

Foreword

It is with deep gratification that I write this Foreword to the Proceedings of the 1st MEC TESOL conference organized by the Middle East College, Muscat, Oman, on the 29th of March, 2018. The carefully chosen conference theme, “English in the changing local and international context”, encompasses the issues and challenges faced by TESOL professionals today. They are constrained to address the local as well as international requirements in curriculum design, selection of pedagogical models, and material design. The aim of the conference was to encourage interaction among ELT practitioners, researchers, and curriculum developers by providing them a platform to share best practices and a vision of future developments in the changing English language teaching and learning environments.

English has become the preferred lingua franca in most parts of the world to the extent that the non-native students of English in higher education have outnumbered the first language speakers of the language. As language teachers we share the common vision of preparing our students to effectively communicate and collaborate with the people across the globe in the English language and simultaneously maintain their cultural identity. The challenge faced by educators is to accommodate the dynamic interplay between the local and international demands and the fast paced changes which are a result of the technological advances. This can only happen when there is dialogue between academicians in similar contexts as they share their research findings, challenges faced, lessons learned and success stories.

The presented papers contributed interesting insights in the field of TESOL, especially in the Middle Eastern contexts. The review process ensured that each paper contributes a new theme and adds to the existing body of knowledge. The major sub themes covered by the selected papers are: Use of ICTs in language learning; Challenges of academic writing; curriculum design; Communication strategies; Language through literature; and Peer assisted language learning. I trust that these Proceedings will provide TESOL professionals with useful insights into the latest research developments. I am also certain that these proceedings will be a stimulus to inspire further study and research.

I would like to thank all the authors for their contributions and the dedicated reviewers for their expert comments. Last but not the least, thanks are due to Dr. Khairi Obaid Al-Zubaidi, Editor in Chief, AWEJ, without whose support, these proceedings would not have been possible.

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