At the University of Kansas, English language instruction is undergoing a sea change—transforming curricula, enriching professional development and enhancing student experiences. The Applied English Center, the KU Academic Accelerator Program and faculty in a range of KU departments are all active in this process of transformation. Students, faculty and participants in short-term programs all benefit from this broad examination of how language is used academically and what it means to speak English in a global context. This issue of Horizons focuses on developing teachers for an international classroom, whether it be a classroom in the United States, Korea or Vietnam. KU is a leader in this arena, bringing valuable perspectives, as well as best practices to the field of second language studies.

AEC Faculty Redefine Language Instruction

Kellie Smith Herrod and Marcellino Berardo think of themselves as scientists in a language laboratory. Working with the KU Academic Accelerator Program is their opportunity to use their research and experience to redefine how English language is taught at KU and to influence how KU faculty think about teaching international students.

Berardo describes the Applied English Center as comprising three units with different curriculums. The Intensive English Program is traditional instruction; the short-term programs require nimble, flexible teaching and the AAP is a content-based curriculum.

After thinking about English for academic purposes concepts for five years, the Applied English Center language specialists finally have the chance to implement them. Herrod and Berardo are thinking broadly about language learning and sharing those concepts with general education faculty for the first time.

“We’re redefining English as a discourse community,” a group that has common goals or purposes, and use communication to achieve these goals.

Faculty in the American and Environmental studies programs develop the courses and then work with the AEC faculty. The AEC classes are complementary, not a

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Brox’s Teaching Methods Enhanced by AAP

Teaching a classroom of only international students was a new experience for Ali Brox, lecturer and Academic Accelerator Program coordinator for the Environmental Studies Program. Working with faculty from the Applied English Center, Brox and other Environmental studies faculty have developed three classes that introduce students to the Kansas landscape. A sister class reinforces the language components for the series.

When the AAP began in 2014, Brox and her colleague Bob Hagen met with AEC Language Specialist Marcellino Berardo to develop their courses, which are part of the general education curriculum. Academic disciplines have their own language—a set of specialized words and phrases that have very specific meanings within the field. The collaboration allows for the identification of grammar structures and reoccurring words that general education faculty expect their students to know and use. The interdisciplinary nature of the course gives the grammar and collocations wider applicability while providing a consistent disciplinary context.

To make sure she is reaching the students, Brox has adapted her teaching techniques. Lectures are short, no more than 20 minutes. She writes terms and concepts on the board, so students can hear and see key words. She “scaffolds” the assignments to help the students take notes and advise them on how to tackle the readings. Class discussion and participation are new concepts to most international students. Brox models class discussions, so students understand how to use the text and build on what their classmates are saying. “The students have gotten better and are more comfortable speaking in class,” Brox said.

The environmental studies courses have been designed to provide students with hands-on experiences with different Kansas landscapes. Experiential learning and the ability to “bank” experiences for the future have been extremely important. In addition to writing activities, students give mini presentations to the class after every field trip. The final project for Introduction to Kansas Landscapes includes an essay and formal presentation. The short “practice” presentations have greatly improved the quality of the final presentations, as well as the comfort level that students display when formally presenting at the end of the term.

Along with Berardo and Lecturers Monica McCuistion and Marina Greene, Brox shared what she has learned at the Mid-America Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages conference this fall at the University of Iowa. The group presented “Collaborating with Gen Ed Colleagues on Grammar Curricula.” Brox adds that experience to the professional development she has gained working with the AEC, which has enhanced the teaching methods she uses in her non-AAP classes.

In her fourth semester of teaching in the AAP, Brox is aware of the richness that international students add to a class and her role in bringing out these riches.

“Faculty have assumptions about what it means to have a class of international students. They think they need to lower expectations and something will suffer. It’s really about expanding tools and strategies. It can transform a course,” Brox said.

New ways of thinking about language instruction have given Brox tools and concepts that have benefited all the students she teaches. Sharing the language of Environmental studies now means something transformative and exciting to Brox.
Cho’s Mission: to Prepare Teachers for International Classrooms

Creating a supportive academic environment in a variety of settings where all students contribute to the class experience and share their cultural background is a priority of Hyesun Cho. College is a time for students to figure out who they are. International students have the additional challenge of learning who they are while living in another culture.

Cho, an assistant professor in the Department of Curriculum and Teaching originally from South Korea, has lived this academic experience. So students “know that I did this.” She points to the importance of having a diverse faculty who can serve as role models and be part of a support system.

Preparing students to teach in an international classroom is part of the curriculum in the Department of Curriculum & Instruction. Cho and Professor Lizette Peter established a TESOL practicum study abroad program to Korea last summer. The nine students taught English during a four-week summer program at the Kyungwa Girls’ Private School in South Korea. While earning practicum credit, the students taught for the first time in an international classroom.

To prepare for the practicum, the students attended three workshops about the Korean education system and the role of English language instruction, and also learned some Korean.

