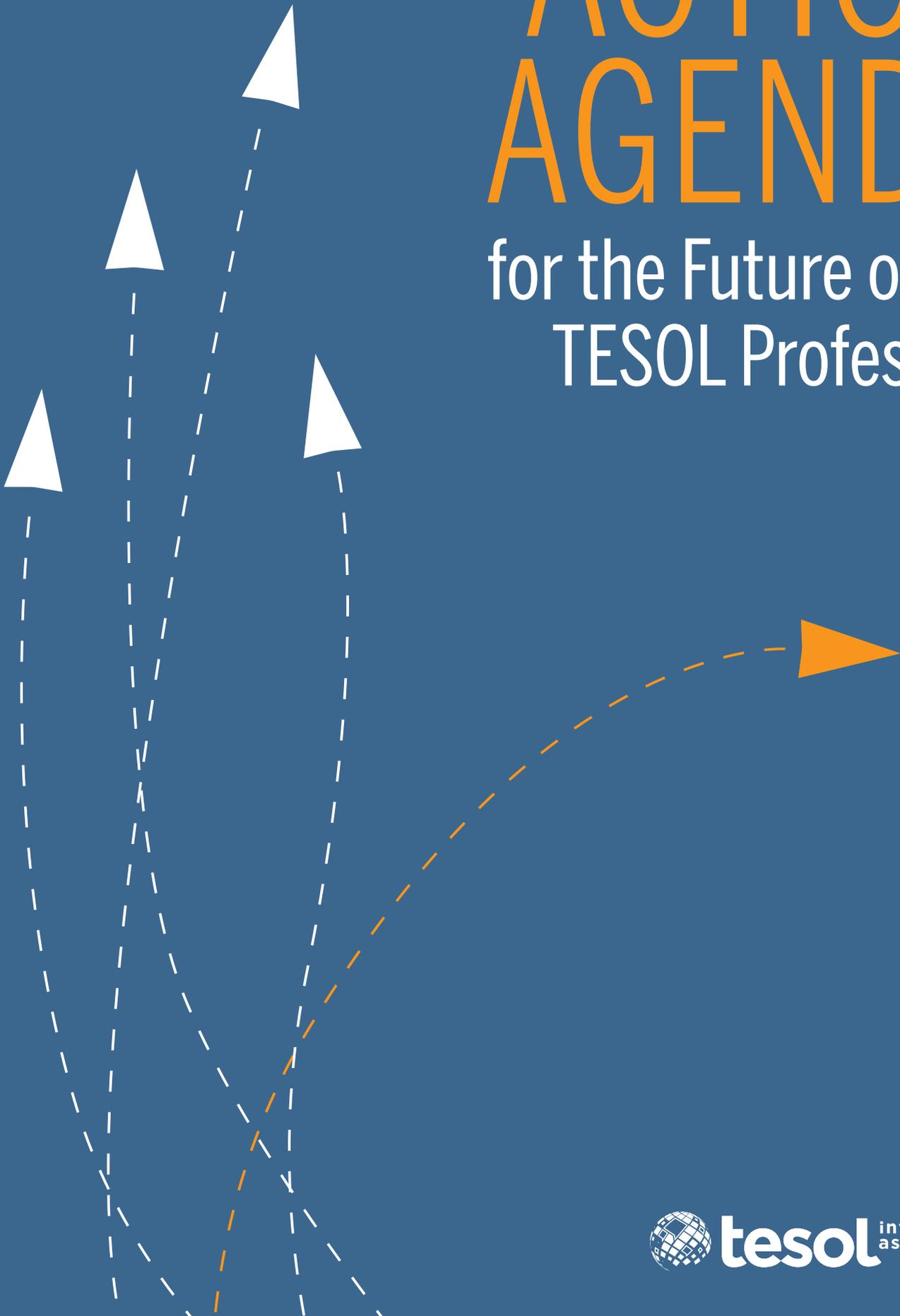


ACTION AGENDA

for the Future of the
TESOL Profession



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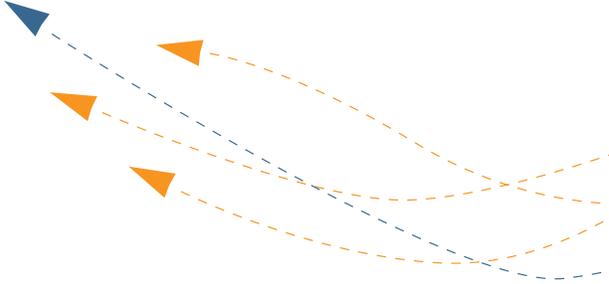
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Preface



The demand for English language instruction has grown dramatically as English has become the global language of commerce, diplomacy, entertainment, technology, advertising, and tourism. Most countries have adopted policies to encourage English language learning in schools, and universities in many countries offer classes or entire programs in English. As a result, TESOL educators around the world have seen English learner populations grow and change dramatically at all educational levels, from primary and secondary to postsecondary and adult education.

Despite the skyrocketing demand for experienced and knowledgeable English language educators, many TESOL professionals are not invited to participate in the decision-making that drives policy, high-stakes assessments, materials development, research, and practice—all of which directly affect their learners. For decades, non-TESOL professionals have been able to manipulate the profession's direction. Occasionally, and thankfully, TESOL professionals have been able to advocate for improvements to English language instruction and lead innovation. All too often, however, they have remained on the margins, left to implement policies and use textbooks, curricula, and assessments that others, from outside of the classroom, have assigned or designed.

So, how can TESOL professionals take the lead when advocating for new and innovative policies? How should TESOL professionals be empowered to initiate and sustain innovation and foster positive change? What role can stakeholders in the TESOL profession play in shaping the future of English language education? What does this high demand for English language skills and instruction mean for the TESOL profession? And how should this demand and changes in learner populations be addressed?

Recognizing the need to answer these questions and map out a clear direction for the profession, TESOL International Association spearheaded the [Summit on the Future of the TESOL Profession](#) in 2017.

The ideas, recommendations, conclusions, and outcomes conceived at the summit have been synthesized into this strategic action agenda, which is intended to serve as a guiding framework for the TESOL profession at the local, regional, national, and international levels. It consists of five priorities and related action steps that TESOL professionals and stakeholders can implement globally to strengthen local initiatives for English language

The TESOL profession aspires to be a unified community of individuals and organizations working together on global strategies that strengthen local English language initiatives. This vibrant, international community draws strength from the complexity of the field and dedication of its stakeholders. We share our progress, learn from our setbacks, and celebrate our triumphs. By working together through our shared vision for the future, we can influence the TESOL field in a positive, lasting way.

Preface

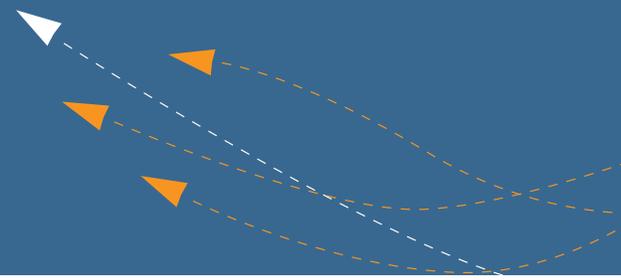
policies, practices, research, and instruction. We invite all stakeholders (policymakers, professional organizations, teacher preparation faculty, materials and assessment writers, administrators, teachers, and all others engaged in English language teaching) to identify and pursue the priorities and actions most relevant to them and their sphere of influence. By acting on this agenda, we can collectively ensure that the profession continues to meet the needs of the ever-changing, ever-growing global population of English language learners for decades to come.

