

# TESOL Arabia Plenary and Invited Speakers

**Thursday: March 12<sup>th</sup>, 2020**

## **Opening Ceremony and Plenary Day 1: 9:30-10:30 AM**

### **Invigorate English Language Teaching with The 6 Principles®**

Deborah Short, Academic Language Research & Training, LLC;  
TESOL International Association President-Elect (2019-2020)

This plenary presents TESOL's The 6 Principles for Exemplary Teaching of English Learners ® and their application to EFL, EMI, and CLIL settings. It describes the vision for ELT education in the 21st century, explains optimal conditions for second language learning, showcases effective instructional and assessment practices, and discusses how to use the 6 Principles for teacher development and program improvement. By implementing the 6 Principles in strategic ways, English language teachers can invigorate their lessons and promote multilingual learner success.

#### **Bio:**

**Deborah J. Short**, Ph.D., directs Academic Language Research & Training, LLC and provides professional development on academic literacy, content-based ESL, and sheltered instruction worldwide. Formerly she was a Division Director at the Center for Applied Linguistics where she co-developed the research-validated SIOP Model for sheltered instruction. She has directed research and program evaluations on English learners for the Carnegie Corporation of New York, Rockefeller Foundation, U.S. Department of Education, and U.S. Department of Justice, among others. Publications include the SIOP Model books, ESL textbooks for National Geographic Learning/Cengage, and numerous professional journal articles. She has presented at conferences around the U.S. and in Canada, Europe, South America, the Middle East, and New Zealand. She has taught ESL and EFL, in New York, California, Virginia, and the DR Congo. She led *The 6 Principles* writing team for TESOL and is the President-Elect for 2019-2020.

## **Invited Speaker Day 1: 3:45-4:30 PM**

### **Putting Research into Practice: Designing Classroom-based Tasks for Learners of Business English**

Catherine Nickerson, Zayed University, UAE

One of the consequences of the digital era has been the undeniable rise in the use of English in business. Studies have shown that large numbers of people in the business community now rely on English in order to get their work done, and at the same time, that many business transactions now take place through digital technologies in the form of computer mediated communication

(CMC). In my presentation, I will be talking about how to design relevant classroom based tasks for learners of business English, who have a limited knowledge of business. I will draw upon our experience with a project carried out with our high-proficiency learners located in Abu Dhabi, which aimed to help them develop the CMC skills that they will need to succeed in the contemporary U.A.E. workplace, with specific reference to email. In doing so, I will discuss the importance of going beyond what is normally included within the textbook and drawing upon recent research findings to place our learners in a writing space more similar to that of the modern business context.

**Bio:**

**Catherine Nickerson** is a Professor in the College of Business at Zayed University in the United Arab Emirates. In 2008 she received the Association for Business Communication's Distinguished Publication Award, in 2009 the Association's Outstanding Researcher Award and in 2017 the Outstanding Article in the Business and Professional Communication Quarterly Award. Dr Nickerson's work has been published widely and her latest book (Teaching Business Discourse) appeared with Palgrave Macmillan in 2019. Her current research interests include the use of business English as a lingua franca, the integration of mobile learning into the business English classroom, and the communication of Corporate Social Responsibility.

## **Friday: March 13<sup>th</sup>, 2020**

### **First Plenary Day 2: 8:30-9:15 AM**

#### **English Language Teachers Leading the Profession into the Future**

Rosa Aronson, Past Executive Director, TESOL International Association; English Language Specialist, US Department of State

As English language instruction continues to grow around the globe, teachers are asked to demonstrate high levels of proficiency and expertise as English language professionals. How can teachers respond to this mandate? How can they build a professional discipline? And how can they help define the future of the English Language Teaching (ELT) profession? This plenary examines the ways in which English language teachers can sharpen their teaching skills and build their leadership capacity through ELT organizations.

**Bio:**

**Rosa Aronson** works as an English Language Specialist with the U.S. Department of State. Her assignment have included working with teachers and leaders in Central Asia (2019) and in Vietnam (2018). Between 2010 and 2017, Aronson served as executive director of TESOL International Association, where she launched several successful strategic initiatives, including a global Summit on the Future of the TESOL Profession, an expansion of the TESOL Affiliate network, multiple international conferences and events in collaboration with ELT organizations around the world, and the development of a book series, the 6 Principles of Exemplary Teaching of English Learners.

Her career in Education began as an EFL teacher in France and continued in the USA in professional educational organizations. She holds a Ph.D. in Social Foundations of Education, a Master's degree in Education, and a Master's degree in English Linguistics. In 2015 she was named Fellow of the American Society of Association Executives (FASAE) in recognition of her service and leadership in association management. She is a certified Association Executive (CAE), a title given to professionals who demonstrate the knowledge required to be successful in association management. She has lived on three continents and is bilingual (French).

### **Invited Speaker Day 2: 1:30-2:30 PM**

#### **Current Trends in Language Assessment**

Peter Davidson, Zayed University, UAE

As a busy teacher, it can be difficult to keep up to date with all the latest research and developments in our field. In this talk I will update teachers on the seven latest and most significant trends in language assessment that they need to be aware of. Specifically, I will discuss: Multiple Measures Assessment; Authentic Assessment; Integrated-Skills Assessment; Rater Bias; Computerized Testing; Automated Essay Scoring and Feedback; and Learning-Oriented Assessment.

