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## “Eulogy at the Passing of a Praiseworthy Professional Periodical”

### Foreword to the final issue of the *TESL Reporter*

by Lynn Henrichsen

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“Let’s start a professional journal for TESL!” This audacious proposal, voiced casually in 1967, by William D. Conway and Alice C. Pack, faculty members at the Church College of Hawaii (CCH) may have seemed bold and ambitious. However, having just created one of the first academic degrees (a BA-TESL) in the United States in the relatively new field of teaching English as a second language, these self-assured academics were feeling bold. In 1967, there were only a few journals in the field of second language teaching—*The Modern Language Journal* (started in 1916 by the National Federation of Modern Language Teachers Associations and focused on the teaching of all modern foreign languages), *English Language Teaching* (now titled *ELT Journal*, started in 1946 by the British Council), *Language Learning* (begun at the University of Michigan in 1948 and heavily focused on research and theory), and the *English Teaching Forum* (published by the U.S. Department of State starting in 1962, but by law available only outside the United States). In 1967, two other journals oriented toward language teaching and learning were just starting up, sponsored by newly formed professional organizations: *Foreign Language Annals* (by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages [ACTFL]) and the *TESOL Quarterly* (by Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages [TESOL]).

Seeing a need, and with support from the English Language Institute at CCH, these two intrepid academics put together a newsletter-like publication, dubbed it the *TESL Reporter*, and in Autumn 1967 sent it out to teachers and institutions they knew were involved in teaching English as a second language in Hawaii, elsewhere in the Pacific (in the Education System of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, of which the Church College of Hawaii [later BYU-Hawaii] was a part), the United States, Canada, and Asia. The “central focus” of the *TESL Reporter* was to be “upon the methods and problems of TESL, mostly in Hawaii

and in the Pacific Basin” and it would “contain practical lesson plans, news of the ELI and BATESL programs of Church College and of other institutions, articles on language and pedagogy,...and other relevant articles of general interest” (Reporter Focuses on Hawaii, Pacific, 1967).

Printed on colored paper, the first issues of the *TESL Reporter* were only eight (6” x 9”) pages in length, and initially Conway (editor) and Pack (assistant editor) wrote most of the articles themselves. They also did the typesetting and page layout, as well as the mailing address labels and bulk mailing. The first articles were mostly about TESL at CCH (a new language laboratory, the new BA-TESL degree, visits to the CCH campus by distinguished linguists), and the language training of Peace Corps volunteers at CCH. However, the first issue also had an academic-pedagogical article on teaching the [ɹ]-[ɹ̥] contrast to Polynesian learners of English, as well as a discussion of cross-linguistic and cross-cultural differences that create challenges for Polynesian learners of the English language.

As the *TESL Reporter* reached the hands of TESL practitioners in its target area, academics from other institutions contributed manuscripts for publication. Ted Plaister, Gerald Dykstra, and Yao Shen (all from the University of Hawaii) contributed articles that appeared in the first few issues. For volume 1, issue 2, J. Donald Bowen of UCLA authored “Terminal Behavior and Language Teaching,” which had a far-reaching effect as it was later reprinted in Kenneth Croft’s *Readings on English as Second Language: For Teachers and Teacher Trainees* (1972), an anthology widely used in TESOL teacher-preparation programs of the day. Other noteworthy TESOL professionals who published articles in the *TESL Reporter* in its early years included Virginia French Allen, Richard Via, Nancy Arapoff, Jason B. Alter, Albert Marckwardt, Kenneth Croft, Emilio Cortez, Donna Ilyin, Judy E. Winn-Bell Olsen, Larry Smith, Peter H. Fries, Judy Gilbert, Don L. F. Nilsen, and Paul (I. S. P.) Nation. Of course, in accordance with its stated purpose, the *TESL Reporter* also included articles written by TESL faculty and students at CCH (which later became BYU-Hawaii).

As its circulation increased, the *TESL Reporter* put CCH “on the map” of the TESOL world. Its BA-TESL Program was featured in the *TESOL Quarterly* (Conway, 1969). Hearing about the CCH/BYU-Hawaii TESL program, a stream of

language and linguistics dignitaries visited the CCH campus over the years (including Gerald Dykstra, Robert Lado, Edward Anthony, James Alatis, Harold B. Allen, Charles C. Fries, Arthur Henry King, and Lily Wong-Fillmore). As publication of the *TESL Reporter* continued, the addition of book reviews, job announcements, conference announcements, and bibliographies increased the journal's usefulness to subscribers. It also enhanced the reputation and employability of CCH/BYUH's BA-TESL graduates, who went on to fill important positions at educational institutions throughout the Pacific and beyond.

