed.D., is Director of International Programs for Syracuse University's College of Professional Studies, where he oversees the English Language Institute and manages pathway and grant-funded programs for international students. He serves as Secretary for the EnglishUSA Board and Chair of the Professional Development Activities Committee.

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