

BALEAP Bulletin

Andy Gillett, Chair of the British Association of Lecturers in English for Academic Purposes

Since my last bulletin, BALEAP has had an executive meeting and business meeting and the BALEAP Biennial Conference in conjunction with SATEFL at Heriot Watt University in Edinburgh.

Following decisions at the meetings, BALEAP now has an EAP job-shop on the web-site where member institutions can advertise jobs in their institutions. Access to look at the jobs is open to everyone, so if you want an EAP job, it might be a useful place to start. We also set up a working party to investigate BALEAP involvement in EAP teacher training. As EAP becomes more important, we agreed that BALEAP needs to do something soon as we have the expertise. BALEAP also needs to be more pro-active in encouraging EAP related research.

The conference was organised with the Scottish Association for the Teaching of English as a Foreign Language (SATEFL). BALEAP exists to promote research and good practice in the teaching of English in academic contexts and SATEFL supports the professional development of teachers of English in Scotland. The practical theme of this conference, *New Approaches to Materials Development for Language Learning*, was intended to reflect the interests of both the groups.

Four keynote speakers and some 65 presentations in 11 concurrent sessions covered the main areas of research and good practice, which included:

- curriculum and course design
- acculturation into the academic community
- the development of online and blended learning
- the use of corpora to analyse and select language for teaching
- critical thinking, information literacy and avoiding plagiarism
- developing reading, writing, listening and discussion skills in academic contexts

As I pointed out in my last bulletin, materials have been at the centre of much of BALEAP's work since it started. The kinds of materials we need and use depend very much on our students and fundamental to BALEAP's approach to EAP materials is finding out who our students are and what they need. What is their purpose in learning English?

The opening plenary by Eija Ventola - *New Challenges for English Language Teaching Materials and the Classroom* - set the scene for the conference by reminding us that 'We are learning for life, not for school'. Her paper looked at the past, the present and the future of teaching English in a global society and particularly at the way different areas of life - including education - are represented by different genres and the way these genres are embodied in learning materials. She asked whether materials have kept up with our increasing knowledge of student's purpose and the relevant genres and gave examples of teaching English in various contexts that show they perhaps have not.

The other plenaries were Peter Grundy: 'Optimality, context and materials in EAP', Brian Tomlinson: 'Localising the Global: Matching Materials to the Local Context of Learning' and Ian McGrath on 'Textbooks, technology and teachers'.

The 65 presentations ranged across the six main areas with a large number of presentations being related in some way to technology especially VLEs, use of corpora and the www. It was a joint conference with SATEFL so could have expected non-EAP presentations, but it was clear that almost all the presentations were EAP related, emphasizing perhaps the growing importance of EAP in English Language Teaching in the UK. The conference proceedings will be published by Peter Lang and are due out in June 2006.

The importance of remembering our students' purposes is particularly relevant for our in-sessional courses. This is something that will be followed up at the next BALEAP Professional Issues Meeting (PIM). The theme will be "In-sessional Provision: Issues and Practices" and it will be held at the University of Exeter on Saturday 12th November.

Contact

As always, see the web-site www.baleap.org.uk for further information on PIMS or BALEAP in general.