Living in a dormitory with 600 female students immersed the student teachers in the school’s system. They taught with a Korean teacher and then took over the classroom, the first time students had a professional identity as teachers, Cho said.

Building cultural competency and understanding extends throughout her teaching. In her Language and Identity graduate seminar, Cho asks her students what it means to be a minority student. The seminar explores the spectrum of learner and teacher identity and the role of language in the construction of social identity and vice versa.

The questions that Cho wants her students to investigate include what is class participation? Is it active listening or speaking a lot in class? Students have different definitions of participation. Plagiarism is another course behavior issue. Some cultures have a different understanding of plagiarism. Cho gave the example of copying classics text as a learning strategy in China, but one that is not part of Western teaching methods.

Cho’s study abroad practicum and classes help her students develop empathy for language learners and gain self knowledge, all of which will help them be effective teachers.
Lizette Peter teaches the first-year seminar “English as a Global Language: Issues and Implications of Teaching and Learning English Abroad,” which focuses on the political, cultural and economic factors that drive English's status as a global language and the demand to learn it. The associate professor in the Department of Curriculum and Teaching wants to start early to expose students to the idea of English as a global language and the responsibilities that come with that.

This is the first year that Peter has taught the first-year seminar. In the graduate-level course on the same subject that she's taught for many years, international students form the majority of the class. The students' home countries help determine the direction of the course and what research they will conduct. “Once they've taken the course, they think about what it means to teach English in their home countries,” Peter said.

One of the first-year seminar assignments is to interview an international student about their attitudes toward English. Peter enlists her graduate students to be the interview subjects.

For students who want to live overseas after graduation, teaching English is often the best way to accomplish that. Finding a good teaching job is harder than it used to be, so to help their students be more competitive, other disciplines are adding teaching English as a foreign language courses to their curriculums. The increased demand for courses is reflected in the increase in full-time faculty in the TESOL unit to four.

Making English language learning more academically oriented is a growing field in language studies, Peter said. “Language isn't separate from learning about the world.”

Peter wants students to learn “how to teach English with integrity.” Not to just impose English, but to be more critical of how English is taught. More and more international institutions are mandating English instruction beginning at a young age. Peter sees pros and cons to that approach--achieving English proficiency is a positive but losing the inability to think critically in one's first language can be damaging. “I want students to understand the double-edged sword that English is,” she said.

As her field grows, Peter imparts on her students the standard that English language teachers must have a deep understanding of the content they teach and of the social and cultural issues that impact teaching and learning.

“Language isn't separate from learning about the world.”

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tutorial, and use English to discuss content. Reinforcing content demonstrates what the students have learned. Each Environmental studies class session has a main idea and a prompt. The AEC faculty use the prompt to emphasize grammar, creating more authentic and discipline-specific content. Discussions and activities emphasize and reinforce the grammar structure of the week by focusing on how words, phrases, and grammar are used in definitions, examples, and explanations.

The main goal for students is to become fluent users of academic English to achieve classroom success in any subject area. This includes learning academic English to construct knowledge as well as gain and share knowledge.

Students learn to use English to find out what they do not know, as well as how to ask about what they do not understand.

The AEC courses provide sustained exposure to and engagement with disciplinary language in context, and teach the strategic use of academic English to access, understand, re-create and critically discuss disciplinary content. “We’re seeing success. Learning is coming from two angles; language and content are inseparable,” Berardo said.
Teachers Program Transforms Vietnamese Classrooms

Phuong Nguyen and Cuong Nguyen participated in Vietnamese English Teacher Program Project J-hawk, which brought 13 Vietnamese English teachers to the Applied English Center in the academic year 2014-15. After enhancing their English language skills and teaching methods, Phuong Nguyen returned to “Nguyen Chi Thanh Gifted High School” in Dak Nong Province and Cuong Nguyen is back in his classroom at “Quang Trung Gifted High School” in Binh Phuoc Province.

**Cuong Nguyen:** Since I have been back from KU, I have focused more on my students’ language skills, especially pronunciation, speaking, listening and writing. I have realized that passing university entrance examinations is not the only thing we expect, but we also prepare students for better English skills so that they can meet the demand of the international learning environment. So I find the testing and assessment that I learned from the course very useful; it provides guidelines for my marking and giving feedback so that students can see what they need to work on, but they still feel encouraged and motivated.

I have shared what I learned with my school teachers of English and they like it very much. They also use listening logs, vocabulary logs so that they can check if their students learn outside class or not. They are also excited about the presentation tools such as Prezi, Blend Space and Padlet. We are planning to do teacher training on a larger scale after the Ministry of Education and Training and The Foreign Languages 2020 Project holds a teacher training course for us to get qualified. However, the American Center in Ho Chi Minh City sponsored our participation in the SEAMEO International Conference 2015. Our presentation on using IT tools in English teaching was well attended and attracted a lot of concerns from the audience, but due to the time limit, we couldn’t answer all of their questions. We were also invited by the American Center to present these information technology tools to some students and teachers from universities of education all over the city. They were so interested and appreciated it.

