

TESOL RESEARCH AGENDA, JUNE 2000

I. OVERVIEW

Inquiry is, by nature, contextualized and changeable. Topics of relative importance today may be less important years from now, as new knowledge is accumulated and as the world and educational settings change. Similarly, topics popular in the past may later reappear as their focus again attracts interest and debate. Any research agenda must reflect the changeable nature of its discipline and, thus, of research priorities. In a field such as TESOL, which involves language professionals internationally, flexibility and responsiveness to changing world conditions is particularly important. A research agenda must therefore be open, inclusive, and represent the best interests of the field at large.

Thus, this agenda sets forth the following:

1. Every 3 years, from the time of adoption by the Board, the TESOL Research Agenda will be reviewed for possible updates and revisions. With the approval of this first version of the agenda, in June 2000, the agenda will be reviewed for the conventions of the following years: 2003, 2006, 2009, and so on.
2. No model of change is suggested or implied: Components of the agenda may be replaced, relocated, or omitted. Amendments may be added. Cross-references to other documents, agencies, or entities may be added. Hypertextual revision may be included. TESOL may choose, at a later point, to discontinue this agenda entirely.
3. These periodic reviews will be the responsibility of a team named by the TESOL president, with input from the Board of Directors, and shall consist of several members of the TESOL association, including appointed interest section (IS) and affiliate leaders.
4. From March to August of the year preceding the third year since its last revision (i.e., 2002, 2005, 2008, and so on), the team will review the agenda. The team will make recommendations to the Board at its October meeting of that year as to how the agenda should be changed. The Board

will then either vote to approve the changes at that October meeting or return the revised agenda to the team for further deliberation, allowing for a later vote. This schedule should allow formal Board approval by the following convention.

5. TESOL shall maintain and make available to its membership, for historical record, all versions of the agenda and make all versions available for public review. Change to this agenda is not meant to supercede any previous version of itself, but, rather, to provide for our discipline a more accurate map, one that charts both past and current needs.
6. If possible, and appropriate, the Board may sponsor a slot on the convention program in the third-numbered years to acquaint convention attendees with the changes.

II. TOPICS AND CONTEXTS OF INQUIRY

This section of the agenda draws a rough map of the field of TESOL by setting forth a list of topics and contexts in which research in TESOL is productive and beneficial. This list provides a quick glance at the field, and, thus, may help researchers to consider ways of bridging research across areas. The list below is intended to be illustrative, not exhaustive. The topics below are grouped in terms of Language Learners (learner variables, language, and literacy); Educational Settings (curriculum design, development, delivery, and evaluation; teacher education and professional development), and Language in Society (social contexts, English in the developing and changing world, English in the global economy). These categories are then linked with the sample research questions that follow.

A. TRADITIONAL MACROCONTEXTS

1. ESL (e.g., English in Australia or the United States)

2. EFL (e.g., English in Egypt or Japan)
3. English as an international language (e.g., English in India or Nigeria)

B. EDUCATIONAL CONTEXTS

1. Preschool
2. Elementary education
3. Secondary education
4. Higher education
5. International education
6. Adult education
7. Mainstream (content-based) classes
8. Environments created by electronic media (e.g., distance learning)

C. NONSCHOOL EDUCATIONAL AND SOCIOLINGUISTIC CONTEXTS

1. Home/family
2. Local communities
3. Refugee communities
4. Immigrant communities
5. International/expatriate communities
6. Public and private institutions

7. Government agencies
8. Media (for both classroom and independent learning)
9. Electronically networked communities
10. Workplaces

III. PRIORITY RESEARCH AREAS AND QUESTIONS

This section of the research agenda provides suggested areas of research priority, listing research questions within those areas and providing brief commentary on the research topic. The aim of this section is to provide a prioritized list of questions for the field of TESOL. The areas and questions listed are meant to be illustrative, not exhaustive, of TESOL's needs. Furthermore, it is recognized that priorities will vary for individuals in different settings according to their professional interests, commitments, and areas of greatest need, in addition to local contingencies. Research topics and directions are often negotiated between multiple parties (e.g., government agencies and school districts, students and dissertation committees). These negotiations, combined with fiscal and other constraints, may inform and impact possible lines of inquiry. Finally, this agenda acknowledges, but does not summarize or allude to, the substantial research on language, language education, and language acquisition that has been conducted over the past several decades. The intent here is to point to currently needed research that should build upon the findings of the past.

The research areas are organized under three major headings: Language Learners, Educational Settings, and Language in Society. Within each major heading, subheadings exist. Within subheadings, specific research questions and rationales are presented.

