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**Holism and Applied Language Study**

**Professor Roger Nunn**

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Abu Dhabi

**Abstract**

A holistic philosophy of education considers the learner as a ‘whole person’, exploring constructive relationships between academic disciplines, actively seeking connections between learning and both local and global issues. The relationship between developing learners intrapersonally and developing interpersonal competence for a variety of often unpredictable local and global contexts is at the heart of a holistic approach.

In this paper, I would like to address the theme of the conference by summarizing and synthesizing in one place, several papers I have published or presented that consider holistic approaches to curriculum development, to applied language and discourse study, to (language) learning, teaching and assessment. The purpose is to forefront and develop the notion of holism itself as a productive philosophy that can inform and support a range of related applied activities in our field. Focusing on holism itself will also allow me to discuss and explore the important relationship between holistic and atomistic activity and to suggest ways of making learning more effective by engaging the ‘whole learner’.

A holistic learning philosophy provides a theoretical umbrella for a variety of learner-friendly and context-sensitive approaches. Topics include the learner as a whole person, motivation, the nature of competence, language and discourse use as holistic activity, curriculum development (project-based and task-based learning), classroom discourse analysis, classroom method-in-use and life-long learning. The design of holistic curriculum is sensitive to the relationship between holistic competence and performance and the particular learning needs of students within but also beyond their own learning context. While, holism (as realized for example in the design of projects and holistic tasks) is commonly opposed to atomism (as realized in activities such as language exercises), I propose a different synthetic relationship, arguing that holism is an inclusive notion that most usefully subsumes rather than opposes atomism. Indeed, to isolate holism as an exclusive concept is arguably counter to the meaning of holism.

A holistic view of language and discourse allows us to relate the study of important linguistic phenomena such as article use or use of the passive voice to the role they are playing in the whole communication activity that they are a part of. The camera lens is a useful metaphor. A skilled cameraman is able to zoom in and out at will at different stages of the process. A broad lens obscures detail, a narrow focus prevents us seeing the whole picture. Only a combination of a broad and narrow focus can provide a holistic understanding of the phenomenon.

**Biography:**

Roger Nunn has worked in EFL for over 30 years in seven different countries, including more than 22 years in Asia. He is currently working at the Petroleum Institute, a new University in Abu Dhabi, where he teaches communications and research skills. He is also Chief Editor of the Asian EFL Journal. He has a Trinity College TEFL diploma, an MA and Ph.D. in TEFL from the University of Reading, UK. His Ph.D. study was on teaching methodology and curriculum development across cultural boundaries in a Middle East setting. He has published widely on a variety of topics and is particularly interested in international and intercultural perspectives on language teaching.



## **ELT and the “Science of Happiness”**

**Marc Helgesen**

Miyagi Gakuin Women's University,

Sendai Japan

### **Abstract**

Positive, motivated students -- engaged with what they are studying and with each other -- learn more and approach tasks with more enthusiasm. How do we foster that positive attitude in the language classroom?

The new field of “positive psychology” offers direction. Psychology has traditionally focused on *mental illness*. Positive psychology focuses on *mental health*: – What do happy, mentally healthy people do? TIME magazine dubbed this “the Science of Happiness.”

Language learning is, of course, informed by educational psychology. How can we connect ideas from positive psychology to our classrooms? In this session, we’ll work/play/experiment with tasks that do just that.

Positive psychology has identified 8 behaviors of happy, mentally healthy people. They are remembering good things in one’s life, doing kind things, taking time for friends and family, forgiving, taking care of one’s health, expressing gratitude, noticing good things as they happen (mindfulness), and learning to deal with problems.

All of these items connect to language skills we teach our students: “express gratitude” and “remember good things” require past tenses, “notice things” requires the present, “dealing with problems” often brings up modals for advice, “friends”, family” and “health” are common classroom topics, “forgiveness” requires functional language. This session will connect the ideas of positive psychology with practical classroom activities. Ranging from “happiness journals” to “gratitude letters” to “compliments & saying thank you,” these tasks allow learners to learn and practice English while engaging in the same behaviors positive psychology recommends. In addition to major activities, we will consider short “10 minutes for happiness”

tasks that nearly any teacher can “squeeze” into the curriculum. Participants will receive a handout explaining 20 ELT/positive psychology tasks. This session builds on research of Lyubomirsky, Seligman, Csikszentmihalyi, Gilbert, Ben-Shahar, Kataria and others.

