



TEACHING ENGLISH TO SPEAKERS OF OTHER LANGUAGES

NEWSLETTER 2021

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1. ACTIVITIES OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Following the completion of the Board of Director's first three-year term, the General Assembly was called into session in May as required by Article 7 of TESOL Turkey's constitution. However, due to measures taken by the government against the Covid-19 pandemic, all activities involving broad participation, including general assembly meetings of associations, were cancelled and could not be held until September. As a result, TESOL Turkey's General Assembly could not convene until September 16, 2021. At the meeting held without a majority at Yaşar University in İzmir, where the Board of Directors' Report on Operations covering the period of December 2017- September 2021 and the financial report with the Supervisory Board's audit report were delivered to the members present, both boards were exonerated. The General Assembly, then, proceeded with the election of the new Board of Directors and Supervisory Board. Nominated by Bahar Gün, the following members were unanimously elected to serve until May 2024.

Board of Directors:

Bahar Gün
Beril Ayman Yücel
Sibel Tüzel Kandiller
Yasemin Yelbay Yılmaz
Yeşim Eraslan

Alternate members:

Evrin Üstünlüoğlu
Sinem Atamsoy Koşar
Melis Akdoğan Gündoğdu
Metin Esen
Duygu Erdoğan

Supervisory Board:

Hande Kefeli Çalık
İlkay Özdemir
Özge Coşkun Aysal

Alternate members:

Sibel Taşkın Şimsek
Derya Eker Kaba
Aslı Yılmaz Ercan

Thus, the Board of Directors of 2018-2021 were elected to serve a second term. As TESOL Turkey's Internal Bylaw Article 1 restricts the period of service of the members of the Board of Directors to two consecutive terms (6 years), this will be the final term of this Board of Directors.

With the exception of the founding President, whose term in Office was set as three (3) years to enable the establishment of standardized procedures within the Association, Article 2 of the same bylaw limits a president's term thereafter to one (1) year. Thus, at the first Board of Directors Meeting, having completed her three years as founding president, Bahar Gün stepped down and president-elect Sibel Tüzel Kandiller as elected by the Board of Directors last February, was appointed for a period of one year.



The Board of Directors began their new term by scheduling a series of online meetings with the members of the various professional councils, committees, task forces as well as the executive committees of the Special Interest groups to self-evaluate their performance and set goals for the new term. They later met with members of

TESOL Turkey to exchange ideas about TESOL Turkey activities and future plans. Based on data gathered, the Board compiled the following as their plans for December 2021-December 2022.

Roadshows, local events and the annual conference preceded by pre-conference events organized by the Special Interest Groups will continue during this period as will the publication of *Professional ELT Magazine Online*. US Embassy projects and the search for grants will also continue. The first of the courses towards micro-credentials and badges will be piloted this year. Starting immediately, membership and registration procedures will solely be carried out online.

During this period, the Board of Directors will focus their attention on ensuring more effective communication between the bodies of the Association and maintaining closer contact with members. They will also dedicate this year to the documentation of all procedures and processes for increased structure, consistency, transparency, accountability and quality.

