**Title of Report:** MA-TESOL at Anaheim University
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The Graduate School of Education is the focus of this case report. It offers a masters degree and a graduate diploma program in TESOL, and is, at the time of writing, launching a doctorate in education.

## 1. Identify and describe the Professional Development Opportunity (PDO).

Anaheim University (AU) was founded in Orange County, California, USA, in 1996. It is incorporated in the United States and is authorized to operate as an educational institution by the State of California. In this case report, we document the development and current status of the MA (TESOL) program, which was the first program offered by the University in 1998 and which remains its flagship.

In terms of administrative support, there is a Dean of the Graduate School of Education, a Chair of the Graduate School of Education, five Student Services support staff members, an Administrative Director, a TechSupport specialist, and a TESOL website developer. Additional support can also be provided on an as-needed basis.

With the exception of two, four-day residential sessions held in southern California and other locations around the world, the entire MA program can be completed online. The program is headed by the University's Graduate School of Education Dean, Dr. David Nunan, and TESOL Department Chair, Dr. Rod Ellis, both of whom have taught in the TESOL program since its inaugural year. Instruction is carried out through weekly live online high-definition webcam classes taught by experienced faculty members, many of whom have written texts that are used in graduate TESOL programs around the world.

## 2. Describe the target audience for the PDO.

The program is offered to qualified students around the world. The target market is working professionals seeking to acquire education or to upgrade their education and skills in the field of TESOL. For some participants, the program provides the stepping-stone for further studies in a doctoral program.

We generally only accept experienced teachers in the masters program. It is quite rare for individuals without experience to apply for and be accepted onto the course. Most of our students are working full-time, e.g., teaching in schools and institutions, offering private tutoring, or running their own language schools. A number of our students are already residing overseas or plan to travel or move during their program of study.

Anaheim University accepts adult students of all ages provided they meet our

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entrance requirements. The great majority of our students are between 25 and 50 years of age. Students have enrolled in the program from all over the world, but most are originally from English-speaking countries, particularly the US. A great number of these US citizens reside overseas.

Reasons students have given regarding their choice of online study include the following:

- The program provides the opportunity to study under world-renowned faculty who would be inaccessible in their geographical location.
- They desire to gain a degree from an accredited US university while residing overseas.
- They anticipate having to move to another state or country during their term of study.
- The program allows the students greater flexibility than a face-to-face program, given their existing substantial job and family commitments.
- They have previously studied online and wish to continue to do so.
- A graduate TESOL degree is not offered on-campus in their home area.

Over 35 students are enrolled in Anaheim University's MA-TESOL programs at the time of this writing.

### 3. Describe how you recruit students for your PDO.

Most marketing is conducted via the Anaheim University website and through word-of-mouth from either current students or graduates recommending our programs through student referrals. The University also establishes partnerships with Ministries of Education and other universities, both in the US and overseas, who introduce students to Anaheim University. For example, Anaheim University is currently training about 100 public school teachers under an arrangement with the Ministry of Education in Colombia, and has partnerships with California State University, Fullerton; Hanyang Cyber University, Korea; and Cyber Hankuk University of Foreign Studies, Korea.

The University is also increasing its presence at professional TESOL and Applied Linguistics conferences, including Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages association (TESOL International Association), the American Association of Applied Linguistics (AAAL), the California Association of Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (CATESOL), and the Korean Association of Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (KOTESOL). Advertisements are placed on select websites and in publications, such as *TESOL Quarterly*, and *TESOL Journal*. Anaheim University is also increasingly building a notable presence in social media, e.g., Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn.

The focus of our marketing is the high quality faculty, including five former presidents of the TESOL International Association. Anaheim University also stresses the diversity and global nature of the program, along with the program's ease of access, with teaching conducted via the Internet and weekly real-time HD webcam classes.

Anaheim University has developed its marketing strategy to reach as wide an international audience as possible while keeping its marketing costs to a minimum. By reducing marketing costs, the savings can be channeled towards developing student

scholarship programs, improving learning resources, and supporting faculty.

**4. Describe the curriculum choices made.**

Online delivery was chosen to provide students around the world the opportunity to study under some of the top TESOL faculty in the world. Anaheim University was able to go beyond the restriction of having to hire faculty who live within the standard commuting distance from campus and instead hire faculty based on their professional excellence and status within the field, regardless of their distance from Anaheim, California. Online delivery also offers the opportunity to provide a quality education to students who live in areas where an on-campus graduate level education in TESOL is unavailable. The major motivation in developing an online program back in the mid-1990s when the planning began was to reach a diverse student body of working TESOL professionals in different countries throughout the world.

The initial curriculum was developed by Dr. David Nunan, an author of teacher training and student textbooks for English language learners. Dr. Nunan is currently Vice-President for Academic Affairs and Dean of the Anaheim University Graduate School of Education. He was the President of Anaheim University from 2006 to 2008. In 2000, he served as President of TESOL.