### **Biodata**

Marc Helgesen is author of more than 100 professional articles, books and textbooks including the *English Firsthand* series (Pearson Education/Longman Asia) and has lead teacher development workshop on 5 continents. He is professor at Miyagi Gakuin Women's University, Sendai and adjunct at Teachers College Columbia University, MA Program, Tokyo. He maintains a website on this topic at

<http://ELTandHappiness.terapad.com>

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## **Teaching Spelling Skills with a Mind-mapping Software**

**Prof. Reima Al-Jarf**

King Saud University, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

Website: <http://faculty.ksu.edu.sa/aljarf>

### **Abstract**

Although the language program at my college offers several English language courses in the first four semesters of college, the spelling skill is completely ignored. Since many EFL freshman students are poor spellers, mind-mapping software can be used to help them connect spoken phonemes with their written forms. A mind map begins with placing a target concept, category or phonics rule such as *silent consonants* in the middle of the screen. This target category “*silent consonants*” is used as a basis for grouping, categorizing and sub-categorizing silent letters into *silent /l/, silent /k/, silent, /gh/, silent /t/, silent /w/* and so on. Nodes and branches radiating from the central category “*silent consonants*” are drawn for the sub-categories *silent /l/, silent /k/* etc. Sub-categories and examples are elicited from students, grouped into related sub-categories and placed radiating out from the central category. Mind-mapping software use lines, colors, arrows, branches to show connections between the spelling rule and examples generated on the mind map. By focusing on key rules and then looking for branches that radiate out and connections between the words, the students map phonics knowledge in a way which helps them understand and remember sound-symbol relationships. The study shows how mind-mapping software can be integrated in EFL courses to help students discriminate different pronunciation of the vowel letters a, i, o, e, u; adding a final silent e; pronunciation of vowel digraphs; consonant letters with more than one sound; different pronunciations of consonant letters *c, cc, g, ch, s*; double consonants; homophones; homographs; hidden sounds; rules for adding affixes; assimilation; elision; acronyms and abbreviations; and American vs British spelling variations.

**Bio:-**

Prof. Reima Al-Jarf's Bio:

Prof. Reima Al-Jarf has taught EFL, ESP and linguistics courses to graduate and undergraduate students. She has written 7 books and 110 articles and has given 190 presentations and conducted 30 workshops in 45 countries. She has won 3 Excellence for Teaching Awards and the Best Faculty Website Award at her university

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**Title:**

**"The Concentric Circles Model: Implications for Learning and Teaching World Englishes"**

**Author: Carlo Magno, PhD,**

De La Salle University, Manila, Philippines

**Abstract:**

The article presents the implications of Kachru's concentric circles model in teaching and learning World Englishes. Considering that English is now spoken by majority of people in the world (part of the expanding circle), their needs for learning the language should be addressed through instruction and/or teaching. Models of learning a diverse form of English are explained by the need to use the English language, role of ones' native language (for EFL learners), and standards of assessing world Englishes. The consequences of these models are also discussed. Implications for teaching and learning a diverse form of English are presented. For learning, the goal of learning world Englishes is to close the gap between the current state of English to a more potential state; English is learned given the needs in ones context; and focusing to achieve negotiations among users of the English language. Four pillars were described in teaching the diversity of English: (1) Teaching people an understanding of how to work with diversity; (2) The need to teach a more central version; (3) The need to understand the relation between English and local languages; and (4) Emphasis on description rather than prescription.

**Dr. Carlo Magno** is an Honorary Regional Adviser of the Asian EFL Journal and is currently the chairman of the Psychometrics and Statistics Division of the Philippine Educational Measurement and Evaluation Association. He is also the managing editor of The Philippine ESL Journal, TESOL Journal, The International Journal of Research and Review, The International Journal of Educational and Psychological Assessment, and other academic journals. He has written numerous papers on TESL and is a respected scholar and educator. In 2008, the National Academy of Science and Technology awarded Dr. Magno for his contributions to social science research.



