

# AL/TESOL TIMES

Annual Newsletter of the Applied Linguistics and TESOL Program · Teachers College, Columbia University



## A Letter from the editor

In 2025, we are witnessing astonishing breakthroughs in artificial intelligence—tools that can generate, predict, and even appear to “understand.” We are also surrounded by growing uncertainty: global conflicts with no end in sight, rising tensions at home, and a sense that the world is moving faster than our capacity to make meaning of it.

And yet—within our classrooms, our research, and our communities—we continue to find clarity and purpose. We are reminded daily that intelligence is ultimately not the product of machines, but also the result of human connection, reflection, and

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care. AI can assist, accelerate, even impress—but it cannot replace the empathy, creativity, and judgment that define real learning and leadership.

Alongside instability, something steady endures: our commitment to learning, to listening, and to leading with humanity. In this year's *AL/TESOL Times*, we do not simply celebrate academic milestones—we affirm the presence of people at the heart of every meaningful change. It is not AI, or policy, or machines that hold communities together. It is educators, students, researchers, friends. People.

As we look ahead, we hold space for both possibility and responsibility. The tools may be new, but the core question remains timeless: How can we use what we know to serve one another better?

Warmly,  
Zhangdaiwei (Davynn) Xu (Editor)  
and  
Dr. Howard Williams (Advisor)

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## A Grateful Farewell to Dr. Vivian Lindhardsen



Dr. Vivian Lindhardsen has served as Lecturer and Senior Lecturer in the AL&TESOL Program since 2009. For the past six years she has also served as Program Director. She and her husband are returning to her native Denmark to be with family.

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## AIRiAL 2024: Expanding the Horizons of AI in Language Education

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By Kedi Mo

This past September, the second annual Artificial Intelligence Research in Applied Linguistics (AIRiAL) Conference was held at Teachers College, Columbia University, gathering researchers, educators, and technologists from around the world for two days of rich exchange on the theme “AI in Education: Empowering Learners & Preparing Educators.” Organized by the ALTESOL Language and Technology Research Group, the event welcomed over 100 participants from 10 countries and 17 U.S. states, marking our most international and interdisciplinary turnout to date.

Held on September 27–28, AIRiAL 2024 featured over 40 presentations spanning paper sessions, posters, colloquia, and tech demos. The program covered a wide range of topics at the intersection of AI and language education, including automated feedback, chatbot-mediated learning, VR-enhanced vocabulary instruction, and AI-driven assessment. A mix of empirical studies, theoretical insights, and classroom innovations made the conference both rigorous and practically relevant. A standout component was the hands-on demo session, where students and researchers showcased emerging AI tools from multimodal storytelling apps to AI-powered resume feedback platforms. These demonstrations captured the spirit of the conference: grounded in research, driven by innovation, and dedicated to improving real-world language teaching and learning.



*Left: Monica Arés, Executive Director of IDEA Lab at Imperial College Business School ;  
Right: Yanis Ben Amor, Executive Director of the Center for Sustainable Development at the Climate School*



*Photo: Planning Committee (L–R) - Dr. Erik Voss, Shamini Shetye (Chair), Kedi Mo, Yilin Zhang, and Dan Eskin.*

Opening remarks were delivered by President Thomas Bailey, Dean KerryAnn O’Meara, and Professor Erik Voss, framing the event around the increasing significance of AI in shaping the future of education and research. The conference featured two plenary speakers offering complementary perspectives. Dr. Yanis Ben Amor, Assistant Professor of Global Health and Executive Director of the Center for Sustainable Development at

Columbia University, discussed global disparities in AI access and called for more equitable integration of technology in education. Monica Arés, Executive Director of Innovation at the IDEA Lab, Imperial College Business School, presented advances in XR and generative AI to support more engaging and inclusive learning environments.

We would like to acknowledge the contributions of everyone who made AIRiAL 2024 possible. Our sponsors included the Duolingo English Test, Language Testing International, the British Council, and the Digital Futures Institute. The planning committee consisted of Shamini Shetye (Chair), Dan Eskin, Xin Li, Kedi Mo, and Yilin Zhang. We also thank the reviewers who

evaluated proposals, the student volunteers who supported event logistics, and the presenters and attendees whose participation shaped the success of the conference.

Plans for AIRiAL 2025, themed “Social AI: The Future of Emotionally Intelligent Machines,” are already underway, with the dates set for September 25–27, 2025. We’re excited to continue these vital conversations at the intersection of artificial intelligence and applied linguistics.



