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Editorial

David T. Lind
Syracuse University

Alison Camacho
Department of State

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Editorial

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Editorial
by David T. Lind &
Alison Camacho

The Spring/Summer 2024 edition of the EnglishUSA Journal is here, and we want to express our sincerest gratitude to everyone who shared their work with us for this Journal. We truly value the time, energy, and passion invested in each submission. As we reflect on the past year, it is evident that the landscape of English language programs (ELPs) is rapidly evolving. This edition of our publication highlights key trends and insights that are shaping the future (and present) of ELPs, inside the classroom and out.

Our feature article for this edition, "*First-Generation African Americans in English Language Education*," by Quanisha Charles from North Central College explores the unique challenges faced by first-generation African American students in ELPs. This article underscores the importance of representation and belonging in ELPs and proposes solutions and support systems for first-generation African Americans who are joining the profession. It also highlights the need for further research into making the English language education profession more supportive of underrepresented groups.

In "*Building Speaking Confidence with Call Annie*," Andy Mattingly from Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University explores the use of generative AI to support students in overcoming their fear of speaking in a target language. The article delves into how the app Call Annie can be used as a confidence-building tool, providing practical scenarios and real-time feedback to enhance students' speaking skills.

Megan Chiusaroli from Savannah College of Art and Design presents "*Interactive Warm-ups that Promote Engagement and Build Community*." This piece discusses the importance of starting classes with engaging warm-up activities that foster a sense of community and enhance student participation. Chiusaroli divides these activities into personal, cultural, and creative categories, offering a variety of strategies that can be easily adapted to different learning environments.

Jennifer West from Temple University introduces a novel approach to online learning in "*Using a Virtual Escape Room for Active Learning in an Online University ESL Course*." West shares her experience with gamification through virtual escape rooms, demonstrating how these interactive activities can boost student engagement, collaboration, and motivation in an online ESL context.

Sherry L. Steeley and Suzanne Matula from Georgetown University describe the impact of virtual class-to-class exchanges in their article "*Building Cultural and Educational Understandings through Class-to-Class Exchanges*." Through a case study of an initiative sponsored by the U.S. Department of State's Office of English Language Programs, the authors highlight the benefits of such exchanges in promoting cross-cultural understanding and professional development among teachers and students from diverse backgrounds.



"Fostering Intercultural Communication via International Conversation Partners" by Quanisha Charles and Malika Nazyrbekova from North Central College emphasizes the benefits of pairing international and domestic students for cultural exchanges. This article outlines the structure of their initiative, the International Conversational Partners program, detailing how it helps students develop intercultural communication skills and build meaningful connections.

Our interview segment this issue features Cheryl Delk-Le Good, Executive Director of EnglishUSA, and Jackie McCafferty, Director of Temple University's Center for American Language and Culture. The two shared insights into the recent Certified Trade Mission to Mexico and Colombia. They discussed the history, goals, and outcomes of the trade missions, emphasizing their role in promoting English language programs in the U.S. and fostering international collaboration.

Lastly, Daryl Bish, President-elect of EnglishUSA, and Haviva Parnes, Immediate Past President, share a summary of the latest collaborative advocacy efforts of the organization. As we look ahead, it is evident that embracing innovation and fostering inclusivity are crucial for the advancement of our field. We hope this edition inspires you to implement new strategies, build supportive communities, and continue making a positive impact on your students' lives.

Thank you for your dedication to this field and for your commitment to continuous improvement. Together, we can shape a more dynamic and inclusive future for English Language Programs.

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.

Alison Camacho is the Marketing and Outreach Manager for English Language Programs - a program of the U.S. Department of State. She is co-editor of the EnglishUSA journal and a member of the Professional Development Activities Committee. Her work focuses on strengthening connections within the English language programs community by providing a variety of engagement and professional development opportunities.

