

Second Language Studies Student Association Newsletter

LETTER FROM THE EDITORS

We are pleased to present you with the first edition of the Second Language Studies Student Association Newsletter. Our goal is to bring together all those interested in the happenings of the Dept. of Second Language Studies--current students, faculty members, alumni, prospective students, and others related to the department.

We encourage all to contribute to the newsletter! We would love to hear about your recent work, research, classroom experiences, or experiences at an SLS/applied linguistics related event. Please send submissions to slsnewsletter@gmail.com.

Enjoy the holidays!

Lucas Edmond & Taylor Lewis



Congratulations, Dr. Hudson!

By Lucas Edmond

After 27 and a half years serving the Department of Second Language Studies, Dr. Thom Hudson will retire this December. While his research interests have evolved over the years, he has primarily been interested in issues of language assessment, L2 reading, program development, and English for Specific Purposes (ESP). He has taught a variety of courses, from introductory testing to advanced seminars in specialized topics such as ESP and quantitative research. As an advisor, he has chaired nearly 15 PhD committees and served on countless others.

Dr. Hudson joined the SLS department in 1989 when it was known as the Department of English as a Second Language (ESL). He has witnessed the department changing over time, which he views as a positive evolution. "The cultural identity of the department has changed over the years, and it has become very interesting and complex," says Dr. Hudson. "When it was ESL, almost everyone was engaged in researching English language pedagogy, but now, we have moved beyond that and the research here embraces a variety of applied linguistics topics."

Carrie Bach, a current MA student, will remember Dr. Hudson not only for his support and clear instruction, but also his quirky sense of humor. "Dr. Hudson really dislikes pie charts. I remember he would bring to our QR class a lot of jokes and comics about bad graphs and charts that he'd found in newspapers and on the Internet...Now whenever I see a bad pie chart, I immediately think of him."

After retiring, Dr. Hudson will relocate to Portland, OR, where he plans to spend more time relaxing and enjoying nature, but still continue doing research and activities related to language education. He plans to stay connected with the department as a Professor Emeritus in the future.

"The department has been home. I will miss Hawaii, especially the multicultural aspect of it. The cultural richness here is rare, and it's something that I've valued. I will truly miss the diversity of the student population here, who really bring interesting and complex perspectives to the department."

We all would like to sincerely thank Dr. Hudson for his dedication to his students, and we wish him the best of luck in this next stage in his life. He will be truly missed here at Moore Hall!

From Research to Practice: SLS Summer Practicum in Thailand

By Lucas Edmond

Continuing the tradition founded by Dr. Day in 2007, Dr. Betsy Gilliland and PhD student Jay Tanaka led the biannual SLS Practicum in Teaching at Ubon Ratchathani University this past summer. I, along with 13 other MA students and two PhD students, embarked on an unforgettable journey teaching and learning together in rural Thailand.

Placed in one of two departments, each student taught an intensive English course specifically requested by the department. We had considerable freedom in designing our courses, which allowed us to put the knowledge and theory we have gained from SLS courses back at UH into practice. "In graduate school, classes tend to stress observations, small projects, and research, but there is a lack of the big picture," says Dr. Gilliland. "On the practicum, however, students can take what they have learned in class and see how it would work in a specific context. This gives them a bigger picture of language teaching and learning."

Apart from teaching our courses, we were also required to take a companion seminar course. While the course was like any other graduate course in which we had readings and reports, it was more focused on the practical aspects of teaching; it was a place where we could share our ideas and communally reflect on our experiences to help each other out. "I really appreciated having the support of Betsy and all of the other teachers," says Kelly Bolen, a fellow MA student and practicum participant. "We really bonded as a group and formed a community of support that really helped me get through some of the challenges I faced both inside and outside the classroom."

Outside of teaching, we also engaged with the local Thai-Isan culture through various activities with other teachers and students. Working in Thailand was an academically and culturally enriching experience, and I feel much more prepared to enter the professional teaching world upon graduating.