**Rob Dickey**

**Dynamic Senses for Pronunciation.**

**Korea**

**Abstract**

Despite over 100 years of scientific studies, all we really know about pronunciation is that the scientific evidence isn't very helpful in the classroom. Overly technical explanations and unclear graphics simply confuse learners. Much of the literature, furthermore, doesn't fit with student expectations. "Listen and repeat" works for some, not for many others. "Accent reduction" programs leave students without their own voice. What we need are ways for students to "see" what happens and where, to "feel" and even "taste" the sounds of English. To use more of their senses actively during pronunciation time. Only then can they find the sounds they seek. This session includes both the presenter's own ideas, and opportunities for attendees to contribute. (I haven't figured out how to "smell" English yet, but am certainly open to ideas!)

**Bio:-**

Rob Dickey has been teaching English in formal settings since 1994, but has been learning and teaching a variety of languages as far back as he can remember. He is a past-president of Korea TESOL, a founding member of Asia TEFL, and a member of the advisory board for Asian EFL Journal. He is presently developing a textbook for a major publisher that incorporates the ideas discussed in this session.



**Dr. Michael Fennell**

**Arab American University Jenin, Palestine**

**North, South, East and West: the aim's the same, the game's the same.**

**Abstract**

Whatever the combination of letters in acronym and direction, the aim – to connect – is the same. So too, is the game. For as users of the English language we are challenged to play creatively, with passion and inspiration; infused we are encouraged to move with practiced spontaneity. We will stumble, for sure; yet so too, will we rise and score!

This is my belief and indeed, my experience. I have a 'player's anecdotal manual', from which I will share. Opening the pages, I will tell of encounters in England, Nicaragua, Saudi Arabia and Palestine. It is my hope that you too will feel the emotional pull of ELT and leave debating the premise that 'North, South, East and West, the aim's the same, the game's the same'.

**Bio:-**

Dr. Michael Fennell, is currently on a year's unpaid sabbatical leave from the Arab American University Jenin, Palestine where he is Assistant Professor (TESOL). He has used this time to pursue his interest in teachers' lives, attending conferences in Albania, Northern Cyprus, Tunisia, Turkey and the UK. He is also writing a book on 'How to survive the PhD'. With 24 years in the field of TEFL, he has worked in Sweden, Italy, England, Nicaragua, Saudi Arabia, and Palestine. Both his MA (TESOL) and PhD (Education) are from the Institute of Education, University of London.



**Prof. Z. N. PATIL**  
**English and Foreign Languages University**  
**Hyderabad, India**  
**Pedagogy as Dialogue**

**Abstract:**

My experiences as a teacher trainer and my observations of monologic classroom performances and practices over the past three decades have led me to arrive at a rather bleak picture of the prevalent pedagogy. A monologic, unidirectional and unilateral pedagogy breeds paradigms of dependence and hierarchy. Moreover, it assumes the parasitic role of the learner who is looked upon as an empty vessel to be filled and as a zero balance bank account into which the authoritarian, omnipotent and omniscient teacher deposits funds of knowledge, which s/he accepts unquestioningly. This type of pedagogy fails to nurture the learner's resourcefulness, imaginativeness and innovativeness, and is detrimental to an all-round development of his / her personality. Synchronously, my experiences and observations have helped me to explore newer avenues and think of fresh approaches, methodologies and strategies which nourish dialogic pedagogy. Dialogic pedagogy, which is by its very nature interactive and participatory, results into paradigms of equality, interdependence and independence, and encourages a spirit of involvement, participation and critical questioning. Moreover, it accommodates a deconstructionist plurality of perspectives and multiplicity of interpretation and lateral thinking. Further, it is tolerant of deviations from clichéd patterns of thought, and more importantly, encourages and nurtures learner autonomy.

**Keywords:** pedagogy, monologic, dialogic, paradigm, dependence, interdependence, independence