*Photo: Connecting minds at AIRiAL 2024*

## Celebration of Teaching 2025: Mental Health in the Classroom

By Licen Liu

The 11th Annual Celebration of Teaching Conference at Teachers College, Columbia University took place on Saturday, April 26, 2025. Established by students in the TESOL/AL Program in 2014, CoT has highlighted various exploratory teaching practices to address challenges faced by teachers and language learners in schools today.

CoT provides a space for participants to network with fellow teachers-in-training, current classroom teachers, peers from TC, and community members from various backgrounds. It is free of registration fees, attracting enrollment from local schools.



*Photo: Focused audience during the conference session*

This year, our theme focused on mental health in the classroom. Presentations touched specifically on demo teaching lessons offering techniques to use with students with learning disabilities such as ADHD, ways to celebrate the cultural backgrounds present in the classroom, methods of working with language learners, immigrants, and newcomers, and even methods of utilizing AI in the classroom.



*Photo: Dr. John Allegrante share his insights.*

Our keynote speaker was Dr. John Allegrante. He has been a member of the Teachers College faculty since 1979, serving as department chair, deputy provost, and associate vice president for international affairs. As an applied behavioral scientist, Dr. Allegrante has published extensively on epistemological, theoretical, and methodological issues, as well as research-to-practice translation, in the science of health promotion and education. He is a co-founder of the Anxiety Research Project and principal co-editor of *Anxiety Culture: The New Global State of Affairs* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2024), which takes up anxiety as a sociocultural

concern. Titled “Living with Uncertainty: How to Endure when Stability Slips Away”, Dr. Allegrante’s presentation highlighted a mental health epidemic rampant throughout our world, especially among the younger generations. Based on research data, he proposed that anxiety deserves greater attention now as a cultural concern, and how the new book he and his project colleagues have published takes up anxiety as a sociocultural concern. Key questions for everyone to ponder upon are: How is anxiety perceived across cultures and in different socio-political and economic contexts? What is the role and responsibility of our social mediating structures—especially education—to address anxiety culture? And what are the long-term impacts and costs of anxiety culture on society?



*Photo: Presentations with demo teaching*



## CIFLTE 2024-25: A Year in Photos

By Ashley Beccia

The Center for International Foreign Language Teacher Education (CIFLTE) continues to thrive, promoting academic excellence and innovation in language teaching. Explore the people, programs, and public events that shaped CIFLTE this year—with just a few words, and many pictures!

### TCSOL Certificate Program

This year marked the 15<sup>th</sup> cohort of CIFLTE's Teaching Chinese to Speakers of Other Languages (TCSOL) Certificate Program in New York.



*Top left: Zhizi (ZZ) Chen teaching the Practicum I course in October.*

*Top right: Participants with Ashley Beccia (seated), instructor of Acquisition, Pedagogy & Assessment I, in December.*

*Bottom left: Professor Lening Liu (second from left) with participants on the last class of Chinese Pedagogical Grammar II in April.*

*Bottom right: Professor ZhaoHong Han provides closing remarks at the cohort's Capstone Project presentations in May.*

## Say My Name Café

In November, in celebration of International Education Week, CIFLTE partnered with the TC Office of International Students and Scholars (OISS) to host Say My Name Café.



Participants in the TCSOL Program 2024-25, guide attendees in the pronunciation of Chinese names.  
Top: Yifan Wang (middle) and Yifei Huang (right). Bottom: Yifan Chong (left) and Shuang Wang (middle).

## Workshops

Several workshops and three public talks were hosted by CIFLTE through the year, with a mixture of in-person and online modes of delivery drawing attendees from near and far.



Top: Professor JiaFei Hong of National Taiwan Normal University, Professor Hansun Waring and Dr. Vivian Lindhardsen of the TESOL/AL Program led workshops for TCSOL students.

Bottom, from left: Professor Qi Huyang (Shanghai Normal University) - Chinese pedagogical grammar.

Bottom, in the middle: Professor Luke Plonsky (Northern Arizona University) - study quality in applied linguistics.

Bottom, from right: Professor John Rogers (The Hong Kong Polytechnic University) on Input Spacing in Second Language Learning.

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## Pushing Boundaries: The SLA Doctoral Seminar in AY2024-2025

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By Professor Zhaohong Han

This academic year has been marked by both intense effort and genuine excitement for the group. With laser focus, everyone has been developing, exploring, or substantiating their dissertation topics – a process filled with moments of joy, anxiety, and a growing sense of intellectual accomplishment.