TESOL International Association calls on the broad, diverse community of TESOL professionals and stakeholders to implement this action agenda globally, in all contexts, so that English language instruction, research, policy, and materials will

- ▶ reflect the knowledge and expertise of the TESOL profession,
- ▶ enhance English language instruction and improve language skills for learners, and
- ▶ empower TESOL professionals and the English learners they serve.

We can only accomplish this if all stakeholders work together toward common goals.

The Summit on the Future of the TESOL Profession



In development for nearly 2 years, the summit was built on a foundation of countless emails, online discussion, and virtual meetings that helped shape a strategic conversation intended to set a course for the future of the TESOL profession.

Summit architects (steering committee members, reference group partners, and featured speakers) were selected to challenge common misconceptions, present provocative new ideas, and develop a vision for the TESOL profession to embrace over the next several decades.



Grounded in the three guiding principles of [inquiry](#), [equity](#), and [professionalism](#), strategic conversation focused on four major themes: [Futurology](#), [English in Multilingualism](#), [Reimagining English Competence](#), and [The Profession as Change Agent](#). A mix of online discussions, face-to-face meetings, and live-streaming allowed as many people as possible to participate.

In December 2016, summit participants (who included summit delegates, researchers, practicing teachers, preservice teachers, and English language students) began online discussions on the summit themes. Then, summit delegates (leaders who influence English language education policy and decision makers from teacher education institutions, binational centers, English teacher associations, nongovernmental organizations, and companies serving the TESOL profession) representing 64 countries came together in February 2017 for the 2-day summit in Athens, Greece; summit participants were invited to join

The timing of the summit could not have been more relevant. Geopolitical events around the world throughout 2016 and 2017 demonstrated the critical importance of intercultural dialogue, communication, and understanding; these are all central values to the TESOL profession and are needed now more than ever.

*The Summit
on the
Future of
the TESOL
Profession*

virtually via live-streaming. Each of the summit themes was addressed by three speakers, followed by roundtable discussions, during which summit participants could submit real-time questions through an online chat.

After the live event, conversations continued online to solidify key takeaways. Summit delegates played a critical role in formulating the recommendations that were discussed in Athens. From these rich conversations emerged the priorities and actions presented in this document.



SUMMIT ON THE FUTURE OF THE
TESOL 2017
PROFESSION
Athens, Greece • 9–10 February 2017



State of the Profession

Discussion of our rapidly changing world has almost become cliché. Growth in global commerce, mass media, and communications has affected all sectors, particularly business, science, health, and education. As a result, English has become the global lingua franca, an adopted common language used for commerce and other purposes around the world. This change in who is using English and the purposes for which they use it has had a profound impact on English language teaching and the TESOL profession.

As English language teaching has transformed and grown, the profession has developed a robust, research-driven knowledge base. We know the following:

- ▶ Languages are complex and dynamic. They develop variations based on how they are used and who is using them.
- ▶ Using knowledge of other languages facilitates the learning of English in the classroom.
- ▶ Multilingualism is the norm in most regions of the world.
- ▶ The age of a student when starting to learn English is not the only variable in determining success.
- ▶ The idealized “native speaker” is an ineffective role model for developing materials and assessments.
- ▶ Teachers’ qualifications and pedagogical skills, not when or how they learned English, are the major determinants of effective instruction.

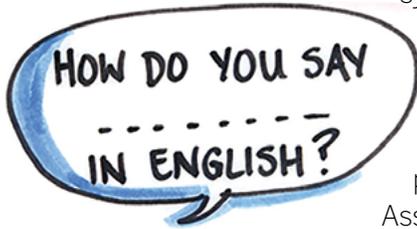
Through the intensive, global discussions that took place during the summit, participants recognized that TESOL professionals must collaborate in policy-making decisions and use the current knowledge base to develop instructional methods, materials, and assessment tools. Summit participants also discussed the untapped potential of current technologies to facilitate collaboration and disseminate knowledge and expertise. Finally, summit participants recognized the great power of professional associations to affect change, promote unity, and help members find commonalities throughout the profession. Only through unity can we give ourselves the best chance to accomplish the critical actions needed to move the profession forward.

What became most apparent during the summit, however, was the belief that barriers surrounding the advancement of the profession exist, including barriers such as political

Formal and informal groups can have digital conversations that bring together the different players in the profession—teachers, researchers, teacher educators, materials writers, language testers, and policymakers.

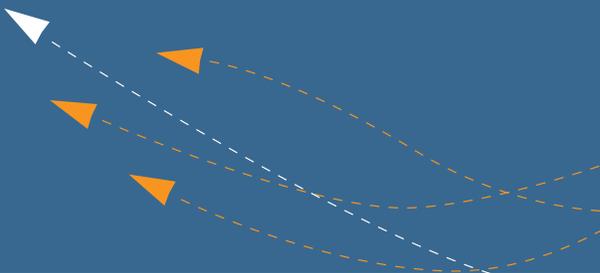
State of the Profession

transitions; entrenched beliefs; and resistance from the general public, who struggle to understand the nature of language learning. In addition, the appeal of simplistic solutions driven by short-term political or financial gains, rather than the best interest of learners, can distract stakeholders from achieving real solutions. Perhaps paramount to any other challenges, participants recognized that factors such as under-resourced education systems, remote locations, poverty, and the displacement of people all pose serious threats to the innovation that is needed to advance the TESOL profession. TESOL International Association strongly believes that this action agenda provides direction for all stakeholders to begin breaking down these barriers while ensuring an optimistic future for TESOL professionals around the world.



In many countries, the English language—and the ability to speak English—is viewed as a critical aspect of being globally connected. For example, in preparing to host the 2008 Olympics in Beijing, the Chinese government planned to invest in English language teaching because speaking English was viewed as a key component to being a welcoming host to the hundreds of thousands of visitors from around the world. This pattern repeated in Brazil when Rio de Janeiro hosted the 2016 Olympics and is repeating in Japan as Tokyo prepares to host the 2020 Olympics.

Priorities and Actions



PRIORITY 1: STRENGTHEN THE STATUS AND VISIBILITY OF THE PROFESSION

English language instruction is in high demand worldwide, yet the value and expertise that stems from the TESOL profession are often unnoticed and undervalued. The expert insights of TESOL professionals are needed to provide positive direction to the development and implementation of innovative policies and practices.

As outcomes of successfully pursuing this priority, policymakers, stakeholders, and the general public will have an increased appreciation for the TESOL profession; misperceptions surrounding language policy, practice, and research will be dispelled; and a community dedicated to professional collaboration will lift up the legitimacy of the profession.