2. PROFESSIONAL COUNCILS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

2.1. Associate Network Professional Council (ANPC)

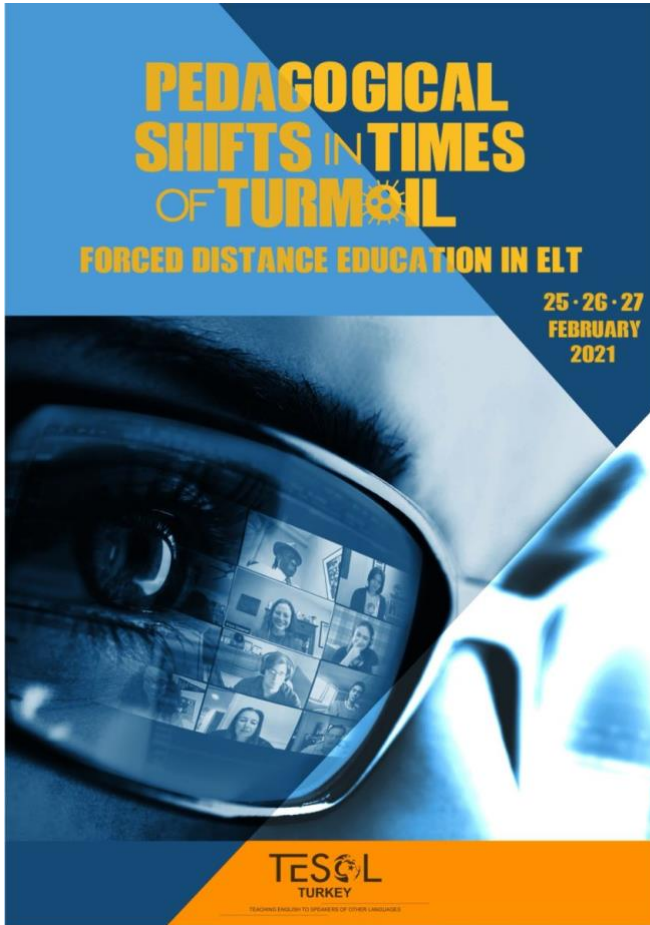
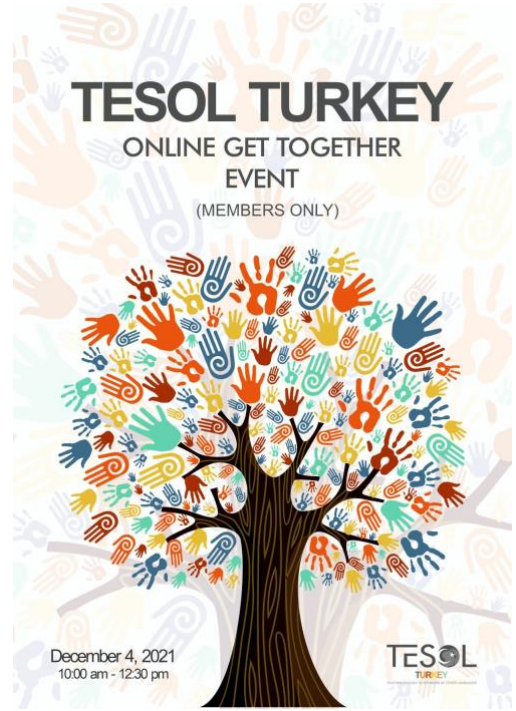
In October, the responsibilities of the Affiliate Network Professional Council, led by Bahar Gün, were expanded to include working in close collaboration with TESOL Turkey's Special Interest Groups (SIGs) to ensure (1) the smooth flow of information between the SIGs and the various bodies of TESOL Turkey, (2) cooperation between the various SIGs, and (3) compliance with SIG policies and procedures. Thus, the council was officially renamed the Associate Network Professional Council. In the upcoming year, while the council will continue to fulfill its responsibility of maintaining relations with TESOL International and IATEFL and pursuing new partnerships and collaborative relationships with associations and organizations that share a mission similar to TESOL Turkey's, it will also be in close interaction with the SIGs. For this purpose, the council requires an expansion and the Board of Directors will be sending out a call for a new member as well as a one for a SIG Representative soon.

2.2. Events Planning Professional Council (EPPC)

2.2.1. Roadshows and Local Events

Sadly, neither of these could be realized due to Covid-19 in 2021. However, both hybrid Roadshows and online Local Events are being planned for 2022.

The EPPC organized an Online Get Together Event that took place on 4 December 2021. It was such a pleasure to see friends and colleagues again even if virtually. The aim of this event was manifold: to inform members who had been unable to attend the General Assembly held in İzmir in September of TESOL Turkey's activities and plans for the upcoming year, to help them gain deeper insight into the various bodies of TESOL Turkey and the contribution of each to TESOL Turkey, and to gain an understanding of members' expectations of TESOL Turkey and the various bodies as well as their suggestions for the future.