*Photo: participants – joined by friends Sean (from the Language Use track) and Mohammed (from the TC-Tunisia Project) cooled down at a cozy Japanese cafe after an energetic one-hour Salsa lesson in a midtown Manhattan studio. The excitement on their faces, mixed with a touch of post-dance sweat, says it all.*

Throughout the year, participants have been deeply engaged with projects at their respective developmental stages (aka “hurdles”). The topics span a wide range of timely and impactful issues:

- Suemin Park (A&HL 8900), Digital Gameplay Affordances and Incidental Vocabulary Acquisition: A Multiple Case Study

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- Ashley Beccia (A&HL 8900), Task Complexity and Learner Agency: A Dynamic Investigation into Young Learners' Task Performance
  - Abby Massaro (A&HL 6507), Early German-English Bilinguals' Sensitivity to Use of German Fronting Alternatives
  - Zhizi Chen (A&HL 6507), Effects of Repetition on Word Knowledge: A Partial Replication of Webb (2007)
  - Jill Williams (A&HL 6507), Foreign Language Anxiety from a CDST Perspective
  - Shamini Shetye (A&HL 6507), Vocabulary Learning via Chatbots
  - Emily Kutz (A&HL 6507), Language Teacher Cognition: Content Knowledge, Pedagogical Knowledge, and Belief
  - Liza Ostolaza (A&HL 5507), English-Medium Instruction and Academic Language Proficiency: What do We Know?

This year, alongside their individual projects, SLA Docsem participants also collaborated on two publications:

- Park, S.M., Sok, S. & Han, Z-H. (2024). Using game-mediated digital tasks to elicit data on incidental vocabulary learning. In Sadeghi, K (Ed.), *The Routledge handbook of technological advances in researching language learning* (pp. 145-157). Taylor & Francis.
- Han, Z-H., Park, S, & Shetye, S. (in press). *Quasi-experimental research in digital language learning*.

There is more in the pipeline, and much still lies ahead for the SLA Docsem.

## Capping Off the Journey: Cheers to the Class of 2025



From Left to Right: Dr. Howard Williams with Weiting Yuan (M.A. TESOL, 25)



From Left to Right: Ruotong (Annie) Li (M.A. TESOL, 25); Yajing Yang (M.A. Applied Linguistics, 25)



From Left to Right: Lei Zhuo (M.A. TESOL, 25); Yue Zhu (M.A. TESOL, 25); Yifan (April) Zhang (M.A. Applied Linguistics, 25); Xiaoyue Liu (M.A. Applied Linguistics, 25); Xinyang Yuan (M.A. TESOL, 25)



Dr. Hansun Waring places the doctoral hood on Kelly Frantz (Ed.D, 25) in the graduation ceremony.

## Spotlight on AL/TESOL Achievements

### Provost Grant Awards

**Jessica Coombs** - “Manipulating, Vocalizing, and Prompting: Involvement Strategies with a Preverbal Child”

**Cicely Rude** - “Real Human Connections in Virtual Play Spaces: “Pop-off” as an Involvement Strategy in Collaborative Video Game Play”

**Kelly Frantz** - “Is that what you’re tryna say?': A Study of Consultant Practices for Prioritizing Writer Intention”

**Lily Zu** - “Text Message Openings in Mandarin in the Digital Age”



*Photo: Cicely Rude Presenting her project at Education Expo 2025*

In *Real Human Connections in Virtual Play Spaces: “Pop-off” as an Involvement Strategy in Collaborative Video Game Play*, I examine how online video games serve as rich virtual environments for meaningful interaction. Players from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds build group identities and forge emotional connections through real-time conversation. Despite the richness of these peer-to-peer interactions, micro-level engagement in gaming contexts remains underexplored. Drawing on 20 hours of video data from two Canadian professional “Let’s Players” collaboratively playing a single-player game, I analyze their talk using an interactional sociolinguistic framework, incorporating ethnographic observation, detailed transcript analysis, and playback

interviews. The study focuses on a multimodal involvement strategy the players call a “pop-off”, an explosive expression of excitement that links players to each other as well as to shared knowledge of the game world and to broader media and real-world contexts. This strategy fosters

emotional rapport, shared understanding, and playful engagement, highlighting the complex ways people connect through play.