Dr. Gilliland plans to lead the practicum course again in the summer of 2018.

Continue reading on page 3 for a reflection from one of the practicum's participants, Kiriko Shimaji, and to see more pictures from our trip!



Welcome, Dr. Kyle!

By Taylor Lewis

Dr. Kristopher Kyle visited Hawaii for the first time in February, but the newest SLS faculty member already has a favorite place to climb. Unfortunately, the Berthoud, CO native and self-professed "mountain guy" has only been out to the Arch by Kaena Point once.

This year is full of firsts for Kyle, who's first trip to Hawaii was for an interview for his current position as an assistant professor. After teaching SLS302 this fall, he will add his first graduate class this coming spring.

Kyle specializes in natural language processing (NLP) and learner corpora, with particular interest in how NLP technology can be used in second language acquisition (SLA) research. "I think there's a lot that can be done there and a lot of questions that we answer with those type of tools," he said of using such technology in SLA research.

Kyle comes to UH via Georgia State University, where he began his work with Dr. Scott Crossley in NLP and computational linguistics. Two of the biggest projects the two have collaborated on are [TAALES](#) (Tool for the Analysis of Lexical Sophistication) and

[TAASSC](#) (Tool for the Automatic Analysis of Syntactic Sophistication and Complexity). Kyle's tools have been used to identify sarcasm and for sentiment analysis, among other research.

Though he has only worked with English in the past, Kyle hopes that through collaboration, he can work with other languages.

This spring, Kyle will teach SLS650 (psycholinguistics) in addition to SLS302. He plans to teach an SLA learner corpora class next fall, and an NLP course not long after.

Why did you choose UH?

By Anna Mendoza

Being a PhD student is tough. Not a week goes by when, working hard and occasionally lonely, I remind myself how much I wanted to come here.

Last year I was offered admission to Hawaii and another school, with similar funding packages. Given the cost of living in Honolulu, I dug deeply into my savings to do my PhD here, and sold my home.

While I arrived with more of a background in sociolinguistics and critical pedagogy, my first year is starting to change that. In taking SLS 441, I now realize how much we need to know about the world's languages and their properties before we can strategize on how to teach them. In a Discourse Analysis class, I'm learning how speakers may achieve interactional goals strategically through meaning use in non-conventional ways. If I were being trained in a less interdisciplinary department, there might be a dichotomy between language systems and language use, but instead, I'm getting the whole picture of how they mutually reinforce each other.

The theme of this stage in my life is "synthesis." In teaching reading and writing in the English Language Institute, I've focused on training students to synthesize ideas commonly conceived of as oppositional. In my own study, I'm researching an approach to teaching English for Academic Purposes that supports students' translanguaging. I chose to apply to and eventually attend UHM-SLS because you can't do original research and teaching in a department characterized by compartmentalization instead of synthesis.

That understanding is what keeps me going through 100+ pages of reading a week, the endless lesson prep, the separation from family and partner for all but a few weeks each year. I know I'm not the only one who made these sacrifices. This program is the reason we're here.

SLSSA Fall 2016 Retreat

By Taylor Lewis

On a (mostly) clear Saturday in September, SLS students and faculty gathered to take some time off from the books and bond at Nimitz Beach for the Fall 2016 SLSSA Retreat.

The day began with breakfast and beach time. Some chose to dive right in to the water with their surfboards, while others laid out towels and sat on the sand. When there was difficulty with the volleyball net setup, several students just chose to play without it.

After a few hours of relaxation, it was time for speed-networking the faculty. Old and new students discussed their questions and ambitions as professors moved from table to table, getting to know the students they teach and work with.

Connections were reinforced over lunch, with everyone digging into food provided by Waipahu's Thai Kitchen.

At the annual auction, led by Joel Weaver and Kenny Harsch, elephant pants, hiking and rock climbing trips, and various sweets raised \$1,350. The money will go to Ruth Crymes, Carr Holmes, Chaudron Funds, as well as the SLS Enrichment Fund.

