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Welcome from the Senior Editor

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GATESOL In Action

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Welcome from the Senior Editor

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A recent edition of the *Atlanta Journal Constitution* (AJC) gives front page coverage to the changes that are coming for Georgia teachers. Rose French and Jaime Sarrio (AJC, November 23, 2014) wrote “Georgia Makes it Tougher to Teach” and discuss how they perceive “standards are designed to raise educator quality” by drawing on the work of the Georgia Professional Standards Commission. While many Georgia-based educators bemoan the plethora of assessments that are crowding teacher preparation no one can deny that increased quality in all teachers is something for which we all aspire.

In our ESOL work, we certainly would like to commend those in-service teachers who despite all odds, work hard to maintain their standards by engaging in school and outside of school professional development

opportunities. It was wonderful to see so many of you at our 2014 fall state conference and to know that some of you are even presenting and reflecting on your own practice by going a step further to write about what you are doing in the classroom. In all our teacher preparation work, we must all continue to insist on rigor and high expectations for our teacher candidates. We must also encourage our in-service teachers to professionalize the work of teaching by being reflective practitioners who write about their work. I cannot emphasize this enough despite how difficult and challenging this aspiration may be.

Our research papers in this Fall 2014 edition compel us to maintain high professional standards and positive attitudes for the education outcomes and possibilities for our students. Mantegna offers us good news for the ending of the old year and the start of a new year. She uses high level tasks such as video composition to empower high school learners to articulate the critical issues that confront them. Indeed, it is the design of Mantegna's tasks that promoted the deep engagement of her learners which showed their capabilities as "multilingual, multimodal communicators of 21 century skills."

Odo, on the other hand, offers us a perceptive take on assessment. It is not the usual puzzle metaphor, just do all these pieces, get them to fit and our assessment will be perfect and complete. Instead, Odo outlines his

dissatisfaction with the “fixed and constrained nature” of the puzzle metaphor to encourage us to develop a more organic view of assessment that relies on promoting “teacher’s assessment intuition” placing the power of assessment in the hands of teachers and not in a set of disparate and discrete tests to be placed in the student’s folder after completion. Again, as professionals we are obligated to update our knowledge and perception so that we can move our understandings to new heights.

Caspary, Wickstrom and Boothe bring us up-to-date on problem-based learning and information and communication technologies under the scrutiny of English for Specific (ESP) and Academic Purposes (EAP). The authors compare the challenges and strengths of teaching and learning under different modes in business and academic settings. They contend that in today’s world the imperative of English language teaching and learning is to incorporate more rigorously problem –based and ICT methodologies and processes.

Early childhood teachers will find the article by Lado very instructive. Lado presents a detailed approach to using picture books. She outlines the features and procedures for promoting “tellability” in using picture books with young learners. Lado makes the approach very accessible because she not only illustrates the procedures but she also provides examples of picture books that can be used to employ the approach.

Our report by a colleague outside of GA is written by Fredricks who is based in Cairo, Egypt. Fredricks brings home to us first-hand, the current political tensions in Cairo and she notes that “university faculty have been fortunate to work with adult learners who have been witnesses to and frequently agents of innovations and political change.” Fredricks describes the work she does in Cairo and demonstrates to us how to work respectfully in contexts outside of one’s home country.

Collectively, the articles in our Fall 2014 edition spell out hope and good will for the work we do in the new year of 2015. We can see that there is always something new to extend and deepen our knowledge and insight and above all, uplift us to explore new worlds and ways of teaching and learning.

A Happy New Year to everyone and we look forward to your spreading the word and the articles of our peer-reviewed GATESOL in Action online journal and we encourage you to write about what you are doing in your teaching context. Don’t be afraid to submit your work to us! We look forward to giving you encouraging and helpful feedback that will be invaluable to your professional development.

Gertrude Tinker Sachs, Senior Editor