The reader will notice that there is no clear one-to-one relationship between the topics listed in Section II and the research priorities and questions that follow. Rather, overlaps between topics/contexts and research areas/questions exist, such that one question (or a group of similar questions) could appear within a number of different topics/contexts, depending on focus and interpretation.

A. LANGUAGE LEARNERS

1. Learner Variables

a) Research Priorities: What are the characteristics of specially defined populations, including those based on biological age, that impinge on success in learning a second or foreign language? What instructional methods, interventions, or diagnostic procedures best meet the needs of these special populations?

b) Rationale: This is a broad area representing extensive prior research and ongoing debate and challenges in TESOL. TESOL professionals teach students of all ages and therefore need consistent updates on research findings to inform their practice regarding learners in different age groups, with different backgrounds and histories, and with different cognitive attributes and abilities. Many groups of individuals for whom English is an additional language face difficulties: elderly learners; naturalistic learners with fossilized language; refugees and others whose education has been interrupted; teenage immigrants with social, academic, and linguistic difficulties in ESL or EFL contexts; and special needs (learning disabled) or otherwise nontraditional learners. We need to find appropriate means of addressing these language needs while respecting the dignity and rights of learners.

In addition, in most countries, educational policies determine the age at which English language instruction is introduced systemwide as a mandatory or optional subject. There are widespread ramifications as a result, within the educational system, in students' lives and in society at large. Economic, social, political, and military discord and/or instability can foster the movement of large numbers of persons across national and cultural boundaries. It is important to identify ways in which the specific language learning needs of these groups can be identified and addressed, while they are in transition and after their settlement in a new permanent location. Finally, persons with significant physical, cognitive, or psychological challenges or disabilities may face a doubly difficult task when acquiring an second language (L2) or foreign language (e.g., a poststroke patient).

c) Sample Questions

(1) Age-Related Issues

- (a) What is the relationship of age to L2/foreign language learning, and how can that relationship be utilized to the benefit of learners?
- (b) What are the special age-related needs of the population of older learners, and what instructional approaches or interventions are most successful?
- (c) What is the optimal age to begin L2/foreign language instruction in different contexts?
- (d) What are the costs versus the benefits of starting English language education at different ages in terms of
 - i) students' acquisition of English
 - ii) attitudes toward the language and cultures of English speakers
 - iii) the learner's motivation for learning the L2
 - iv) the impact on teachers and institutions
 - v) teacher education and ongoing professional development
 - vi) instructional practices
 - vii) the impact on the teaching/learning of other languages, including the students' first language (L1)
 - viii) future opportunities to learn/use English for work, study, or other purposes
 - ix) What are the differential effects of immigration at different ages on students' long-term well-being?

(2) Issues of Ability Versus Disability

- (a) How is the learning of an L2 or foreign language constrained by physical, cognitive, or psychological challenges or disabilities?

- (b) What instructional methods, interventions, diagnostic procedures, technological aides, and assessment procedures exist for the education of language learners with special needs?
- (c) What policies, if necessary, should be suggested for the education of special needs students?
- (d) How can learning difficulties be assessed and diagnosed in an additional language, and what are the policy implications of such findings?
- (e) What procedures, materials, and curricula are effective for teaching English to deaf learners?
- (f) What are the English language learning needs of deaf persons in academic and/or workplace settings?

(3) Issues of Displacement, Settlement, and Shifting Identities

- (a) What are the factors affecting language acquisition among displaced (e.g., refugee) groups?
- (b) What diagnostic procedures and interventions are appropriate for different populations with specially defined needs?
- (c) What strategies can be adopted to foster language acquisition; linguistic and cultural maintenance; and successful settlement, integration, education, and employment among such groups?
- (d) In terms of changing demographics, what differences exist in the contexts, experiences, and outcomes of learning for students in high-concentration immigrant populations (heterogeneous or homogeneous) versus less concentrated immigrant populations?
- (e) What are the impacts and outcomes of language-skills learning opportunities for refugee and immigrant populations on their lives and on their family and community?

- (f) What are the most pressing issues facing immigrant populations and families in English-speaking contexts today? How can TESOL research best understand, study, and respond to these issues?
- (g) To what extent does the separation of a social group, whether by choice or because of discrimination, from mainstream educational institutions and practices contribute to a lack of mastery of the standard language over the course of an individual's life or across generations?
- (h) To what extent does lack of community models/lack of access to good quality education, including models of and practice in standard forms of the country's dominant language and literacy, contribute to individual resistance to learning standard English as an additional language or standard dialect?