To be successful in meeting this priority, we must increase accessibility to professional teacher associations, strengthen partnerships with not-for-profit and nongovernmental organizations, and establish a more visible public presence, especially on social media.

ACTION STEPS

- ▶ Involve TESOL professionals and incorporate their knowledge, experience, and expertise in policy development and implementation at local and national levels.
- ▶ Collaborate with other organizations and professional associations to build professional capacity, increase stakeholder outreach, and cultivate change.
- ▶ Facilitate online and face-to-face opportunities for educators to establish practices that challenge norms, share ideas for innovative policies, and empower one another as valued members of their communities.
- ▶ Commit to policies that recognize, support, and value the unique knowledge and expertise of TESOL professionals.
- ▶ Disseminate TESOL professional knowledge and resources to stakeholders who influence the profession.
- ▶ Improve TESOL professionals' technological and digital media skills required to leverage the visibility of the profession through social media.

PRIORITY 2: REDESIGN ENGLISH LANGUAGE EDUCATION PROGRAMS TO FOSTER GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT

The quality of English language education varies from place to place, largely according to differences in resources and access to quality TESOL preparation and professional development. Acknowledging and respecting different languages and cultural traditions around the world is a valuable element of global engagement. Linguistic diversity also serves as a key resource for English language education. High-quality language education recognizes that language is a flexible tool for communication that is shaped by specific purposes and contexts and that language learning is an extension of the linguistic diversity that learners bring to the classroom.



SUSTAINABILITY DEPENDS ON LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY

As an outcome of successfully pursuing this priority, the positive value of multilingualism in English language teaching will be increased while simultaneously fostering global engagement.

To be successful in meeting this priority, we must support professional development programs that embrace adapted curricula, materials, and assessments, and we must support teacher preparation programs that leverage the diverse, multilingual experiences that English language learners bring to the classroom.

ACTION STEPS

- ▶ Engage in practices that recognize multilingualism as an asset to English language teaching that positively influences language outcomes, innovation, and practice.
- ▶ Enhance intercultural communication and the development of global engagement in English language education programs.
- ▶ Expand the capability, accessibility, and skill sets of educators to use technology in professional and student learning.
- ▶ Establish practices that ensure TESOL professionals understand contemporary ideas and theories regarding language, pedagogy, and the roles of English as a world language, allowing for informed instructional decisions and practices.
- ▶ Encourage educators at all levels of experience to reflect critically on established practices and to enact change when needed.

PRIORITY 3: MOBILIZE LEADERS TO CONFRONT AND EMBRACE THE CHALLENGES AND COMPLEXITIES OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING

TESOL educators, who have professional credentials and qualifications so that they can be effective teachers, should be able to address the variety of social, cultural, and political issues that impact their teaching and their students. It is critical to the profession that educators leverage their expertise, experiences, and knowledge to become the leading voices in English language teaching policy and education reform efforts around the world.

TESOL professionals must champion their importance, affirm their value, and fulfill their role in educating every generation of English speakers.

As an outcome of successfully pursuing this priority, TESOL professionals will become engaged in advocating for and developing better policies, which will lead to improved learning opportunities and outcomes for their students.

To be successful in meeting this priority, we must ensure that educators have support to develop leadership, communication, and advocacy skills.

ACTION STEPS

- ▶ Provide opportunities for English language educators to demonstrate their expertise.
- ▶ Design teacher preparation and professional development programs that empower and encourage English language teachers to advocate for positive change.
- ▶ Create diverse career paths that enrich the profession.
- ▶ Promote professional growth opportunities to all educators throughout their careers.
- ▶ Commit to policies that directly address the social justice, equity, and human diversity issues that affect learners' access to a high-quality English language education.
- ▶ Support efforts to make TESOL professional preparation programs more proactive in responding to the changing uses of English and varying configurations of professional teacher education.

PRIORITY 4: EXPAND CAPACITY FOR INCLUSIVE AND COMPREHENSIVE RESEARCH

Practice and policy must be research based, meaning that research should inform practice and policy as much as policy and practice should inform research. This premise suggests that TESOL professionals and policymakers create opportunities to collaborate on research, collect meaningful information, measure results, and implement change.

As an outcome of successfully pursuing this priority, TESOL professionals and researchers will ask relevant and pertinent questions that will lead to improved instruction, assessment, and learner outcomes.

To be successful in meeting this priority, we must provide research opportunities for educators and opportunities for researchers, practitioners, and policymakers to discuss common trends and collaborate on the issues they agree must be addressed to advance the profession.



Being a native speaker alone does not make one an English teacher. Effective English language teachers have acquired specialized knowledge and expertise through coursework and professional development that has prepared them to meet the varied and distinctive needs of English learners through a variety of curricular, instructional, and support strategies. A TESOL educator's capability as a teacher should be determined by their professional credentials and qualifications, not when or how they learned English.

ACTION STEPS

- ▶ Widely disseminate the findings of robust research to reach all sectors of the TESOL community, especially when those findings offer conclusive answers to relevant questions.
- ▶ Leverage evidence-based solutions to inform policy-making and professional practices.
- ▶ Encourage inquiry on the impact of global and future trends on practice and the profession.
- ▶ Facilitate collaborative research that is inclusive of local needs and different ways of learning.
- ▶ Provide TESOL professionals and stakeholders with resources and opportunities to propose and collaborate on research questions, collect information, investigate issues, and effect change.

PRIORITY 5: CULTIVATE A CULTURE OF INNOVATION THAT IS RESPONSIVE TO GLOBAL TRENDS

TESOL professionals must be aware of the global political, economic, social, intercultural, legal, and digital megatrends that affect English language education and address these trends both in and outside of the classroom. TESOL professionals understand how teaching English can impact broader concerns. Though English language proficiency can offer a gateway to success on an individual level, limited access to language education can exacerbate, rather than alleviate, global inequity. Those without access to education programs are at a severe disadvantage when compared with those who are able to access and afford quality English language instruction. This inequality is especially prevalent in conflict zones, places disrupted by political instability, and under-resourced areas around the world.

As an outcome of successfully pursuing this priority, TESOL professionals will remain globally connected and engaged, anticipate the many changes that impact English language education, and be able to address potential setbacks before they occur.

To be successful in meeting this priority, we must expand global connectivity among TESOL professionals, create partnerships among government and nongovernmental organizations, and anticipate the many changes that impact English language education through collaborative problem-solving.

ACTION STEPS

- ▶ Identify and disseminate information on appropriate practices to leverage limited resources.
- ▶ Enhance multimedia critical literacy skills and capabilities in all teacher education and English language education programs.
- ▶ Ensure that policies provide equitable access to high-quality English language instruction opportunities, curricula, and materials.
- ▶ Consider and discuss changes that could impact English language education so that challenges may be anticipated and transformed into opportunities for learner success.

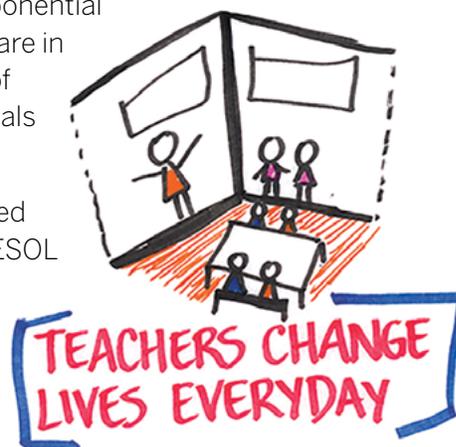
Why These Five Priorities?