**Phuong Nguyen:** My teaching philosophy has changed significantly since I came back from KU. In the past, I just focused on grammar and students did not know how to use English in their daily life. Now, I concentrate more on communication and I use almost 100 percent of English when I am in class. I hope that I can create a good environment for my students to practice speaking English. Moreover, I ask them to do projects using English so that they can show their creativity. One of the methods I like most is modeling, in which the teacher explains and illustrates clearly so that students could understand and know what to do next. It is the foundation of their creativity. I learned this technique from the teachers of AEC in KU.

I use information technology tools to prepare the lessons, test students’ language skills and ask them to do projects using some IT tools such as Voicethread, Wevideo, Thinglink, Padlet, Prezi and Postcast. I have divided the class into six groups and they are doing the project “Becoming Independent” using all these tools. My students will show their projects. My students like the new way of integrating IT into teaching English and they cooperate well with me.
AEC Revamps State Department Program in Year Two

There are several ways to develop an international classroom. The Applied English Center is sharing knowledge and resources with international teachers of English. The 13 English language teachers participating in the Vietnamese English Teacher Program Project J-Hawk 2.0, the second year of this prestigious program at KU, are spending the academic year learning about teacher training, methods and technology, while also experiencing different facets of American culture.

Based on feedback from last year’s participants and the AEC faculty, the first semester now focuses on the teachers improving their English, including listening and pronunciation and teaching skills. The AEC realized that the teachers need pronunciation in the first semester, so they could concentrate on learning to teach that skill in the second semester. Also in the second semester, the teachers will train to be teacher trainers, developing activities to share with each other and when they return home.

Sharing teaching methodologies is not common in Vietnam where decisions are made at the federal level, so implementing change is difficult. From their perspective, incremental change is important, said Margaret Coffey, AEC associate director.

Understanding how the Vietnamese classroom works is essential to the program’s success. Kellie Smith Herrod, who spent a year in Vietnam on a Fulbright, was instrumental in helping to shape the program. In order for the material to be relevant to the teachers, understanding the Vietnamese cultural and educational system are key factors. Another key factor is making sure that the teachers shape what they learn and create, Coffey said. By designing their own lessons and activities, the teachers control the content so they can decide what they can take away and how the subject matter can fit in their schools.

The Vietnamese teachers program is also an important learning experience for AEC faculty who need to think about how to share relevant information with teachers who are going to use it in different contexts. Having master teachers “who are nimble and able to meta teach as needed” enables them to respond to different teaching situations, Coffey said.

This AEC program is sponsored by the U.S. Department of State and is administered by the U.S. State Department, Hanoi Bureau. Preparations to apply for the program for a third year will begin in January.
Students Find AAP Prepares Them to Earn KU Degrees

After completing the three semesters of the KU Academic Accelerator Program (KUAAP), Yuhan “Oliver” Ye began his sophomore year this fall.

Ye entered the KUAAP because his Chinese education agent advised him that he would be well-served by working on his English language skills. His only knowledge of KU was watching the basketball team win the 2008 NCAA championship. Ye found grammar easy, and said his reading and writing classes were hard. Learning how to format and write a paper was an essential part of his first-year experience.

Participating in class was also a challenge for him. He realized he needed to do it to improve his English comprehension. “You can’t do well if you don’t understand,” so Ye heeded the advice of his AAP teachers to communicate regularly with his professors.

As his KUAAP year progressed, Ye put all of the pieces together to become an independent learner. He was able to navigate the campus and prepare for the next step. “We want to do things by ourselves,” he said.

This semester Ye dove into his general education requirements. His second humanities and western civilization class requires a lot of reading, and he participates actively in class discussions. Ye plans to major in geography.

Ye stays connected with the KUAAP by serving as a student ambassador, sharing what he’s learned about KU with current AAP students. He’s also a tutor for the Academic Achievement and Access Center.

Abdelaziz Alloghani didn’t know how to write a 200-word paper, let alone a 1,000-word paper, when he entered the KUAAP. He was shy and had trouble communicating in English. Now at the end of his third semester, he can give a speech in English with confidence and feels ready to begin his sophomore year.

Alloghani, from the United Arab Emirates, wanted to improve his language and communication skills and thought the KUAAP would be a good place to accomplish that. He plans to major in petroleum engineering.

Coming to KU was a big transition, but now that he has mastered group projects, office hours, course credit and learned about a GPA, he is prepared to leave the AAP.

Having a roommate from Kansas has also enhanced his KU experience. They play video games together, help each other with their class work and do things outside the dormitory together.

Alloghani said entering the KUAAP was the right choice; he needed the time to be prepared to be a full-time college student.

For Ye and Alloghani, the AAP instruction and their experiences within the AAP have provided them with a solid foundation for success at KU.
Thank you to everyone who supported International Programs from January 1-June 30. Your gifts enabled students to study abroad, faculty to conduct international research and international students to come to KU.

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