

For Immediate Release

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TESOL Board Approves Position Statement on Use of Asset-Based Terminology

Alexandria, Va. (May 3, 2024) – At the TESOL International Association (TESOL) board of directors meeting in March 2024, the board voted to approve a [position statement on terminology](#) used in the English language teaching (ELT) profession. The statement encourages the use of asset-based language and emphasizes the importance of proper representation in all contexts.

Based on a TESOL board of directors' initiative, in March 2023 a team of ELT professionals from different contexts and geographical locations set out to create a comprehensive list of terms that educators worldwide could use to improve communications and better understand one another. After surveying the TESOL membership and at the board's direction, the working group developed a position statement with general guidance on language use as well as specific recommendations on certain key terms, such as the use of "multilingual learner of English" instead of "English learner". "Multilingual" highlights a learner's assets and associates the term with the cognitive and social benefits of multilingualism.

"It was a pleasure to collaborate with such a diverse and talented group of professionals on this important initiative," said Sarah Sahr, TESOL head of education and events. "The profession is evolving and the terms we use need to reflect our current knowledge and values."

The following people served on the terminology working group:

- Stacy Brown: Trauma and policy specialist, multilingual English language development administrator, and international emergency case worker, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, USA
- Luis Javier Pentón Herrera: Full professor, Akademia Ekonomiczno-Humanistyczna w Warszawie, Warsaw, Poland
- Fares J. Karam: Associate professor of TESOL, College of Education and Human Development, University of Nevada, Reno, Nevada, USA
- Khanh-Duc Kuttig: Instructor in English Language, University of Siegen, Siegen, Germany
- TESOL staff partners: Tomiko Breland, Jeff Hutcheson, and Sarah Sahr

About TESOL

TESOL International Association is the trusted global community for knowledge and expertise in English language teaching. TESOL advances the professional expertise in English language teaching to speakers of other languages in multilingual contexts worldwide through professional learning, research, standards, and advocacy. In principle and in practice, TESOL values professionalism, respect, integrity, and lifelong learning and seeks diverse and inclusive participation within the field of English language teaching. TESOL promotes equitable representation, engagement, and broad access to professional opportunities for all and works to eliminate any kind of discrimination. TESOL is a professional community of more than 13,000 English language professionals representing more than 150 countries. For more information, please visit www.tesol.org.

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