2. Language and Literacy

a) Research Priorities: What is the relationship between the development of L1 oral and literacy skills and L2 literacy development? To what extent does learning in one language transfer to an L2?

b) Rationale: Further research needs to examine issues concerning the relationships between L1 and L2 literacy development, the transfer of knowledge and skills from one language to another (i.e., the use of the L1 to scaffold learning through the L2), and the academic achievements and outcomes of students with varying degrees of L1 literacy proficiency. More research needs to examine research on family literacy initiatives, the development of critical literacy, and multiple literacies.

c) Sample Questions

- (1) What is the role of native-language oral proficiency in the acquisition of ESL or EFL?
- (2) What is the role of native-language literate proficiency in the acquisition of ESL or EFL?

- (3) What is the role of native sign language proficiency in the acquisition of ESL or EFL by deaf learners?
- (4) What are enabling factors in the successful development of literacy among children, adolescents, adults, and within families?
- (5) Are there differential rates of success among groups from different linguistic/cultural backgrounds in their literacy development and overall English-language success and academic achievement? If so, what action can be taken to help the different groups?
- (6) What is the relationship between and among levels of L1 orality/literacy, L2 orality/literacy, and L2-mediated academic achievement?
- (7) What is the relationship between graphic literacy, language comprehension and acquisition, and content learning?
- (8) What are the distinct L2 literacy requirements across different academic and vocational settings?

B. EDUCATIONAL SETTINGS

1. Curriculum Design, Development, Delivery, and Evaluation

a) Research Priorities: What are the most effective methods of determining the linguistic needs of students within particular curriculum/vocational contexts? What principles should determine how pedagogical activities (or tasks) are graded, organized, sequenced, and integrated within the curriculum? What kinds of assessment instruments and practices contribute most to successful language learning and to understandings of variable competencies across topics, tasks, and settings? What practices and procedures in monitoring and evaluating TESOL instructional programs most effectively meet the needs of the various stakeholders in language programs?

b) Rationale: There is much to be learned about how teachers set and pursue their goals; how teachers interweave their goals and objectives with the results of needs

assessments; how this information is translated into methodology; and how teaching and learning processes and outcomes are most effectively monitored, evaluated, and modified. In addition, research on methods of language assessment is crucial because assessment both directly and indirectly influences decisions made about progress, further instruction, and proficiency. These decisions, in turn, influence learners' lives in important ways. With the increasing emphasis being placed on accountability in TESOL programs around the world, it is important to investigate the variety of factors that may affect the quality of program outcomes. Information from such research is vital for purposes of demonstrating accountability to funding authorities and for program improvement.

We also see technology--particularly computers and the Internet--as a growing and significant force in all language education, including English language education. The principle that should guide our actions in this regard is one of benefit to the learner and to society. Technology should not be adopted for its own sake but, rather, should have some demonstrable benefit to learners.

c) Sample Questions

(1) Goal and Objective Setting

- (a) How do teachers set course goals and objectives? In what terms do they express them?
- (b) How useful do teachers find goals and objectives?
- (c) How much information do learners want about the teacher's goals and objectives?
- (d) How specific can, and should, objectives be?
- (e) How can objectives be made clear to, and negotiated with, learners?
- (f) How are objectives modified in the light of ongoing instruction and assessment?

(2) Needs Assessment

- (a) What procedures and techniques do teachers find useful for assessing needs?
- (b) Which needs do teachers prioritize and why?
- (c) How are differing individual needs reconciled within a group?
- (d) What do teachers do when the teachers' and the learners' perceptions of learners' needs differ?
- (e) How and why do learners' needs change and how do teachers deal with this?
- (f) How and why do teachers' needs change?

(3) Methodology

- (a) How do teachers translate goals and objectives into learning activities?
- (b) On what basis do teachers select learning activities?
- (c) What principles do teachers use to grade, sequence, and integrate these activities?
- (d) What principles do teachers use to evaluate language learning tasks and resources?
- (e) How do teachers address the problem of accommodating different learning styles and preferences within a group?

(4) Materials, Including New Media and Technology

- (a) What principles do teachers and administrators use to select and evaluate language learning materials?
- (b) How do teachers adapt learning materials to individual learners' needs?
- (c) How do learners use materials in self-access mode?

