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Research SIG Mission Statement

The primary purpose of the ACTFL Research SIG is to provide leadership in conducting research to inform instructional practices and build theory, as well as to demonstrate how research is shaped by knowledge and theory generated from instructional practices. At this national forum, the SIG membership meets to provide a supportive critical community to discuss and guide the national and local agendas toward meaningful research on the teaching and learning of languages. A significant part of each year's annual meeting, the SIG sponsors pre-conference workshops on research, roundtables, and panel presentations, which provide a venue for both experienced researchers and graduate students to update their research skills, receive mentoring, and provide leadership in the direction of world language research.

How to Join

To join the SIG, simply check the appropriate box on the ACTFL dues (renewal) form and include the \$5.00 payment when you send in your dues. Or, sign into the ACTFL website and click 'Add a Special Interest Group' on the left-hand menu.

Spring 2016 Webinar



Presenter: Dr. Bryan Smith –
Arizona State University

Date: February, 2016

Day/Time: Thursday, February 25th
at 3:00 (EST)

Topic: Methodological Challenges
in Researching SLA-relevant CALL

[Bryan Smith](#) is Associate Professor of English at Arizona State University's Tempe campus. He teaches a wide selection of courses in areas within applied linguistics. His research focuses on computer-assisted language learning (CALL) - specifically, the intersection of CALL and SLA. He is Editor (along with Mat Schulze) of the [CALICO Journal](#), which is an international journal devoted to research and discussion on technology and language learning.

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**Contact Us and send us
your news!**

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Webinar Information

Over the past decade CALL researchers have more systematically applied theoretical paradigms, perspectives and empirical research methods from applied linguistics in investigating the nature and effectiveness of instructed SLA. Today good CALL research necessarily draws upon established SLA constructs and approaches in exploring learner-computer and learner-learner interaction. At the same time, CALL research has the potential to shape (and also complicate) aspects of SLA theory. Indeed, the digital medium affords CALL researchers certain advantages; however it also presents a host of methodological challenges. Among these challenges sufficiently tracking learner behavior seems to be critical.

I will first discuss how CALL has “come of age” in a general sense and will then turn to several current, theoretically grounded CALL/SLA studies that are leading the way in terms of richly tracking learner behavior. I will end by suggesting ideas for how young CALL researchers can build upon this work in helping move the field forward.

ACTFL 2015 Session Information

Session Theme: Current Affairs: The Impact of Technology and Study Abroad in the Foreign Language Classroom

We are pleased to report the success of the Research SIG session at ACTFL 2015 in San Diego. We would like to thank Bill VanPatten, Walter Hopkins, and Daniel Trego, from Michigan State University for their session on **In-Class Versus Online Testing**, Margaret Keneman and Katherine Bevins, University of Tennessee; Sebastien Dubreil–University of Tennessee-Knoxville; Rachel Lamance, University of Arizona for their session on (Re)Designing Hybrid Curricula as Technology evolves, Arturo Miranda, University of Nebraska; Melanie Bloom, University of Nebraska at Omaha for their session on **The impact of Short-Term Study Abroad on Intercultural Competence.**

ACTFL 2015 Research SIG Keynote Speakers

About our presenters



Idoia Elola (B.A., University of País Vasco, M.A., Universidad Complutense, Ph.D., University of Iowa) is an associate professor of Spanish and Applied Linguistics & Second language studies at Texas Tech University. She is in the editorial board for *Revista Española de Lingüística Aplicada* (John Benjamin). Her research and publications focus mainly on research in areas of second language writing, such as collaborative and individual writing when using Web 2.0 tools, Spanish heritage language learners’ writing processes, and revision and feedback. She can be contacted at idoia.elola@ttu.edu



Ana Oskoz (B.A., University of Deusto, M.A., University of Iowa, Ph.D., University of Iowa) is an associate Professor of Spanish at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County (UMBC). She is the associate editor for the CALICO Journal. Her research is in areas of language and technology, such as the use of synchronous and asynchronous communication tools for second language learning to enhance second language writing and foster intercultural competence development. She can be contacted at aoskoz@umbc.edu