The following sections summarize the current realities and challenges in the TESOL profession that drive this action agenda. For each priority area, the issues that the action agenda calls for to be addressed urgently and collaboratively by TESOL professionals and stakeholders are further explained. All of the information came from summit participants during the summit's live and virtual components.

PRIORITY 1: STRENGTHEN THE STATUS AND VISIBILITY OF THE PROFESSION

Though the need for teachers of English has grown worldwide, the visibility and recognition of the TESOL profession itself and the TESOL professionals charged with educating English learners have lagged behind. With the soaring demand and exponential growth of English language education programs, TESOL professionals are in an excellent position to impact the development and implementation of innovative policies and practices. It is important that TESOL professionals take advantage of this strategic opportunity.

Although teaching English as an additional language requires specialized understanding of language, language learning, and education, many TESOL professionals implement policies and use textbooks, curricula, and assessments that have been selected or designed by others from outside the classroom. This action agenda urges all TESOL professionals and stakeholders to unite and to share their expertise with each other and participate in the decision-making that directly affects the success of English language learners, advocate for improvements to English language programs, and influence policymakers to recognize TESOL professionals as experts and take advantage of their expertise when developing new policies that will improve and advance the TESOL profession.



TESOL professionals need to claim their expertise.

The TESOL profession is a unique discipline that is too often misunderstood and undervalued. Vibrant and diverse, the TESOL profession comprises experts in areas such as second language acquisition and development, linguistics, intercultural communication, pedagogy, assessment, and teacher preparation. Its expertise and expansive knowledge base should be shared with decision makers. The expertise that TESOL professionals possess is especially valuable in sectors where

The power and ability to advocate collaboratively for the field and its learners has, and always will, rest in part with the TESOL professionals who help guide it.

Why These Five Priorities?

the ability to speak English with native-like proficiency is favored over TESOL preparation or where language education is undervalued.

As the global demand for high-quality English language education programs continues to increase, the need for additional experts in the TESOL field naturally follows. Unfortunately, such a demand for TESOL expertise has not led to the hiring of additional qualified TESOL professionals in many localities around the world. Moreover, instead of being consulted and recognized as experts in their field, the insightful and practical experiences possessed

EMBRACING SOCIAL MEDIA | *Christel Broady, Georgetown College, Georgetown, Kentucky, USA*

As a teacher trainer and an English language teaching professional who is internationally active within a community of practice with members in 179 countries, for me the use of social media in TESOL circles is essential. Here are two of my reasons:

- 1. Social media creates powerful professional learning communities from the bottom up.** The professional field is often dominated by a few individuals who are the gatekeepers of professional discourse; they decide what information is being disseminated. Many nonpublishing practitioners are reduced to mere consumers and recipients of what a few others think they should know and do. Social media channels open avenues to all practitioners to own their professional discourse. Another bonus is the fast turnaround for addressing issues. Contrary to the world of peer-reviewed articles and books, social media sharing happens immediately and without editors and publishers, who might often be guided by business interests. Moreover, many professionals have no skill or interest in publishing; however, they still have extensive professional knowledge that is worth sharing. Social media allows them to have a voice. Therefore, social media provides a useful professional publishing medium in addition to the traditional peer-reviewed corpus publications.
- 2. Social media can build bridges and promote peace.** Users create communities not filtered by issues that often prevent us from engaging with one another by focusing on the professional knowledge all share. Over time, as members become more familiar with each other, many friendships develop. Therefore, social media promotes a free exchange of ideas and cultures and promotes respect and peace among all.

USING SOCIAL MEDIA | *Isabela de Freitas Villas Boas, Casa Thomas Jefferson, Brasília, Brazil*

Social media can be a powerful tool to integrate TESOL professionals in a more informal and organic manner. There is an online community in Brazil named Brazilian English Language Teachers (BrELT), created by a group of five educators, with more than 16,000 followers.

Here are some of the things they do:

- They have a blog where guests can publish on topics in which they are interested.
- They organize a chat on Facebook every week.
- They hold online conferences.
- They advocate in favor of nonnative-English-speaking teachers' equitable treatment by, for example, publishing posts and videos on the topic and refusing job posts on their page that require native-English-speaking teachers.
- They defend lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) professionals and protest discrimination or unethical practices of English teaching franchises around Brazil.
- They send roving reporters to conferences who post summaries of what they see.
- They organized their first face-to-face conference in Rio de Janeiro, which attracted more than 100 participants.
- They provide a space for teachers who are engaged in research to post their surveys or questionnaires and initiate discussions with researchers and other members on their research topics. This could be an effective way to build a bridge between researchers and teachers and to engage the latter in a meaningful form of inquiry. Guided by an experienced researcher, I am sure the BrELT members would be excited about this type of inquiry.

by many TESOL professionals often go unnoticed. For these reasons, TESOL professionals must advocate for themselves. While many TESOL professionals already serve as effective advocates for their learners and programs, that same advocacy is equally needed for fellow educators and the profession as a whole. TESOL professionals must raise their profiles and voices in a collective effort to command the respect and recognition that they deserve as experts on the front lines of English language education.

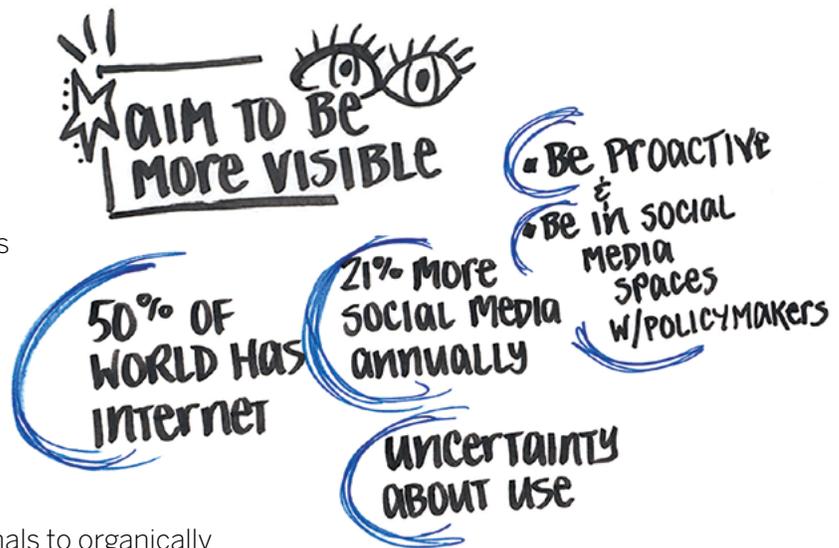
TESOL professionals need to unite, open lines of communication, and strengthen the profession as a network.