- (d) What factors increase the availability and effectiveness of self-access centers, particularly in developing regions?
- (e) How do teachers integrate technology into their instructional practices?
- (f) What are the implications of new forms of electronic communication for program organization, program delivery, and teacher professional development?
- (g) What kinds of technology foster language acquisition, and in what ways?
- (h) How does technology transform instructional practices?
- (i) How does the growing use of English as a medium of technological communication shape language learning, language contact, language policy, and language change?
- (j) What is the impact and potential of technology (media and electronic communications) in language learning, teacher education, and research?
- (k) How might research address critical issues of differential access to technology in TESOL within and across countries, along socioeconomic lines, and along gender lines?
- (l) What kinds of technology can serve as appropriate research tools?
- (m) In resource-poor programs or contexts with limited access to computer technology, what kinds of locally developed or otherwise commercially viable and culturally appropriate print-based and audio materials most effectively support English language teaching and learning? What activities and instructional practices best utilize existing educational resources to maximize English language learning within those contexts?

(5) Learner Assessment

- (a) What criteria do teachers use to assess learners' ongoing progress and overall proficiency gains?

- (b) What principles do they use in designing and selecting assessment procedures?
- (c) What demands does systematic learner assessment make on teachers?
- (d) What kinds of criterion-referenced procedures are the most appropriate for assessing learners' ongoing progress and overall attainment?
- (e) In what terms do learners perceive and talk about their progress?
- (f) What are the various types of systemic assessment in use (e.g., standardized normative tests, national assessment standards, state or provincial assessment) and what is their impact on language learners?
- (g) What can be done to improve the validity of decisions made from assessments?
- (h) What can be done to improve the reliability of assessment instruments?
- (i) What assessment practices external to the classroom contribute to successful language acquisition?
- (j) What is the appropriate role of technology in learner assessment?
- (k) How can the impact of participation in ESL programs on the lives of participants be effectively assessed?

(6) Program Monitoring and Evaluation

- (a) What criteria are used to evaluate language programs by different stakeholders (e.g., accrediting agencies, school districts, employers, the public, teachers, parents, students)?
- (b) Can differences in criteria be reconciled?
- (c) How can program evaluation be carried out as a collaborative exercise among various stakeholders?

- (d) What are the cognitive, linguistic, and social demands of participating in learning activities (other than ESL/EFL instruction) through the medium of English?
- (e) Why do learners stay in or leave particular programs?
- (f) What is the relationship between English language proficiency and access to educational and vocational opportunities?
- (g) How can information about learners' summative language attainment best be gathered and presented to funding authorities and other audiences outside the program?

(7) Program Support and Resourcing

- (a) What support structures are required to introduce major new initiatives into the program (e.g., a change of focus from classroom to individualized learning)?
- (b) What are the consequences for teacher development and materials development?
- (c) What is the effect of different learning environments on student learning (e.g., self-access centers, bilingual teaching arrangements)?
- (d) How cost-effective are "specialized" programs that attract increased resources (e.g., remedial pronunciation)?
- (e) How effective are new types of learning arrangements in terms of their desired outcomes (e.g., specific purpose programs, individualized contract learning, electronic distance learning)?
- (f) What is the effect of class size on learner outcomes in ESL/EFL contexts?
- (g) What factors contribute to successful and unsuccessful curriculum innovation?
- (h) What is the effect of technology-enhanced learning environments on different school populations?

2. Teacher Education and Professional Development

a) Research Priorities: What knowledge, skills, and attitudes should an effective TESOL teacher have, and how are such attributes obtained? How can practicing teachers maintain their enthusiasm and professional commitment? How do language teachers continue to upgrade their skills and knowledge throughout their professional lifespans?

b) Rationale: It is extremely difficult to isolate the attributes of successful teaching in such a way as to claim that a particular attribute (or cluster of attributes) is directly related to the quality of a teacher's preservice education or to some particular type of in-service program. However, the preservice model of teacher education and certification remains the major social model by which people become teachers. In addition, in-service workshops and short courses are relied on heavily in many educational systems. The challenge for research in this area is to carefully unpack and describe the impact of preservice and in-service training in precise and real terms.

c) Sample Questions

- (1) What is the impact of preservice teacher education on teacher attributes?
- (2) What is the impact of in-service teacher education on teacher attributes?
- (3) What is the role of prior experience, particularly language learning experience, in the development of teachers' awareness, attitudes, knowledge, and skills?
- (4) How do teachers change their behavior to incorporate new knowledge and skills in their teaching repertoires?
- (5) How do successful and satisfied teachers renew their professional commitment and develop their skills and knowledge throughout the span of their careers?
- (6) What are the factors associated with burnout among language teachers and how can burnout be prevented?