2.2.2. Annual Conference

The 3rd TESOL Turkey International ELT Conference, "Pedagogical Shifts in Times of Turmoil: Forced Distance Education in ELT", took place on 26 and 27 February 2021 and was delivered virtually over Zoom. The Pre-Conference Event (PCE) hosted by LAMSIG and METASIG was held on 25 February. Keynote speakers of the conference Adrian Underhill, Elena Schmitt from Southern Connecticut State University and Jacquelin Einer from Sabancı University delivered inspiring talks that were highly thought-provoking. The event was a big success attracting delegates not only from Turkey but also from various countries around the world.

Preparations for the 4th TESOL Turkey International ELT Conference, which will be held virtually on 18 and 19 March 2022 are underway. The theme for this year's event has been set as "Highway to Heaven: Wellbeing in Education" and very special keynote speakers to be announced soon will be joining. TESOL Turkey's Special Interest Groups will once again host the PCE that will be held on 17 March. Detailed information regarding the conference will follow soon.

2.3. Promotion Professional Council (PPC)

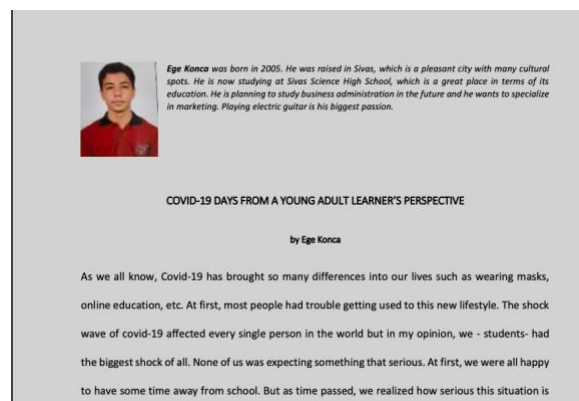
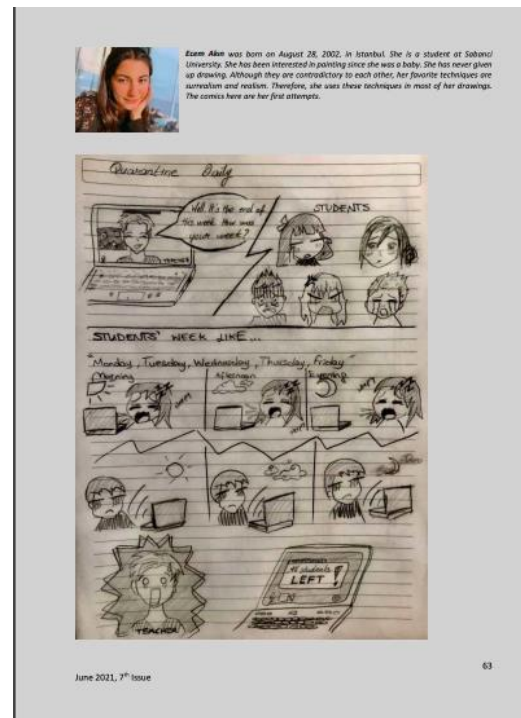
2.3.1. Website

Efforts to improve TESOL Turkey’s website continued until May when it became clear that there was a need for a new website. Following extensive research and several meetings with potential web designers, an agreement was signed between TESOL Turkey and İvilon Engineering Ltd. The design of the new website began in June, and was completed in November. The new website was launched in early December. The new website allows “members only” areas as well as secure online transactions for membership and registration.

2.3.2. Professional ELT Magazine Online



This year, the PPC published the 7th and 8th issues of Professional ELT Magazine Online. In the 7th issue, of the 22 articles published seven were from learners - very interesting reads indeed.



The 8th issue was uploaded to the website in December. It is important to note that, with the new website, Professional ELT Magazine Online is available to members only.

2.3.3. Social Networking

The number of TESOL Turkey followers on Instagram reached 1,308 this year, and the number of followers on Twitter reached 106. To date, 211 posts have been designed, prepared and simultaneously posted on all three social networking sites. Although TESOL Turkey is trying hard to remain active on social media, there is need for greater visibility and presence on social media, especially need for animated and live posts. Therefore, the Board of Directors will be sending out a call for a member with expertise in these areas.

2.3.4. Annual Newsletter

The preparation of this Annual Newsletter Online was the last endeavor of the Promotion Professional Council for 2021.