TESOL professionals and stakeholders must do more to unite as a community. They must seek formal and informal opportunities for professional development, advocacy, and collaboration through associations, social media channels, and other virtual technology. Without collaboration between sectors and among internal stakeholders, the TESOL profession will be vulnerable to fragmentation which would undermine its visibility and position. Increasing communication among colleagues and between stakeholders will strengthen the ability of TESOL professionals to advocate collaboratively for the field and its learners.

TESOL professionals need to leverage opportunities to promote their expertise and become more visible outside of the field.

TESOL professionals must strengthen their ability to broadcast their experiences and expertise to a variety of external stakeholders. Use of social media and other digital platforms has increased dramatically, but TESOL professionals can still do much more to build communities, share expertise, and highlight successes. There are countless opportunities online for TESOL professionals to organically create informal groups to share, collaborate, and disseminate their work. By leveraging popular social media channels, TESOL professionals can share their thoughts and experiences with billions of users, as well as top policymakers from around the world, ultimately advancing their individual and collective interests.

Professional associations play an important role as well, providing valuable connections and outlets for many professionals; yet not all TESOL professionals or other organized groups are optimally engaged. By employing the tools and participating in the organizations that are available to them, TESOL professionals can create a stronger and more unified voice.

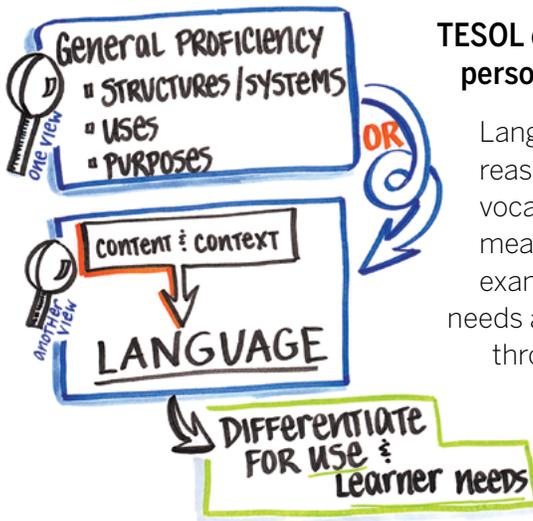


Digital platforms provide countless opportunities for TESOL professionals to organically create informal groups to share, collaborate, and disseminate their work.

Why These Five Priorities?

PRIORITY 2: REDESIGN ENGLISH LANGUAGE EDUCATION PROGRAMS TO FOSTER GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT

As the world becomes more interconnected, individuals benefit from a greater understanding of and respect for different languages and cultures, key aspects of becoming globally aware. TESOL professionals can play constructive roles in fostering global engagement through teaching practices built on a rich, evidence-based foundation. However, the use of outdated ideas and practices continues to influence policy, materials, and pedagogy. Policies, practices, materials, and assessments for English language education must reflect current knowledge about language, language learning, and purposes for learning English to ensure the best learning outcomes for learners and society.



TESOL educators need to embrace the complex, variable, social, and personal nature of language.

Languages are used by individuals and communities for multiple reasons. Language cannot be reduced to a single, fixed set of rules, vocabulary, and sounds because it is not only important to convey meaning, but also to be appropriate to the situation and purpose. For example, an engineer building bridges as part of a global workforce needs a different type of English than a high school student learning math through the medium of English or a hotel receptionist who wishes to accommodate international clientele. Moreover, language is social and personal. Appropriate language use enables speakers to express themselves socially, indicate that they have something to say, and share information with others. Because a learner's context determines the type of English that needs to be taught, pedagogy, materials, and assessments need to reflect both the complexity of English and learners' specific language needs and aspirations.

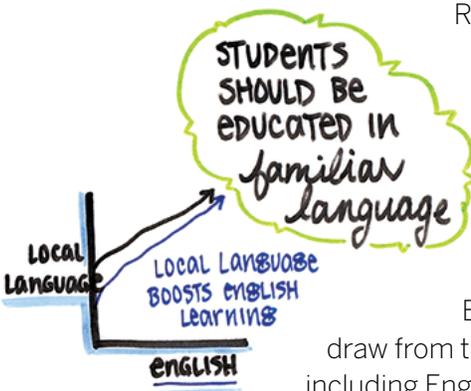
TESOL professionals and stakeholders need to understand that English teaching is most effective when teaching for multilingualism.

Current knowledge is conclusive: English teaching is most effective when it is understood in the context of teaching for multilingualism.



Research indicates that English learning is boosted when learners are allowed to fully develop their home language with a positive attitude toward that language. Research has also shown that the bilingual brain does not behave like two monolingual brains; individuals who learn a new language learn to be bilinguals, not double monolinguals. Across their diverse local contexts, TESOL professionals must recognize how English can develop in conjunction with other languages, not in competition with them.

English language teachers must use various multilingual practices to draw from their learners' other languages to strengthen abilities in all languages, including English.



Stakeholders need to recognize that English is a global language and not the province of any one group of speakers.

Worldwide, more and more people are acquiring English in parallel with or in addition to other languages. As English has become a global language, the old models of language that only drew on the ideal of native speakers—the models that regard North American, British, and Australian varieties of English as the best-suited targets for teaching English—have become obsolete. The reality is that the vast majority of English language users around the world learned English as an additional language. Those learners interact with other nonnative English speakers more than with native English speakers.

A TESOL educator’s capability as a teacher should be determined by his or her professional credentials and qualifications, not when or how they learned English.



The growth of global interconnectivity and communications in English requires TESOL professionals to prepare students to navigate a range of ideas, including misinformation.

The spread of knowledge and information globally in English has been facilitated by the advancement of technology and digital media. In an increasingly multilingual, multicultural world, people naturally use different languages to achieve different purposes. Language proficiency depends on a user’s ability to think critically; to be resourceful; and to select, adapt, negotiate, and use a range of linguistic and nonlinguistic resources that are appropriate in a particular situation. Especially in digital environments, people are faced with information that changes constantly and spreads instantaneously, regardless of

LOWER MEKONG INITIATIVE: ENGLISH FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH

| Anne Katz, *The New School, New York City, New York, USA*

The Lower Mekong Initiative is a language learning collaboration across five countries in Southeast Asia: Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand, and Vietnam. The Initiative was developed in response to economic and political pressures in the region to increase the economic development and competitiveness of these countries within the ASEAN [Association of Southeast Asian Nations] region and to strengthen their political presence. The avenue for achieving these goals was building the capacity of human resources, namely professionals from each country’s ministries and technical agencies representing specific fields such as health, connectivity, agriculture, environment, education, and energy. The participants in the initiative formed working groups of professionals from relevant ministries and technical agencies across the five participating countries. English competence provided a unitary and neutral tool to support collaboration among working group members across borders in their respective fields of expertise and to enhance dialogue among scientists, technical professionals, and policymakers. English instruction was designed to increase participants’ ability to communicate effectively in international meetings and to conduct effective oral presentations on topics in their fields of expertise. Thus, the content of their English lessons related to topics in specific professional fields. For example, in the health field, one topic was universal healthcare for all citizens. The context for using English included presentations and interactions with colleagues at regional and international conferences. The language structures selected for learning focused on discourse texts related to communicative tasks (e.g., delivering a presentation or participating in meetings) like asking for opinions, sharing opinions, and asking for or providing clarification.