- (7) How are new teachers socialized into the profession during the induction years (i.e., the first 2 to 3 years of professional service)?
- (8) What factors lead to language teachers' choices to leave the teaching profession?
- (9) How are language teachers' belief systems realized in their day-to-day interactions with language learners?
- (10) What factors influence teachers' decision making (before, during, and after language lessons)?
- (11) What are the characteristics of successful language teachers, whose students achieve L2 or foreign language proficiency, apparently as a result (at least partially) of instruction?
- (12) What are the contextual variables that influence language teachers' success? How can those variables be used to promote teachers' success (and students' resultant learning) rather than impinging upon it?
- (13) What kinds of support systems are in place to assist novice teachers (native speakers [NSs] and nonnative speakers [NNSs] alike) to successfully make the transition from preservice programs to the job situation?
- (14) What is the effect of technology-enhanced environments on pre- and in-service teacher training (e.g., virtual education degrees and virtual professional development via the Internet)?
- (15) What are the attitudes of ESL/EFL students toward teachers who are NNSs?
- (16) How can collaboration between teachers who are NNSs and those who are NSs be facilitated?
- (17) What challenges (e.g., institutional constraints such as national curriculum and examination system, or accessibility to technology) do

we face in teacher education and professional development for teachers who are NNSs in and outside of the United States?

- (18) In what ways can TESOL programs capitalize on the skills and resources that NNSs bring to the TESOL classroom?
- (19) To what extent, if any, are issues related to NNS professionals addressed by the TESOL teacher preparation curriculum?

C. LANGUAGE IN SOCIETY

1. Sociocultural and Sociopolitical Contexts

a) Research Priorities: What is the most effective means of teaching about cultural aspects (values, practices) of different languages, communities, and varieties of English without denigrating some cultures or representing cultures of English-speaking communities as stereotypical or superior? How can intercultural communication be enhanced among NNSs using English across different social and political sectors?

b) Rationale: TESOL is an international organization spanning several continents. Its members and the learners they serve come from many different languages and cultures. By its very nature, the teaching of English to speakers of other languages involves intercultural contact, communication, and the different worldviews, perspectives, and practices of teachers, learners, materials writers, publishers, policy makers, and others across sociocultural and sociopolitical contexts. TESOL is an inclusive field, committed to respecting cultural differences in teaching and learning and committed to fostering linguistic and cultural maintenance among English language learners. Yet, given the differences that exist, a number of research questions deserve attention.

c) Sample Questions

- (1) What differences exist between and among cultural groups with respect to beliefs, attitudes, practices, and values associated with aspects of TESOL, such as the following:

- (a) language in general (as a system of study, and as a symbol of particular cultures)
 - (b) specific languages (including English)
 - (c) language teaching methods
 - (d) language learning processes
 - (e) literacy practices and outcomes
 - (f) assessment practices
 - (g) teaching materials (including electronic media)
 - (h) translation
 - (i) critical pedagogy/thinking
- (2) How can those differences be effectively bridged in cross-cultural education and cross-cultural interaction in society more generally?
 - (3) How can policy makers, program administrators, and/or language teachers select the most appropriate variety(ies) of English as instructional models in particular contexts?
 - (4) What are the most effective means of teaching and learning about diverse cultures and values without denigrating some cultures or representing cultures of English-speaking communities as stereotypical or superior?
 - (5) What approaches to intercultural English-language training and understanding are most effective for cross-cultural negotiation and collaboration in political, professional, educational, and other (e.g., electronically-networked) settings?
 - (6) What kinds of rhetorical frameworks and imagined or projected identities do teachers ascribe to their learners in the types of reading materials chosen, literacy forms practiced, and forms of feedback provided?

2. English in the Developing and Changing World

a) Research Priority: What are the costs and benefits of introducing or changing widespread English language education in developing countries?

b) Rationale: English language education has a long history in many countries, particularly in what were formerly British colonies. However, in the postcolonial era, language policies, English language education, and the role of English is changing in many of these countries. In other regions, with a different constellation of linguistic, cultural, and political influences, the introduction of widespread English education and the use of English in particular social spheres is a relatively recent phenomenon, one that is linked with economic opportunity, development, and globalization. Finally, as social and political change occurs in various regions of the world, some populations are displaced and must settle elsewhere, often in English-speaking countries. Examining the complex and changing role of English in international contexts and the experiences of language learners in new contexts is therefore timely and important for a number of reasons. Here we suggest questions that could guide future research, some of which could be done in collaboration with researchers in other fields (e.g., with economists for cost-benefit analyses).

c) Sample Questions

(1) Issues in International English Education

- (a) What are the costs and benefits of changing the existing status of English language education in postcolonial societies?
- (b) What are the costs and benefits of introducing widespread English language education in developing countries?
- (c) What positive role can English play in the economic, social, and intellectual development of societies undergoing major transformations?
- (d) How does English language education and/or English language use among professionals in different sectors help developing countries reach short- and long-term goals they have identified?