3. ACTIVITIES OF THE COMMITTEES AND TASK FORCES

3.1. The Projects Committee

This year, 100 members completed the TESOL Core Certificate Program whose practicum component ended in September. 100 TESOL Turkey members completed the self-paced TESOL Advanced Practitioner Certificate, which ended in October, and 25 members completed the Leadership and Management Certificate Program that ended in May 2021. These online professional development opportunities in the form of full scholarships were offered to TESOL Turkey members by TESOL International and the Regional English Language Office (RELO) of the U.S. Embassy in Ankara in collaboration with TESOL Turkey.

3.1.1. Projects

Micro-credentials and digital badges enable professionals to demonstrate their skills through integrating technology into their career development. A digital badge is a digital verifiable account of what a person has achieved after having earned a degree, attended a conference, and/or completed a course. It enables third parties to see a clear account of the outcomes of learning in a digital setting. Furthermore, digital badges allow users to use these electronic badges on their social media accounts which means promoting their success and/or competencies in the digital world. Thus, the talents of the holders of the badges become more visible and may help a learner/teacher to find extrinsic motivation to go digital in terms of promoting themselves.

As stated in its mission, TESOL TURKEY fosters collaboration of professionals in ELT through offering them a wide range of opportunities both in national and international contexts in a world of constant technological developments. Since micro-credentials and badges seem to be an indispensable feature of a globally digital world, it was essential to embark on a project on micro-credentials and badges.

Associations such as TESOL International are already issuing digital badges to course participants. Moreover, the European Commission's (EU) is planning to develop a Europass digital credentials system and support infrastructure, which will ease the recognition of

credentials across Europe. YÖKAK and the British Council have also recently shared a call for proposals on projects investigating issues related to micro-credentials.

The Projects Committee in 2021 prepared an online course that will serve as a pilot program to determine the most effective ways to implement micro-credentials and digital badges through TESOL Turkey. The rationale for addressing such a project is strongly related to the commitment of the association in making its members keep up with the latest developments in education, and as there are plans to test the EU system at national levels, starting this digital credentials project in Turkey will be the first major attempt at raising awareness on what digital credentials are and bring the country one step closer to future national implementation.

3.2. Memberships Task Force

TESOL Turkey continues to grow by the day. The number of TESOL Turkey members, which was over 280 in December 2020 is almost 350 today.

3.2.1. Membership Issues

The biggest improvement this year is in online membership and registration procedures. First time members as well as members who wish to renew their membership can now do so by registering to TESOL Turkey's website and completing the membership application and payment procedures provided. Online payment for SIG memberships as well as TESOL Turkey events is also possible. The website will keep track of membership status and notify members of soon-to-expire memberships. It is important for members to renew their memberships on time as they will not be able to access members only fields of the website once their membership has expired.

4. ACTIVITIES OF THE SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS (SIGS)

4.1. Leadership and Management SIG (LAMSIG)

The first activity organized by LAMSIG in 2021 was the TESOL TURKEY Annual Conference LAMSIG Pre-Conference Event (PCE) held on 25 February. The PCE featured two very informative components. First, was a plenary talk given by Dr. Rıza Kadılar, who spoke on the topic of Connected but Desynchronized Leadership. Dr. Kadılar also offered five scholarships to LAMSIG members to attend his one-month mentoring and coaching certification program. The PCE was continued with a panel of ELT leaders reflecting on their experiences as administrators during the pandemic. The panelists were Jacqueline Einer from Sabancı University, Meral Kızrak from Başkent University, Sally Gayford from MEF University and Donald Staub from Izmir University of Economics, who was the panel moderator.

Following Dr. Kadılar's mentoring and coaching training, on 26 May, 2021, those who had received the scholarships and attended the training, were invited to join a special LAMSIG webinar / panel to reflect on their experiences and discuss possible impacts on their work lives. The scholarship recipients / panelists were Pınar Demiral Gündüz from Sabancı University, Gökçe Erkan from Middle East Technical University, Nilgün İner from İzmir Bakırçay University, Dilek Arca from Yaşar University and Yaşar Üstün Kaplan from Bingöl University. Panel moderators were LAMSIG Joint Coordinators Ian Collins from Yaşar University and Evrim Üstünlüoğlu from İzmir University of Economics.