Why These Five Priorities?

whether it is based on fact. To communicate effectively, global citizens must think critically; question sources; and differentiate between personal, private, and professional positions.

Informed decision-making drives effective teaching. If a goal of teaching English is to nurture global engagement, then it is essential that all TESOL educators practice the same critical thinking they teach their students: They must reflect on their practices and apply current knowledge about language and language learning to their policies, materials, teacher education programming, and pedagogy.

- We need to teach learners to adapt their language resources to the changing situations they encounter.
- Content, in addition to language, may often play an important role in language classrooms, as a means and as an end of learning.
- Of the 1.5 billion English users, only 375 million are native speakers (www.statista.com/statistics/266808/the-most-spoken-languages-worldwide).

PRIORITY 3: MOBILIZE LEADERS TO CONFRONT AND EMBRACE THE CHALLENGES AND COMPLEXITIES OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING

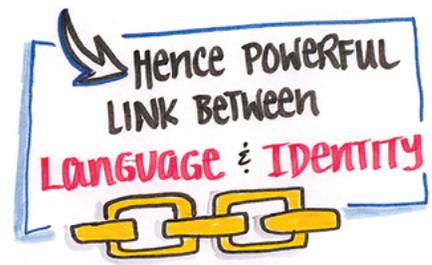
TESOL professionals are positioned to play a key role in meeting the global demand for English language skills and instruction and, by extension, facilitating global communication, the dissemination of information, and connections across borders and cultures. In fulfilling this role, TESOL professionals can seize opportunities for advocacy; their participation in planning and development activities can shape the successes of English language learners and the future of the profession.



TESOL professionals must understand that the position and status of the English language is connected to social justice, equality, and human diversity.

Language education, by its very nature, does not occur in a vacuum. Language is connected to culture, and understanding this fact is integral to effective language teaching. This is a particularly important issue for English language teaching, as there are a number of social, political, and cultural issues connected to English. In places where English is not a dominant or common language, English usage can both reflect and create wider societal power dynamics. In addition, because there are numerous varieties of English, the choice of which variety of English to teach can differ. In places where English is a predominant or common language, TESOL professionals often face a range of socioeconomic and sociopolitical issues connected to the learners they serve. Immigrants, refugees, and underprivileged learners are frequently marginalized because of their limited proficiency

in the common language. TESOL professionals, too, can be similarly marginalized by schools and institutions that are not fully equipped for, or interested in, addressing all of the needs of these English language learners. Navigating these sensitive sociopolitical issues has become a frequent part of the TESOL professional's experience, and the resulting expertise can be a tremendous asset for schools, institutions, and policymakers struggling to address such complexities in a systematic way.



Language teacher preparation programs must prepare teachers to address complex social issues in and out of the classroom.

Understandably, the focus of teacher preparation programs is on pedagogy and classroom management. However, as new issues impact their programs and learners, TESOL educators may not be fully prepared to address challenges beyond the classroom. For example, in addition to teaching, TESOL educators frequently find themselves serving as advocates for their learners and programs, needing to respond to rapid and complex policy changes. Although many teacher preparation and MATESOL programs familiarize teachers with these concerns, they may not adequately provide teachers with the practical skills needed to address them effectively. All teacher preparation and professional learning programs must address these issues and ensure that TESOL educators acquire this essential skillset.

The position and status of English language teaching brings additional issues in different contexts.

Policymakers and administrators must provide TESOL educators with access to appropriate, affordable, and ongoing opportunities for lifelong professional learning.

Effective professional development is coherent, ongoing, context driven, and collaborative. Although professional learning and development are essential for all educators, many receive few or infrequent opportunities to learn and grow as professionals. Despite the dynamic and rapidly changing elements of the TESOL profession, this trend unfortunately applies to TESOL educators. Too often, the financial practices of many programs and institutions value short-term savings over long-term investments with high returns, such as effective professional development. Institutions and programs must ensure that faculty and staff are offered appropriate, affordable, and ongoing opportunities for professional learning. Associations, nongovernmental organizations, and publishers should also develop programming for educators.

Funding for professional learning is often driven by short-term budget allocations rather than long-term returns on investment.

TESOL expertise must be a force driving change in language education.

Policies and practice in education are changing rapidly. However, many of the decision makers and other stakeholders driving these changes are not well versed in current TESOL professional knowledge, including elements of effective English language instruction. In many cases, policies follow a trend of focusing on superficial, low-cost initiatives that limit

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the amount and quality of language instruction and support, ignore the assets brought by the learners' other languages, or frame English language skills and learners as a commodity. Moreover, these changes may not align with what TESOL professionals know, what they have experienced, and what they believe, making it even more challenging for TESOL educators to respond adequately to change. TESOL educators must acquire the skills, knowledge, and expertise to confront these challenges and work toward sound policies and practices that support their learners and their programs.

The global dynamics affecting English language teaching are changing, and the TESOL profession is uniquely situated to lead and drive this change. However, rather than wait for an invitation that may not be coming, TESOL educators will need to be proactive and assume their place as leaders.

TESOL PROFESSIONALS LEAVE THEIR MARK ON NATIONAL EDUCATION CURRICULA | *Misty Adoniou, TESOL Australia, Canberra, Australia*

In 2011, Australia introduced its first draft of its first national curriculum. The English curriculum, or Language Arts, was generally well received. Content was presented across three strands—language, literature, and literacy—and there was freedom for teachers to apply their own pedagogies to the described content.

However, what was glaringly absent was any reference to the language learning needs, and strengths, of those students who speak English as an additional language or dialect (EALD). With around 25% of the population coming from EALD backgrounds, and some urban schools with a 100% EALD student population, this was no small concern. And it became the very large concern of the Australian Council of TESOL Associations (ACTA), TESOL's affiliate association in Australia.

Following a strategic and coordinated plan, ACTA used its members to connect with key policymakers across the country. The message they gave was coherent, simple, and repetitive: In order to improve educational outcomes in Australia, we must meet the needs of the EALD student population. To achieve this, EALD resources must be integrated into the mainstream curriculum rather than sit in standalone documents that may or may not be accessed by mainstream teachers.

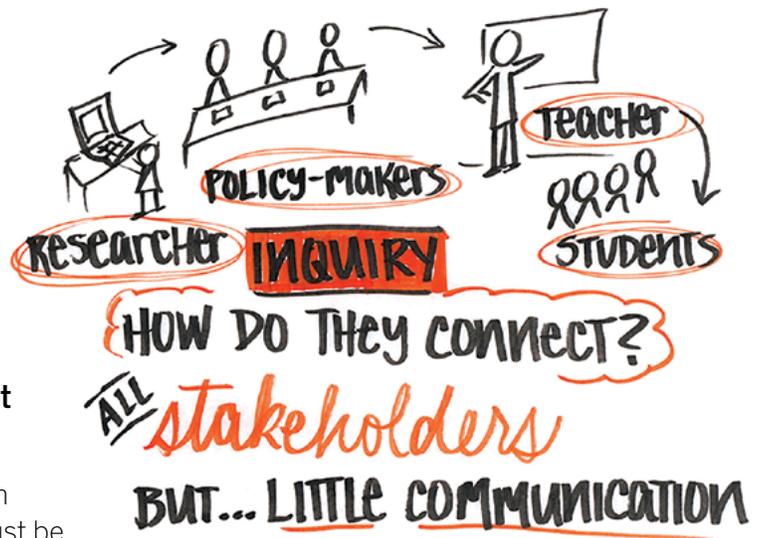
In response, the Australian Curriculum Authority commissioned an EALD resource for the mathematics, English, science, and history national curriculum documents. Members of the ACTA Executive Committee were the key writers for this national initiative. Each mainstream curriculum content descriptor now has EALD annotations that alert mainstream teachers to cultural, linguistic, and pedagogical considerations they should take into account as they deliver the content in their mainstream classrooms—which are, after all, multicultural, multilingual classrooms.