- (e) What are the corresponding needs in terms of the professional development of teachers and other leaders who may require high levels of proficiency in English?

(2) The Coexistence of English and Other Languages

- (a) How can English language/literacy education complement and not threaten or replace indigenous and other language education?
- (b) How do people develop and maintain their skills in multiple languages? In other words, what factors contribute to success in bilingual and multilingual individuals?
- (c) What policies help ensure the rights of English language learners to preserve, maintain, and develop competencies in indigenous and other additional languages?
- (d) How can local cultures, languages, literacy practices, and forms of learning and performing language coexist productively with English-medium or English L2 instruction?
- (e) What is the relationship, if any, between, social, political, and economic development and L1 or additional language development?

(3) The Changing Status of English in World Regions

- (a) What is the changing status and function of English in countries and regions experiencing major political, economic, and/or demographic transition? To what extent does the availability of English language resources in these countries facilitate such transitions?
- (b) To what extent is the role of English in postcolonial societies, in particular, changing and what are the implications of such changes?
- (c) What role does (or could/should) English play in primary, secondary, and tertiary education in developing countries?

- (d) What are the effects (negative and positive) of English-medium instruction on the education, careers, and achievements (linguistic and nonlinguistic) of people in developing regions?
- (e) What role does (or could) English play in effecting local (grassroots) economic, educational, and social development, according to locally determined needs, interests, and priorities?
- (f) What are the special linguistic, sociocultural, and other needs of displaced (e.g., refugee) populations who move to English-speaking countries? How are these needs best addressed?
- (g) What are the economic, social, and linguistic effects of English dominance in electronic communications on local populations?

3. English in the Global Economy

a) Research Priority: What are the implications of the changing nature of work, communication, and global economics for the teaching, learning, assessment, and use of English in the information era?

b) Rationale: An increasing number of people learn and use English via global communications, in multilingual workplaces (which may be mediated electronically across geographical regions) or workplace-oriented programs. The nature of work and of literacies needed for work is changing. TESOL research needs to respond to this situation with research on the changing workplace, changing vocational and higher education, and programs designed to better prepare language programs, teachers, and learners for these changes. At the same time, research needs to consider the impact of these changes on participants and on society as a whole.

c) Sample Questions

- (2) What are the implications of the changing workplace and economy globally for the teaching, learning, and use of English, often with speakers of other languages or varieties of English (some of which are sometimes considered to be more prestigious than others)?

- (3) What equity concerns are there regarding policies and practices regarding the use of languages other than English in these contexts?
- (4) What are the real language needs of adults across a range of professional, vocational, and/or academic fields?
- (5) What role might different accents play in opportunities in the workplace?
- (6) How can technology meet the language needs of the workforce in an international economy?
- (7) What are the employment trends for immigrant and international ESL students (adolescent to adult)?
- (8) What are the employment trends for NNSs in English-speaking countries, in their home countries, and in ESL/EFL countries other than their own?
- (9) When adult professionals whose L1 is not English migrate to English-speaking countries, how many years does it take for these immigrant adults to reach their previous professional stature?
- (10) What is the impact of English language instruction for employment purposes on adult learners' lives (i.e., in both quantitative and qualitative terms, and particularly for women)?
- (11) What barriers exist in access to English language education, access to employment opportunities, and ongoing language education, and how might these barriers be addressed most beneficially?

IV. ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

August, D., & Hakuta, K. (Eds.). (1997). *Improving schooling for language-minority children: A research agenda*. Washington, DC: National Academy Press.

The authors were charged to (a) review what is known about linguistic, cognitive, and social processes involved in educating English language learners, (b) examine the knowledge base on effective educational programming for these students and identify issues worthy of more focused attention, (c) review and identify the strengths and weaknesses of traditional methodologies in this area, (and d) "Make recommendations on research priorities in the field, the infrastructure supporting such research, human resource issues, and the use of scientific evidence to inform policy and practice in this area" (p. 3). The following principles guided the authors' work:

1. Give priority to important topics to which insufficient attention has been paid, but for which there already exist promising theories and research methodologies.
2. Give priority to addressing gaps in population coverage, such as certain age or language groups, and test applicability of current findings against these populations.
3. Give priority to legitimate questions that are of strong interest to well-defined constituencies.
4. Give priority to building the nation's capacity to conduct high-quality research on English language learners.