The rest of the day saw students and faculty back on the beach, trying out slacklining and taking photos in the legendary SLS mu'umu'u.

Thanks to everyone who came out!



Presenting at International Conferences

By Daniel Holden

First of all, for those students in the MA program who have not yet submitted to conferences, I highly encourage you all to do so. I never dreamed that I would have been able to secure a substantial amount of funding that would take me to Europe back then, so it was a surreal experience to say the least.

To give a brief overview of my research project, I've been working with Dr. Dongping Zheng and fellow classmate Yang Liu on a mobile-assisted language learning (MALL) project since spring 2015. We had the wonderful opportunity to participate in the designing and implementation of a new augment reality language learning game for a target population of English language learners in the Hawai'i English Language Program (HELP) this past summer. We are doing work in a

new area of language acquisition where students are able to physically move around real spaces in the Honolulu area while also augmenting their understanding of those places with their mobile devices.

Our work was actually accepted by 3 conferences in Europe! In June, I attended the Sociolinguistics Symposium 21 in Murcia, Spain, the 2ND International Conference on Higher Education Advances in Valencia, Spain, and the International Conference on Interactivity, Language and Cognition in London. Of course, the trip was very expensive, but I was able to receive funding from Graduate Student Organization, the East-West Center, and from one of the conferences itself.

Anyway, I hope that my story encourages those who haven't thought about conferences or publishing to get excited about doing it. Come talk to me anytime if you'd like to know more about the trip!

Thai Practicum: A Reflection

By Kiriko Shimaji

With my hazy longing for Thailand in my heart, I attended the first orientation for the Thai practicum held during the spring semester. Two weeks later, I booked my tickets to Ubon Ratchathani, a place I could not even point out on the map. I know it is stereotypical, but I dreamed of elegant elephants, the magnificent golden reclining Buddha, and delicious *tom yum kung* while reading a free magazine on the air plane.

If someone asks me to describe this Thailand practicum in a sentence, I would say that it was an intensive language teacher-researcher boot camp where we literally lived together and thought about teaching and research 24/7. I was a novice teacher and a novice MA student. This practicum was my first teaching experience in a classroom setting and before this, I had completed only one semester as a MA student. However, the intensive reflection helped me greatly with professional development.

As a part of the practicum, we were required to keep daily reflection journal and attend weekly reflection group discussions. We discussed given prompts, checked in how we were doing, and shared ideas. I sometimes also made teaching materials with my roommate. Working collaboratively with a peer reduced pressure and anxiety. Through my experience, I can say that creating a supportive teacher-researcher community where we can share ideas and advice helps teacher development.

One thing I loved about this practicum is that this experience was something new to everyone. Even if you are an experienced teacher or a novice teacher like myself, teaching in this context will allow you to reflect from new angles and deepen understanding of yourself as a teacher, a researcher, a language learner, or perhaps, simply as "you."

I did not find elegant elephants or the reclining Buddha in Ubon, but rather the joy of teaching and true value of creating a supportive teacher researcher community. I learned that eating *som tam* (papaya salad) from the canteen with my students is much more delicious than *tom yum kung* from a restaurant. It was definitely an unforgettable journey.



Kelly Bolen works with students on a practice interview project.



Students from the Mekong Civilizations major teach practicum participants how to prepare local foods, such as the Isan specialties *gai yang* and *som tam*.



Lucas Edmond, Kezhu Wang, and their first-year BBA students enjoy bubble tea and lunch at an end-of-summer celebration.



The Candle Festival, Ubon Ratchathani's most famous annual summer event, features massive wax floats of Buddhist figures.

Congratulations Fall 2016 Graduates!

Congratulations to all those who graduated in Fall 2016. We wish you all the best of luck in your future career, and we look forward to hearing of your many successes.

MA

Ricky D. Domingo
Daniel Holden
Robert T. Otsubo
Dahyun Park

AGC

Carmen Ramos Gómez
Naemi McPherson

PhD

Jennifer Holdway (Advisor: Dr. Kathryn Davis)
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