ACTA's engagement with the national political and policy processes of curriculum development was a success story and an example of how TESOL professionals can act positively in a time of increasingly standardized approaches to education, and in a time when diversity is increasingly feared rather than celebrated.

PRIORITY 4: EXPAND CAPACITY FOR INCLUSIVE AND COMPREHENSIVE RESEARCH

The core of the TESOL profession consists of a balance between policy, practice, and research. Sound and relevant research is essential to the development of effective English language policies and practices. However, an imbalance is created when research addresses questions that policymakers, educators, and practitioners did not

ask or when practices and policy changes are enacted before sound research findings are available. All TESOL professionals, including those who develop policy and pedagogy, must work together to address these imbalances and expand the capacity for inclusive and comprehensive research, with accessible findings that are free of technical, academic language.



Language policy must be informed by current field research and findings.

When new research supports changes in English language education, English language policy must be adjusted accordingly. TESOL professionals must be able to leverage strong research in order to help shape sound policies on English language teaching. Ineffective policies are often based on unsubstantiated or misguided claims or stem from a lack of understanding or awareness of research findings.



Good policy is founded on evidence and then is evaluated regularly; policymakers must incorporate sound research, centered on improving language learner development, in new policies. Because it is challenging for policymakers to know what goes on in classrooms and teacher education programs, researchers and practitioners must take the initiative to be part of the policy development process. To ensure that policymakers are well informed, TESOL researchers and practitioners must distill their perspectives into small, memorable talking points and communicate them to a wide range of audiences, including policymakers, parents, learners, teachers, program administrators, materials developers, and publishers.

Classroom teachers need to be involved in academic research.

For most of their careers, classroom teachers implement policies that have been developed by groups and individuals that work outside of the classroom. This has caused many classroom teachers to feel disparaged and their experience ignored, even though they are well positioned to contribute their expertise. Primary and secondary teachers have direct access to learner, family, and community data and can connect university researchers with these data in a meaningful way. Furthermore, classroom teachers can engage in practitioner research and develop their own talking points by gathering their experiences as poignant, credible testimonials to present as solutions to important, everyday issues in the field.

Collaboration on research among TESOL stakeholders must occur more regularly.

To expand the capacity for inclusive and comprehensive research that supports policy decisions, researchers, policymakers, publishers, and practitioners must collaborate

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regularly. TESOL professionals must connect academic research outlets with those both inside and outside of universities. Policymakers must establish transparent mechanisms that involve all stakeholders, prove how best evidence has been incorporated into new initiatives, and consult teaching associations for research and resources on policies that do and do not work. Finally, funding opportunities must be open to anyone interested in research at any level of education.

As new policies have led to a greater focus on learner data, practitioners are becoming experts in conducting action research and data analysis.

FROM THEORY TO PRACTICE | *Harry Kuchah Kuchah, Cameroon English Language and Literature Teachers Association (CAMELTA)*

At the annual conference in August 2013, members of the Cameroon English Language and Literature Teachers Association (CAMELTA) put together a list of 182 research questions that would form the basis for a research agenda that addresses the key professional development concerns of the membership. The expectation was that teachers interested in classroom-based research would use this agenda as a starting point for their own inquiries.

Yet, 2 years later, only one teacher had successfully carried out research on one of the questions. Informal conversations at local and national events revealed a general docility amongst teachers, who thought they had nothing to contribute to either local or global English language teaching (ELT). So, a group of 34 teachers got together to found the CAMELTA Research Group to demonstrate that some of the current practices of its members were good enough to generate pedagogic reflections that are consumable both locally and globally.

The CAMELTA Research Group encourages professionals to articulate their practice clearly and to develop a bank of pedagogic principles that are appropriate to the Cameroonian context and consistent with current ELT knowledge. The activities so far have included identifying relevant research questions from the agenda, reading and discussing short articles (on the group WhatsApp forum), developing lesson plans, teaching and observing each other, collecting and analyzing feedback from students, and reflecting on these findings to develop principles for good practice in context.

Members of this group now write for publication and present papers at local conferences and workshops. What is more, four group members were this year invited to run training workshops and demonstration lessons to preservice teachers at the College of Education of the University of Yaoundé. This collaboration between the university and CAMELTA is an unprecedented development in ELT in Cameroon.

PRIORITY 5: CULTIVATE A CULTURE OF INNOVATION THAT IS RESPONSIVE TO GLOBAL TRENDS

Six commonly identified megatrends will affect education in the future: (1) changes in demographics that will bring more people to urban cities; (2) technology and science advancements that continue to grow at a rapid rate; (3) uneven economic growth and increasing inequality; (4) political dynamics that shift between nationalism and globalization; (5) climate change, which increases natural disasters that displace people; and (6) prolonged patterns of conflict that force unintentional migration. People in

under-resourced areas and conflict zones are at a particularly severe disadvantage. While it is certainly challenging when megatrends disrupt lives and livelihoods, education can provide opportunities that contribute to reestablishing stability.

English should not overshadow other people's culture, context, and content when addressing needs related to the six megatrends.

TESOL stakeholders, including policymakers, must understand that while English can address concerns it can also heighten inequality.

TESOL professionals should understand that while English can help solve problems, it can also create new ones. Many individuals see English as a necessary skill, believing that English proficiency will lead to opportunities for personal, professional, and economic advancement. For instance, some universities determine acceptance based on English skills, and some employers list English skills as a preferred qualification. However, accessing English language instruction can be a challenge. In much of the world, rural and poor populations, immigrants, and refugees lack access to adequate resources (e.g., reliable electricity and technology), which can act as a barrier to educational opportunities. TESOL professionals must remember that English is just one of the many languages needed in our global, multilingual society. People who have valuable, global contributions to make should not be denied opportunities for advancement because they lack English competence.

TESOL professionals must understand that while technology can serve as a valuable tool, it is not a panacea.

For the TESOL profession, technology is a great tool for creating interactive lesson plans, disseminating information, discussing issues and trends, advocating for learners' rights, building community, and gathering contributions from various stakeholders. Indeed, many people see the worldwide growth of technology as an advancement for society as a whole. Despite these benefits of technology, users must still develop critical thinking skills to avoid being deceived by incorrect or biased information. Furthermore, at the current rate of use and innovation, technology may be creating a bigger gap between those with and without access and critical thinking skills. Members of the TESOL profession have to educate the general public that technology will never be able to replace a qualified English language teacher, regardless of demand.