The book lists hundreds of research questions in chapters on bilingualism and second language learning, cognitive aspects of school learning, literacy development and content learning, the social context of school learning, student assessment, program evaluation, studies of school and classroom effectiveness, preparation and development of teachers serving English language learners, and estimating population parameters.

Bailey, K. M., et al. (1998). What questions about language learning and teaching occupy your waking and working moments? Annotated bibliography of selected references on teacher research, language classroom research, and research methodology. Symposium conducted at the TESOL 32nd Annual Convention and Exposition, Seattle, Washington.

This annotated bibliography, compiled by more than 60 TESOL professionals, contains brief comments on research-related articles and books. Macrotopics include classroom research, teacher research, action research, and research methodology. The annotations range across a variety of more specific topics under these major headings, and the resulting collection is perhaps a bit loose-jointed. However, this annotated bibliography does provide a useful collection of notes about articles and books that these reviewers felt were significant items, as of March 1998.

Brindley, G. (1990). Towards a research agenda for TESOL. *Prospect*, 6(1), 7–26.

This report notes that there is an increasing focus on research in TESOL in Australia for several reasons. The authors of this agenda find these points to be common to many settings worldwide:

1. Education is moving to learner-centered education and decentralized curriculum planning.
2. Professionalism is increasing, with teachers able to attend more tertiary courses, including research courses.
3. Research is having a growing impact on educational policy development.

The report notes that research is important at different levels of any educational program, and a research agenda should keep this in mind. There will be differences in purpose and audience that will impact research topics and methods. The author provides lists of questions for different research audiences, encouraging both basic and applied research applied to specific problems. Collaborative research is emphasized, with a list of principles to be followed during initiation, execution, and dissemination of collaborative research.

Brindley, G., Baynham, M., Burns, A. J., Hammond, J., McKenna, R., & Thurstun, J. (1996). An integrated research strategy for adult ESL, literacy

and numeracy. Sydney, Australia: National Centre for English Language Teaching and Research, Macquarie University.

The project was commissioned by the Commonwealth Department of Employment, Education and Training (DEET) to support the implementation of a National Collaborative Adult English Language and Literacy Strategy in Australia.

The project aimed at developing a strategy document describing a set of transparent processes for setting priorities and commissioning research in the fields of adult ESL, literacy, and numeracy, accompanied by guidelines for the conduct, management, and dissemination of research. The strategy also includes a statement of priority areas for research identified through analysis of previous activity and through consultation with stakeholders in the field. In addition, the strategy addresses issues of quality control, monitoring, and evaluation of research.

A second subsidiary aim of the project was to inform potential applicants for research funding of the range of options available in adult ESL, literacy, and numeracy research. This involved the development of a classification of research methodologies, illustrated by a set of descriptive case studies of projects exemplifying different approaches. A guide to accessing research information on the Internet was also produced, along with a commissioned paper on implications for numeracy research.

Center for Applied Linguistics. (1998). *Research agenda for adult ESL*. Washington, DC: Author.

This is a report produced by the National Clearinghouse on ESL Literacy Education (NCLE) at the Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL) to complement the adult education agenda of the Office of Vocational and Adult Education (OVAE), the National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy (NCSALL), and the National Institute for Literacy (NIFL). The paper makes the point that in the United States, ESL programs are "the fastest growing component in federally funded adult education efforts" (p. iii), with over 1.5 million participants in 1996. Hence, the goals of the report's agenda are to provide (a) funders with

priorities regarding research needs, (b) support for researchers proposing projects, and (c) "a focus for discussion about how to improve adult ESL programs" (p. 2). The developmental process of the agenda is given, and various detailed research project suggestions are also provided.

Cumming, A. (Article Ed.). (1994). Alternatives in TESOL research: Descriptive, interpretive, and ideological orientations. *TESOL Quarterly*, 28, 673-703.

This article explores alternatives in TESOL research, with contributions by seven noted authors, who describe the following research epistemologies: Analysis of Learners' Language (Tarone), Verbal Reports on Learning Strategies (Cohen), Text Analysis (Connor), Classroom Interaction Analysis (Spada), Ethnography (Hornberger), Critical Pedagogical Approaches to Research (Pennycook), and Participatory Action Research (Auerbach). Each author lists the values and limitations of the particular research approach. Other orientations to research are listed (p. 673), as are different purposes of inquiry (p. 674).