#### **Bio:**

**Peter Davidson** currently teaches Business Communication at Zayed University in Dubai, having previously taught in New Zealand, Japan, the UK and Turkey. He has co-edited a number of books on testing and evaluation including: Language Assessment in the Middle East and North Africa (2017, TESOL Arabia); The Cambridge Guide to Second Language Assessment (2012, Cambridge University Press); The Fundamentals of Language Assessment (2009, TESOL Arabia); and Evaluating Teaching Effectiveness in ESL/EFL Contexts (2007, University of Michigan Press). Peter was recently made a Fellow of the Higher Education Academy (UK).

### **Ending Plenary Day 2: 4:30-5:15 PM**

#### **Do You Blend?**

Sufian Abu-Rmaileh, United Arab Emirates University

With the introduction of technology and the various digital and smart devices in people's lives over the past decade, education was bound to be affected. Classrooms were destined to also include such technology. Traditional classrooms were no longer an option. The old way of teaching and lecturing in the classroom where the students were passive recipients of information needed to change. Although many teachers and schools were unenthusiastic and reluctant to adopt new technologies for a number of reasons, some were brave enough to demand change by introducing the latest technologies and methods of learning. Blended learning is one way where educators are able to use traditional and new learning technologies. In this plenary, we will

define blended learning and show how it is carried out in the most conducive way possible. We will also look at some tools to use in blended learning and discuss some challenges that teachers face in applying Blended Learning in their classrooms.

**Bio:**

**Dr. Sufian Abu-Rmaileh** is the United Arab Emirates University and Zayed Military College Academic Coordinator. He was the External Projects Coordinator for four years. He was also the Professional Development Coordinator for The University General Requirements Unit. For the past thirty-two years, he has been teaching English at various levels, skills and institutions in the United States and the Middle East. He has been an administrator and a team leader for over ten years in the United States, and the UAE. He has an MA in Linguistics and received both his TESL Certificate and his Ph.D. in Educational Leadership from Brigham Young University, USA. Dr. Abu-Rmaileh has also won many awards for his work as a leader, researcher and classroom teacher. He is a frequent presenter, invited and plenary speaker at local, national and international conferences. Dr. Abu-Rmaileh has written on culture, classroom technology, motivation, burnout, communication, business writing, critical and creative thinking, emotional and social intelligences, team building, problem solving, coaching and mentoring and leadership. He is TESOL Arabia past-president, past conference co-chair, 25 years as TA conference planner and other local, regional and international conference planner, and 2017 TA conference co-chair. Dr. Abu-Rmaileh is also a Toastmasters International member, Division Director and Past-President of TA Toastmasters.

## **Saturday: March 14<sup>th</sup>, 2020**

### **Closing Ceremony and Plenary Day 3: 11:30 AM-12:15 PM**

#### **What It Means to be a TESOL Professional**

Christine Coombe, Dubai Men's College, Higher Colleges of Technology

Being a teaching professional is not simply about having the right teaching credentials and being in good academic standing, it involves a commitment to being innovative and transformative in the classroom and helping both students and colleagues achieve their goals. A dictionary definition of professionalism reads as follows: professionalism is the conduct, aims, or qualities that characterize or mark a profession or a professional person; and it defines a profession as a calling requiring specialized knowledge and often long and intensive academic preparation (Merriam-Webster, 2013). However, according to Bowman (2013), professionalism is less a matter of what professionals actually do and more a matter of who they are as human beings. Both of these views imply that professionalism encompasses a number of different attributes, and, together, these attributes identify and define a professional.

In this plenary, we explore the literature on professionalism from a variety of different stakeholder perspectives. Other content to be covered include the myths associated with professionalism and the challenges ELT educators face when being professional. General and

field-specific strategies both from the literature and from anecdotal perspectives for improving one's professionalism will also be shared.

**Bio:**

**Christine Coombe** has a Ph.D in Foreign/Second Language Education from The Ohio State University. She is currently an Associate Professor of General Studies at Dubai Men's College. Christine is co-editor and co-author of numerous volumes on F/SL assessment, leadership, research methods, teacher effectiveness and TBLT. Her most recent publications include *The Cambridge Guide to Research in Language Teaching and Learning* (Cambridge University Press, 2015), Volume 8 of the *TESOL Encyclopedia of ELT* (Wiley Blackwell, 2018), and *The Role of Language Teacher Associations in Professional Development* (2018, Springer) and *Innovation in Language Learning and Teaching: The Case of the Middle East and North Africa* (2019, Palgrave Macmillan). Christine's forthcoming books are on research questions in TESOL and Applied Linguistics and professionalism in TESOL.

Christine has lived and worked in the Gulf for the past 28 years. In this capacity, she has served as the President and Conference Chair of one of the largest TESOL affiliates in the world and is the founder and co-chair of its Testing Special Interest Group. She served as TESOL President (2011-2012) and was a member of the TESOL Board of Directors (2005-2007; 2010-2013). Christine received the British Council's International Assessment Award for 2013. Her most recent honors were being named to TESOL's 50@50 which "recognizes professionals who have made significant contributions to the TESOL profession within the past 50 years." Dr Coombe is the 2018 recipient of the James E. Alatis Award which recognizes exemplary service to TESOL.