TESOL professionals can serve as key links in connecting and strengthening relationships among stakeholders through both digital and face-to-face communications.

Organizations and associations must lead during these changing times.

Teaching associations and other organizations—teacher education institutions, binational centers, nongovernmental organizations, and publishers, to name a few—are uniquely positioned to encourage a culture of innovation in response to these global trends by creating coalitions to implement the actions outlined in this priority. These organizations, and others, are able to recognize how each megatrend may or may not influence their

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situation, act with foresight when change is expected, create accountability measures for their actions, use the appropriate media to educate interested parties, and share success stories and challenges through effective channels. As these organizations use their networks to generate buy-in and initiate change, TESOL professionals will be able to develop the proactive skills needed to address global trends.

Using technology alone does not make better language learners.

FROM THE CZECH REPUBLIC | *Gabriela Kleckova, University of West Bohemia, Pilsen, Czech Republic*

In 2001, a group of English language teaching professionals in the Czech Republic started a small professional organization of foreign language teacher educators with a general mission to contribute to the improvement of foreign language teaching across all levels of the Czech educational system. From the very beginning, the association has strived to be active in various activities supporting quality foreign language teacher training. It has also been involved in policies associated with foreign language education in the country, such as foreign language standards.

Although some members of the association are associated with higher education preservice teacher training institutions, most of its members are primarily classroom teachers who also carry out teacher training activities. It is a group of language teachers who continue to grow in their expertise—keeping up with the profession. As a result of the high level of professionalism of its leaders and members, the organization has gained respect from the Czech Ministry of Education and other entities dealing with education in the Czech Republic.

The association is reached out to for contributions and feedback when new policies are being developed. It is a recognized partner in discussions involving foreign language education, and it is invited to join in national projects that focus on improving foreign language education in the country.

SHARING SUCCESSES | *Samira Idelcadi, Ministry of Education, Rabat, Morocco*

I would like to share an experience of participating in a massive open online course (MOOC) called “Shaping the Way We Teach English,” both as a participant and as an assistant to new participants.

The MOOC is built around two components: a course part, reading materials and watching videos, and a practical part, where participants from around the world share lesson plans and evaluate each other’s work. The way the course is designed invites teachers and educators from around the world to engage in higher levels of thinking through planning instruction and evaluating each other’s work. The idea of planning lessons, self-evaluating one’s work, giving and getting feedback from colleagues, and re-planning on that basis is already a form of inquiry. Inquiry does not necessarily need to be “rigorous” and “persuasive” research, but it can be based on team work, designing and implementing instruction/projects, evaluating it/them, and working together to solve issues related to practice.

Stakeholder Involvement

The list of stakeholders in Table 1 encompasses a general representation of the TESOL profession. This table is provided as resource to guide the various stakeholders on where they can have the greatest impact in shaping the future of the profession as outlined in these priorities. Organizations serving the profession include language schools, publishers, and nongovernmental organizations. Policymakers include school principals in addition to government officials. Researchers include classroom practitioners and university professors. The shading represents the level of attention we estimate these stakeholders must contribute to meeting these priorities; darker shading denotes a higher level of attention.

TABLE 1. STAKEHOLDER IMPACT

		Organizations serving the profession	Policymakers	Teacher associations	Teacher education programs	Teachers	Researchers
PRIORITY 1	STRENGTHEN THE STATUS AND VISIBILITY OF THE PROFESSION	Light Blue	Light Blue	Dark Blue	Medium Blue	Dark Blue	Medium Blue
PRIORITY 2	RECONFIGURE ENGLISH LANGUAGE EDUCATION PROGRAMS TO FOSTER GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT	White	Dark Blue	Light Blue	Dark Blue	Light Blue	Medium Blue
PRIORITY 3	MOBILIZE LEADERS TO CONFRONT AND EMBRACE THE CHALLENGES AND COMPLEXITIES OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING	Light Blue	Light Blue	Dark Blue	Medium Blue	Dark Blue	Medium Blue
PRIORITY 4	EXPAND CAPACITY FOR INCLUSIVE AND COMPREHENSIVE RESEARCH	Light Blue	White	Dark Blue	Medium Blue	Light Blue	Dark Blue
PRIORITY 5	CULTIVATE A CULTURE OF INNOVATION THAT IS RESPONSIVE TO GLOBAL TRENDS	Light Blue	Dark Blue	Dark Blue	Light Blue	Medium Blue	Light Blue

A Call to Action

We find ourselves at a truly remarkable point in history. Never before has the world seemed more expansive while simultaneously feeling so small. In an instant, no matter the actual distance, educators can communicate knowledge, ideas, and experiences regarding policies and practices across the world. These ideas are then easily spread, have the power to become trends, and can be adopted by stakeholders around the world. We now have a unique opportunity to connect and work together to move our profession forward. It will be crucial for all stakeholders to join with one another and provide valuable lessons of successes and failures while concurrently strengthening the TESOL profession through constant communication and idea sharing.

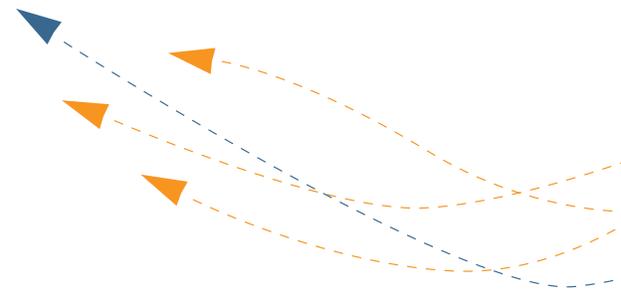


Facing the numerous obstacles that challenge the TESOL profession is certainly a difficult task, but one that is unquestionably achievable if TESOL professionals and stakeholders unite in embracing and implementing the ideas found within this action agenda. Now standing at a critical crossroad, with a choice between maintaining the status quo and sparking innovation, TESOL professionals must focus on advancing the field and positioning the profession for success well into the future.

TESOL International Association invites all TESOL professionals and stakeholders, individually and collectively, to share the great responsibilities that come with teaching English to speakers of other languages and to seize the opportunity to commit to implementing specific actions where they can make the greatest impact.



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The references consist only of publications referred to during the summit process. It includes two parts: the commissioned papers written by the 12 speakers at the summit meeting in Athens, Greece and items referred to during discussions. The commissioned papers also include references that the speakers consulted in writing their pieces.

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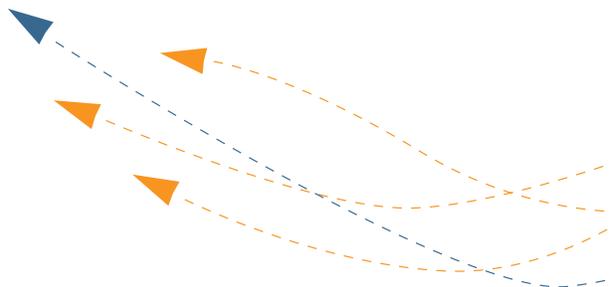
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