In late summer, an Annual General Meeting (AGM) was planned for 9 September, 2021. Two board members had announced that they would be stepping down. Therefore, prior to the meeting, a call for prospective board members was announced, and a vote was taken at the AGM, resulting in the nomination and election of two new board members: Gökçe Erkan from Middle East Technical University and Nilgün İner from İzmir Bakırçay University.



The final activity for 2021 was organized for 16 December, when LAMSIG hosted the first of a multi-part panel series on language program accreditation. The aim of this initial webinar was to discuss the topic broadly with panelists who had experience with the major language accrediting schemes in Turkey: CEA, Equals, and Pearson Assured. The Panelists were:

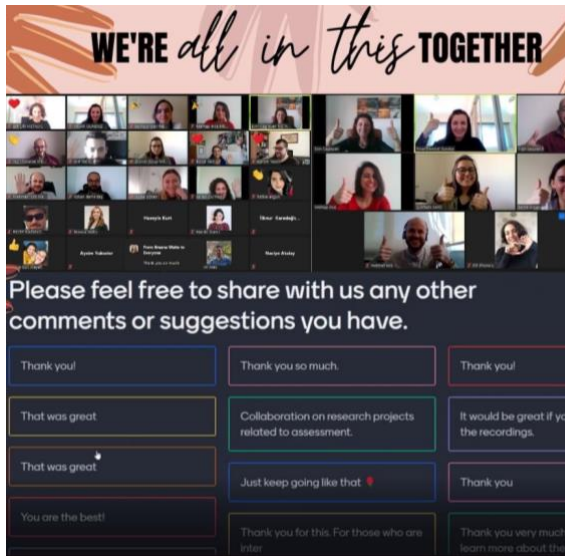
- Gökçe Erkan / Middle East Technical University
- Mehmet Atasagun / Bahçeşehir University
- Miranda Karjagdi Çolak / Bursa Technical University
- Donald Staub / Izmir University of Economics (panel moderator)

4.2. Measurement, Evaluation, Testing and Assessment SIG (METASIG)

The Measurement, Evaluation, Testing and Assessment Special Interest Group – METASIG – was founded in October 2020 with the aim of bringing together foreign language teaching professionals who have experience and/or a special interest in the field of language assessment and testing. As professionals interested in language testing and assessment, they believe in the power of collaboration with colleagues sharing the same passion and goals.

Looking back over the year gone, these are the events and activities organized in 2021. The ‘kickoff event’ – Good Practices in Online Language Assessments – was held on January 30 with 47 participants from 15 different cities. In this event, the participants had the chance to exchange ideas, share good practices, reflect on challenges, and brainstorm suggestions for further improvement of practices. The enthusiasm of the participants and their feedback highlighted the importance of and the need for collaboration in testing and assessment across institutions – especially during the unprecedented times of the pandemic.





METASIG also organized a PCE day on February 25, 2021, at the TESOL-Turkey annual conference. Plenary speaker, Richard Spiby gave a webinar on Assessment Literacy. The session was followed by a panel discussion on assessing language online, where METASIG committee members discussed the strengths, challenges and opportunities of online assessment and shared their experiences.

Looking forward to a new year and thinking about how they could do (even) better, here are METASIG’s plans for 2022. Organization is underway for a webinar that will be held at the beginning of February 2022, and this will be

followed with the PCE day at TESOL-Turkey annual conference. Watch out for details coming soon, do get in touch and let them know how you would like to be more involved in the activities as METASIG moves forward.

There are few opportunities to gain expertise and experience in language assessment and testing and therefore, METASIG will play an important role to assist foreign language teaching professionals in their efforts to maximize their language assessment knowledge and skills and improve learning and teaching processes in their institutions.

Follow METASIG (tesolturkeymetasig@gmail.com) on their social media accounts – Instagram (metasig_tesolturkey), Facebook (Metasig Tesol-Turkey) , and LinkedIn. Come and join this enthusiastic and dynamic team and help achieve the mission of METASIG, or just be an active member who would enjoy the benefits – you will certainly feel welcome.