These forms of in-game talk have implications beyond gaming, particularly for language education, where fostering conversational involvement and engagement through authentic, symmetrical discourse is important for learning. Video game play offers real-world models of emotionally charged, cooperative dialogue in contexts where speakers negotiate meaning, build rapport, and have equal rights and responsibilities for contributing. With an estimated 3.32 billion players globally and revenues of \$187.7 billion in 2024, video games now represent one of the most widespread social arenas on the Internet. Studying how people talk while playing not only sheds light on 21st-century communication practices but also informs how we might design more engaging learning environments.

—— Cicely Rude



*Photo: APPLE and Fanselow Awardees (from left to right)  
Sharon Chan, Cicely Rude, Yuhan Jiang, and Ayana Yanai*

## Fanselow Awards

**Sylvia Shanti Ravichanthiran**

Rites of Passage

Intermediate 3, in the Community Language Program

**Cicely Rude**

“They’re doing it again!”:

A Conversation Analytic Approach to Teaching Affective Displays  
Through Person Reference

**Ayana Yanai**

Voice and Choice in Genre-based Writing:  
An Argumentative Writing Unit on the Death Penalty

## APPLE Awards

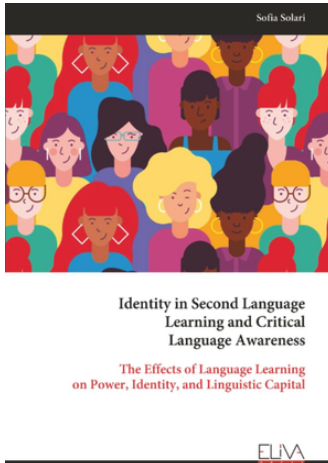
**Sharon Chan**

Does teaching EFL affect the language of native English-speaking teachers?

Exploring the experiences of Japan’s EFL teachers.

**Yuhan Jiang**

The use of turn-initial "fe" as disjunctive marker in Suzhounese conversation.



## Published Book

Sofia Solari (M.A. in TESOL, Class of 25) has published a book based on her MA TESOL project, now available on Amazon: [Language Learning in Context: A Task-Based Approach to ESL Writing](#). The book expands on her M.A. project and her final paper for the course, A&HL 4089 *Teaching writing to ESL students*, taught by Dr. Sarah Creider. Congratulations to Sophia on this exciting achievement!

## Alumni Spotlights: Where are they now?



**Ellin Kim (M.A. TESOL K–12 Initial Certification, Class of 2007; EdM in Applied Linguistics, Class of 2019):** Since earning my MA in K-12 TESOL and NYS Teacher Certification from Teachers College, Columbia University in 2007, my career has evolved from serving as Education Business Development Director at a private educational book publishing company to establishing THINK & WRITE, my own education center in Jericho/Hicksville, NY, in 2009. Over the past 16 years, I have specialized in teaching K-12 students across ELA disciplines, including academic writing and research paper instruction and provide college consultation services. My

commitment to educational excellence led me back to Teachers College, where I pursued advanced degrees while maintaining my teaching practice. After completing an Ed.M. in Applied Linguistics in 2019, I continued my academic journey, earning a M.Phil. in English Education and completing my Ph.D. in English Education in 2025. Throughout this process, I fell in love with research and now actively participate in research conferences. Currently, I balance teaching and educator training at my education center with directing an innovative youth participatory action research program designed for elementary through high school students.

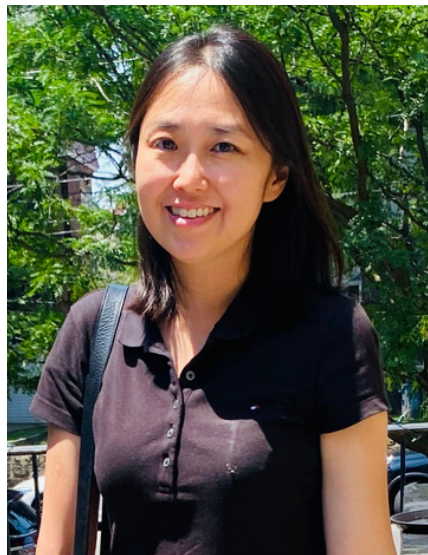


**Dr. Amanda Moody Maestranzi (M.A. TESOL, Class of 2010, Peace Corps Fellow):** I have just completed my third year as a Doctoral Lecturer for the TESOL P.12 and Bilingual Extension 5-12 programs at Lehman College. I now coordinate both programs in addition to teaching methods courses focused on teaching content literacy to multilingual learners (all grades) and English as a new language for grades 5-12. My story is proof that serving as

an adjunct is a viable pathway to gaining experience toward a full-time position, as I started as an adjunct in 2016 and later completed my doctorate in contemporary learning and interdisciplinary research at Fordham University in 2020.