After the *TESL Reporter's* first two years of publication, in Fall 1969, its editor, William D. Conway, left CCH, and his assistant, Alice C. Pack, became editor. Dr. Pack (despite a heavy teaching and administrative load, no workload credit for serving as editor, and minimal staff and budget) continued to nurture the fledgling publication for the next 11 years. A woman of many talents, she did everything—recruiting and reviewing manuscripts, typesetting on a Fuller Typositor, pasting up the paper galleys (using hot wax) on a light table, masking the negatives for the printer, and even sticking mailing labels on the final, printed products and bundling them by postal code with rubber bands for bulk mailing. However, in spring of 1980, Dr. Pack retired, and her assistant editor, Lynn E. Henrichsen, inherited the job. Over the next twelve years, he revised the format of the printed publication, created a new cover design, arranged for the indexing of *TESL Reporter* articles in *Language and Language Behavior Abstracts* and their inclusion in the ERIC Document database, recruited an editorial advisory board, converted from paper-based to computer-based typesetting and page layout, acquired an ISSN (International Standard Serial Number) for the journal, and increased the *TESL Reporter's* circulation and sphere of influence. By its fifteenth anniversary, the journal had a circulation of nearly 3,000 subscribers in over 60 countries. By 2010, that number had grown to over 100 countries.

When Henrichsen left BYU-Hawaii in 1992, Mark O. James became editor. To appeal to a wider range of potential contributors, he further defined manuscript categories: Full-length manuscripts, Teaching Tips, and Reviews (of books, sites, apps and software). He also changed the frequency of publication to twice a year and increased the size of each issue to 80-100 pages. Around the same time, to offset increasing printing and mailing costs, annual subscription rates for the

TESL Reporter were increased to US\$6 for U.S. residents and institutions, but in harmony with its initial mission the periodical was still distributed on a complimentary basis to subscribers outside the United States. In ensuing years, other editors (Maureen S. Andrade, Mark Wolfersberger, Nancy Tarawhiti, and most recently Austin Pack and Jefferey Maloney) have made similar improvements, such as switching from paper-based to online publication, which made instantaneous worldwide distribution of the *TESL Reporter* possible and also saved BYUH thousands of dollars in international postage fees.

Because it was initially sent to subscribers by request and published free of charge—in contrast to the steep subscription fees of most academic journals—the *TESL Reporter* was able to reach a large and deserving audience. It went not just to academics at high powered universities, but to teachers in developing countries and libraries at struggling schools. For many of these recipients, the *TESL Reporter* was the only publication that connected them with the broader, professional world. Its short, practical, pedagogically oriented articles were especially appreciated. Occasionally subscribers would write and express their thanks. For example, a grateful subscriber once wrote, “The *TESL Reporter* is the only professional journal that I read from cover to cover when I receive it. Because of its small size, it fits in my pocket, so I can read it on the bus to work, and the short, practical articles keep my interest.”

On a personal, autobiographical note, I owe the start of my own academic publishing career to the *TESL Reporter*. In 1975, as a recent MA graduate traveling to a new job with the American Samoa Department of Education, I stopped in Hawaii enroute and visited Laie. There I was generously given a stack of back issues of the *TESL Reporter* to take with me to Pago Pago. As I settled in, I put the colorful little journals on my desk, and every morning, I would open one up and read an article or two. The better ones informed and inspired me in the performance of my professional duties and kept me connected with the broader world of English Language Teaching. The articles of lesser quality were also inspirational in a different way. Some of them made me think, “I could do better than that.” Following up on that thought, I wrote up some lessons I had learned from my experience in my previous job managing a language laboratory. I summoned my courage, mailed my manuscript off to the *TESL Reporter*, and was

thrilled when in short order I received an acceptance letter from the editor and then several, bright green physical copies of the *TESL Reporter* with my article on the front page (Henrichsen, 1976)! That experience helped me overcome my fear of failure and launched my academic publishing career. In retrospect, 46 years later, few of the 13 books, 36 book chapters, 3 monographs, and 78 other articles I have authored have been able to match the thrill I received from publishing my first article with the *TESL Reporter*. I like to think that the *TESL Reporter* played similar, beneficial roles in the careers of many other TESL/TEFL professionals.

Now, 55 years after it began, the *TESL Reporter* will cease publication. In light of the many dozens of highly professional (and specialized) academic journals that exist in the field of English language teaching, as well as the abundance of websites devoted to TESOL practices and resources, the need that led to the *TESL Reporter's* beginning no longer exists. Institutional priorities and faculty workloads have also contributed to the decision to stop producing the *TESL Reporter*. While a part of me feels sad about that, a much greater part of me is proud to have been part of this publication and its influence on the TESOL profession and the world. It definitely accomplished its noble professional purpose and did so unselfishly and well. That is an enviable obituary. Most of us will be happy if the same can be said about us and our careers.

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