Freeman, D., & Richards, J. C. (1993). Conceptions of teaching and the education of second language teachers. *TESOL Quarterly*, 27, 193-216.

This paper suggests that a major element of a research agenda for L2 teacher education should include how the "interaction of individual and collectively held views of teaching and learning occurs in the education of teachers" (p. 210). Research is needed on the "conceptions of teaching which undergird the field of second language instruction..." (p. 193). These conceptions "are generally tacit and often go unquestioned" (p. 193). What teaching is and how it should be done are implicitly reflected in teacher education, curriculum development, program design, research, professional standards, and policy making.

Wolfram, W., & Schilling-Estes, N. (1996). *Linguistics and the Human Capital Initiative: A report to the National Science Foundation*. Raleigh: North Carolina State University.

The National Science Foundation (NSF) "aims to increase understanding of the nature and causes of problems related to improving human resources" (p. i). Social and cultural capital are part of the NSF's concept of human capital, so in 1994 the NSF set out to create a research agenda related to the Human Capital Initiative. This document arises from linguists responding to the larger NSF report. In this document, there are six areas of emphasis: (1) families, (2) neighborhoods, (3) education, (4) workplace, (5) disadvantage, and (6) poverty. Within each area, the document lists research questions.

National Center for Research on Teacher Education. (1988). Teacher education and learning to teach: A research agenda. *Journal of Teacher Education* (November/December), 27-32.

This article notes that the central question for teacher education is: What do teacher education programs contribute to teacher learning? Researchers can investigate overall programs, components within programs, and specific learning opportunities within those components. Within overall programs, research can focus on the rationale for what is included and in what sequence; the context of the program (institutional/government constraints/opportunities/resources); the standards for entry/exit, to see what is considered important; and faculty knowledge or expertise. The components to explore are the knowledge, understanding, skills, attitudes, and beliefs of faculty; and the explicit and implicit standards for judging performance within components. Within learning opportunities, the processes used and the assignments and tasks can be investigated. The final part of the article outlines a large study, to be conducted at 11 sites, over 3 years.

Pica, T. (1994). Questions from the language classroom: Research perspectives. *TESOL Quarterly*, 28, 49-79.

This paper lists areas from which teachers would like information to get information from researchers: on input and interactional features, instructional strategies, patterns of classroom organization, the role of the L1 in second language acquisition (SLA), the need for error correction,

grammar instruction, L2 listening and production practice, and the nature and control of learning plateaus (p. 50).

Silberstein, S. (Ed.). (1991). *TESOL Quarterly* [Two special issues], 25(2) and 25(3).

In a special 25-year retrospective of *TESOL Quarterly*, scholars discuss many issues pertaining to agenda-setting in research for TESOL. The following comments from David Nunan's article, "Communicative Tasks and the Language Curriculum" (vol. 25, no. 2), are consonant with the founding principles of this agenda: "the research agenda needs to incorporate a greater range of linguistic and psycholinguistic models" (p. 290). Methodologically, a greater range of tools and techniques are preferable, and TESOL needs research that explores "relationships between contextual factors, interpersonal factors, learner proficiency levels, and pedagogic tasks" (p. 290).

Tucker, G. R. (1999). *Adult ESL in the U.S.: The formative years*. Paper presented at the International Conference on the Australian Migrant English Program: 50 Years of Nation Building, Melbourne, Australia. Retrieved November 2, 2004, from <http://www.immi.gov.au/amep/reports/pubs/papers/tuckerr.htm>

This presentation briefly reviews information concerning the ways in which language educators reacted to the wave of immigration to the United States in the early 1900s and the more recent wave in the 1980s. This is followed by a review of recent research in the area of adult SLA, with a particular focus on issues related to language learning and literacy development in instructed settings, program design, instructional content and practices, and assessment. Next, the implications of several recently conducted meta-reviews of research priorities for the field are summarized and discussed. (Interestingly, almost every review decries the lack of longitudinal research or data.)

The presentation concludes with a discussion of these priorities in light of the Australian Project Report "Integrated Research Strategy for Adult ESL, Literacy and Numeracy." A suggestion is made that funders and

policy makers consider examining their needs within the general framework offered by August and Hakuta (1997):

1. Give priority to important topics to which insufficient attention has been paid, but for which there already exist promising theories and research methodologies.
2. Give priority to addressing gaps in population coverage, such as certain age or language groups.
3. Give priority to legitimate questions that are of strong interest to well-defined constituencies.
4. Give priority to building the nation's capacity to conduct high-quality research on English language learners.