TOPIC: Writing with 21st-Century Social Tools: Traditional and New Literacies in the Foreign Language Classroom

Integrating digital tools into the foreign language (FL) classroom challenges and expands the definitions of traditional writing literacy, as well as learners' approaches to writing (e.g., collaboration). Drawing from social semiotic multimodal approaches and activity theory, this presentation endeavors to guide FL researchers and educators toward a more in-depth understanding of 21st-century literacy practices.

Message from the Chair



I am delighted to serve as ACTFL Research SIG Chair, and look forward to working with my colleagues to make this a productive and exciting year.

I want to extend a warm welcome to our new Secretary, Angela George at Kennesaw State University. We are grateful for the diligent work performed by Jason Martel during his tenure as Secretary. We would also like to welcome our newly appointed Interim Graduate Student Representative, Reuben Vyn, University of Iowa. Two-year term elections will be conducted in the fall.

For ACTFL 2016 in Boston, keep in mind that we have a session chock-full of engaging research, not to mention likely wine and appetizers. Stay tuned for news of our next webinar taking place in spring 2016.

We would also like to know more about our members to encourage, reward, and support your research on language acquisition and language teaching. Please let us know more about you, and send us:

- a summary about a research article coming out
- recent publications
- favorite research article you think others should read

- summaries of dissertation research if you are a graduate student
- research spotlight
- collaboration corner for people looking for opportunities to collaborate, since SLA departments are all over the place

Contact Secretary, Angela George ageorg30@kennesaw.edu to help us disseminate your work, ideas, and needs. Consider submitting an article for our upcoming newsletters! We are interested in reviews for materials concerning teaching and language acquisition. Submissions of up to 500 words are welcomed! Deadline for submission to the Secretary is September 1st for fall distribution.

I wish you a great end of the semester and I hope to see you all in Boston!

Silvia Peart
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Facilitating teacher research: The IRIS Database of Instruments for Research into Second Languages (IRIS)

Sophie Thompson^a, Alison Mackey^b, Emma Marsden^a, & Luke Plonsky^c

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As language teachers we are often presented with questions and concerns about the best methods for teaching and learning a second language. For those of us who are interested in investigating these issues in our own classrooms, action research can be a very rewarding and enlightening experience. However, developing materials and assessments for action research can be challenging and time consuming. The IRIS database (<http://www.iris-database.org/iris/app/home/index>) was designed to facilitate all research, including by language teachers. It is a repository of research instruments and tools which can be used as-is, or adapted to specific classrooms. IRIS contains more than 750 instruments, which range from simple communicative tasks and activities, to questionnaires, protocols for interviews different kinds of tests for a variety of languages, observation schemes, software scripts, sound and video files, and of course, different kinds of teaching intervention tasks. Among many more types of materials. IRIS is searchable by the kind of instrument you are looking for, the sort of research you are planning on doing, names of researchers who have contributed them, the age of learners you work with, the language being learned, the first language of the learners, and the type of instruction, among many other parameters.

One of the principal goals of IRIS is to make research instruments more accessible to teachers so that it becomes more feasible and practical for them to carry out studies in their own language classrooms. The instruments available on

IRIS are free to download and have all been used in peer-reviewed studies on second language learning and teaching. Since its launch in 2012, IRIS has attracted a great deal of interest internationally, with more than 16000 hits and over 10000 downloads. IRIS is endorsed by virtually all leading academic journals and research associations in the field, including ACTFL and *Foreign Language Annals*, and by top investigators in the area of language learning and teaching. Consequently, up-to-date and relevant research instruments are being regularly uploaded to the site providing a range of high quality tools at teachers' disposal.