Now I am a Doctoral Lecturer. To improve my teaching and professional practice, I am increasingly involved in broader campus and CUNY-SUNY initiatives including the Anchored in the Liberal Arts and Sciences program (2022-24), an initiative to bring non-canonical transformative texts, broadly conceived, from historically underrepresented creators and authors to Lehman students in the liberal arts, sciences, and education. I am currently wrapping up my work as a CUNY Initiative on Immigration and Education Fellow (Spring 2025), where I have collaborated with peers from SUNY and CUNY to reimagine and revise course syllabi and assignments to focus more explicitly and strategically on immigration and education using the latest resources available.

**Eunice Chung (M.A. TESOL K-12 Initial Certification, Class of 2011):** I graduated from Teachers College in 2011 with an M.A. in TESOL (K-12 Initial Certification). While at TC, I worked as a Teaching Associate in the East Asian Languages and Cultures Department at Columbia University. Doing so sparked my interest in teaching Korean, my native language. It had always been my dream to become a language educator, and teaching Korean to college students not only fulfilled that dream, but also allowed me



to witness their passion and growth as they learned a foreign language. I found the coursework at TC—such as TESOL Methodologies, Second Language Acquisition, and linguistics courses like Phonetics and Syntax—particularly helpful.

After graduating from TC, I began my teaching career as a Korean lecturer at Boston University, where I taught for two years, and then and then taught for one year at the University of Pennsylvania. In 2015, I was fortunate to begin my current position as a full-time lecturer in Korean at Columbia University, in the Department of East Asian Languages and Cultures. I have now been at Columbia University for ten years, and I am incredibly grateful for this opportunity. I am currently also an Ed.M. student in Applied Linguistics at TC, and I plan to continue teaching and conducting research with genuine passion being a constant learner myself and always striving for growth and development!



**Yuanheng (Arthur) Wang (M.A. Applied Linguistics, Class of 2019):**

Yuanheng (Arthur) Wang is an Assistant Professor of English at the University of North Carolina, Wilmington, where he explores the intersection of AI, corpus-based genre analysis, and second language writing pedagogy. He teaches applied linguistics, rhetoric/composition, and professional writing—basically, all the things that make students (and sometimes professors) question their life choices (in positive ways). Since earning his M.A. in Applied Linguistics from Teachers College, Columbia University in 2019 and his Ph.D. in Applied Linguistics from Penn State in 2024, Arthur has been juggling a gloriously chaotic mix of manuscript deadlines, research rabbit holes, and the eternal cycle of grading (equal parts joy and existential crisis). When he's not leading professional development sessions for fellow AL/TESOL nerds, you'll find him chasing after his mischievous cat Wang-Cai, jetting off on spontaneous trips, or overanalyzing the structure of trench coats while justifying his latest fashion splurge.

**Yuka Muraoka (Ed.M. Applied Linguistics, Class of 2001):** I graduated from the Master of Education in Applied Linguistics program in Dec. 2001. Currently, I am a chair and professor at Seigakuin University, Saitama, Japan. Shadowing has been my research topic for over ten years, and I recently published a book titled *Evolutionary Shadowing for Speaking* (co-author, Cosmpia Publisher). Even after 23 years, all that I learned at TC has been the foundation of my career as a researcher and teacher. What I learned at TC drastically changed my view of language and communication, which still guides my teaching beliefs and approaches.



*Photo: Eun Sung Park with a fellow TC alumna, Tony Liu in Seoul.*

**Eun Sung Park (Ed.D Applied Linguistics, Class of 2007):** I earned my Ed. D in Applied Linguistics from TC in 2007, having previously completed both my M.A. and Ed. M. there as well. After graduation, I moved to California to teach in the MATESL/TFL Program at the Monterey Institute of International Studies (now the Middlebury Institute of International Studies). In 2009, I relocated to Seoul and joined the English Department at Sogang University, where I've been serving as Chair of the English Division since Fall 2024. In recent years, my work has expanded to examine the English-learning needs of North Korean students and asset-based pedagogy for refugee-background students. I have published on these topics in *TESOL Quarterly* (2022) and *ELT Journal* (2025), among others. My latest project marked a refreshing divergence from my previous work. Together with a colleague (Joowon Suh, also a TC alum), I co-edited a volume entitled *BTS: K-pop Transcending Language and Communication* (Routledge, 2025).