IRIS has already been used by teachers to help investigate a range of issues, for example, to assess learners' needs, how best to give feedback, how learners are motivated and how to best design language teaching materials. This is just a snapshot of the types of areas IRIS instruments can be applied to. In addition, using instruments from IRIS can assist the field in overcoming the lack of replication studies on language learning and teaching research and extend the generalizability of findings to different settings, demographics, target languages, and so forth. Teachers can easily use the ready-made instruments on IRIS to carry out replication studies and further their understanding of their own unique contexts. The instruments can also be easily and quickly adapted to different learners and teaching contexts in order to explore areas of interest to both teachers and learners. In summary, IRIS is a teacher-friendly, searchable, easily-accessible database which can be used as a resource by teachers and researchers to better understand their own language classrooms.

News from our Research SIG Members

Tea with BVP



Do you ever listen to talk shows? Have you ever called into one? If not, you will want to read on and learn about an exciting and fun new show called "Tea with BVP." Sponsored by the Center for Language Teaching Advancement at Michigan State University, this is *the* call-in talk show for all those interested in second language acquisition and language teaching.

Bill VanPatten and his co-hosts, Angelika Kraemer and Walter Hopkins, field questions live on the air about language, language acquisition, language teaching, and any other topics callers and emailers bring to them. With Bill's comedic background, it's a funny and engaging way to look at issues that are relevant in our field.

Each week we will post different but often related to pics to entice the listener to call in. On occasion, the show includes prominent guests who bring their own personalities and takes on the issues under consideration.

The show launched on Thursday, October 15th, at 3pm ET and will broadcast live every week at the same time. To tune in and to find out how you can call in, ask questions, and/or suggest topics, sign up to our newsletter at: teawithbvp.com

You can also find us on Twitter at @teawithbvp. We want as much audience participation as possible so don't be shy. Check us out and call in! We are waiting to hear from you!

Current Research Endeavors by SIG Members

Martel, J. (2015). Learning to teach a foreign language: Identity negotiation and conceptualizations of pedagogical progress. *Foreign Language Annals*, 48(3), 394–412.

From an empirical standpoint, relatively little is known about learning outcomes associated with foreign language teacher preparation programs in the United States. In order to address this gap, the present study considers a Spanish student teacher's learning about language pedagogy during her yearlong licensure program. Using symbolic interactionist and teacher socialization lenses, the study conceptualizes learning in social terms, with identity as the unit of analysis. Findings highlight the messages that were communicated to the participant by significant others in university- and student teaching-based settings about how she should take up the role of Spanish teacher, in addition to the unique ways in which she folded—or did not fold—these messages into her self-concept. The notion of progress in the field of foreign language teacher education is discussed in light of these findings.

Alessia Valfredini, PhD - Fordham University

In her doctoral dissertation, *A collective case study of the mediational tools used by undergraduates in academic writing across languages*, Alessia Valfredini studied undergraduate academic writing, in various disciplines and languages (in foreign, second, and native language contexts), from an ecological semiotic standpoint. She examined which sociocultural internal tools framed writing across languages and how the various material and symbolic contexts experienced by each student of the study sample contributed to shape his/her approach to writing. Drawing on sociocultural second and foreign language writing research that studied collaborative writing and external mediational tools, this study expanded the focus to individual writing tasks and internal mediational tools.

Office Election Results

We are pleased to announce that the elections for SIG offices for 2016-2018 have concluded and the following new addition:

Secretary: Dr. Angela George (ageorg30@kennesaw.edu). Dr. George joins us from Kennesaw State University who is currently and Assistant Professor of Spanish and Foreign Language Education as well as the Undergraduate Foreign Language Education Program Coordinator in addition to the Alternative Teacher Preparation Program Coordinator at in the Department of Foreign Languages at Kennesaw State University.

(Interim) Graduate Student Representative: Reuben Vyn (reuben-vyn@uiowa.edu) joins us from The University of Iowa currently enrolled in the College of Education Department of Teaching and Learning Foreign Language and ESL Education.

Thank you for all your contributions, we are looking forward to hear more from our members!