In the years since the founding of the masters program, substantial modifications and additions have been made to the curriculum by new faculty members, including Professors Rod Ellis, Ruth Wajnryb, Kathleen Bailey, Martha Clark Cummings, Ken Beatty, Andy Curtis, and Fran Byrnes. Curriculum choices were guided by the prior experiences of faculty members in developing a wide range of similar programs, in both face-to-face and in distance mode. This PDO is not based on a previously existing face-to-face PDO.

The teacher-student ratio of 13:1 was based on numerous factors, including feedback from students and faculty. The feedback was provided through end-of-course questionnaires, as well as through research carried out by the administration and faculty into the optimal number of students per course, taking into consideration the limitations and benefits of the available technology.

In determining the courses that make up the curriculum, we were guided by a desire to provide a balanced offering among the educational, linguistic, and empirical foundations of language teaching. The courses are grouped as follows:

Educational foundations of language teaching
EDU500 Second language teaching and learning
EDU550 Classroom management and observation
EDU570 Classroom-based evaluation
EDU580 Second language curriculum development

Linguistic foundations of language teaching
EDU510 Grammar for language teachers
EDU520 Pronunciation for language teachers
EDU530 Discourse analysis for language teachers

Empirical foundations of language teaching

Second language acquisition
Research methods in language learning
Second language classroom research

Each of these courses runs for nine weeks – eight weeks of coursework followed by a non-lecture week for assignment preparation and submission. There is a one-week break before the next round of courses begins. Two courses are generally offered in any nine-week period. New students can enter the program at the beginning of these courses. Potentially, therefore, a given course could consist of students who are at any point in their course of studies, from beginners taking their first course to students nearing the end of their studies.

While this arrangement may appear to be somewhat messy in terms of pedagogical sequencing and integration, it has worked quite well in practice. As two courses are generally on offer in any nine-week period, one of these will be aimed at students who are at the beginning of their degree (for example, EDU500 Second Language Teaching and Learning), and one will be aimed at students who are at the mid- to end-point of their studies (for example EDU590 Research Methods in Language Learning). We have found that this arrangement provides maximum flexibility for students.

**5. Explain the PDO's over-arching goals and specific objectives.**

The over-arching goal of the program is to produce TESOL professionals who are autonomous, who subscribe to lifelong professional development and renewal, and who see themselves as part of a global community of TESOL professionals.

Upon completion of the MA-TESOL program, students will be able to:

(1) carry out a detailed literature review using relevant bibliographical resources from print and online resources;
(2) articulate current conceptual and theoretical trends, issues, and concerns in the fields of applied linguistics and language pedagogy;
(3) describe current research issues and concerns;
(4) design a range of curriculum modules, lesson plans, pedagogical materials, and assessment tools to meet a range of learner needs;
(5) summarize significant research findings in the field;
(6) evaluate and critique syllabuses, curricula, tests, and pedagogical materials;
(7) analyze samples of language from first and second language speakers using phonological, lexical, morphosyntactic and discoursal tools;
(8) design, implement, and evaluate two pieces of original research into language acquisition and/or use;
(9) devise and implement appropriate strategies for their own ongoing professional development; and
(10) design and use assessment procedures appropriate for the context, the age, and proficiency level of the second language learners, and the construct to be measured.

These objectives are further elaborated and refined for each of the ten courses that make up the core of the program.

**6. Describe the teaching and learning activities used in the PDO and what online applications are used to support these activities.**

Learning activities include the following:

- Real-time Online Classes: Classes are held at the end of each week and are ninety minutes long. The first hour is a professor-led discussion and the last thirty minutes are for student-led discussion. Participation is mandatory and counts toward the students' final course grades.
- Online Discussion Fora: Discussion topics are assigned each week. All students take part in these discussions, and it is the responsibility of selected student host(s) for the week to encourage students to actively participate.
- Video Lecture/PowerPoint: Some courses include video lectures, which students download from the University's online learning platform. These are frequently accompanied by a supplementary PowerPoint presentation.
- Written Assignments: Depending on the course objectives and subject matter, students typically complete two written assignments. The length of assignments varies according to the nature of the course and the aim of the assignment, but is generally around 1,500 to 2,000 words.

In addition to online instruction, there is face-to-face interaction at two required four-day residential sessions, which include presentations, discussions, lectures, and debates.

Students receive both qualitative and quantitative feedback from instructors. The qualitative feedback includes comments on their written assignments, their online discussion forum postings, and the proctored examinations. The quantitative feedback occurs in the form of points and a letter grade for graded course activities. Feedback occurs also during the live online classes.

The primary media of communication are the synchronous webcam classes and the asynchronous discussion fora. In addition to these official channels, many of the students set up their own informal social networks through email, Skype, Facebook, and so on.

**Synchronous Participation:**

Each course in the MA TESOL program includes real-time online HD webcam classes for eight of the nine weeks of the course. These classes allow for real-time high-definition video communication with professors and fellow students residing around the world. Although these classes use the latest that high-definition video webcam technology has to offer, students all over the world are able to access these resources with a simple Internet connection.

**Asynchronous Participation:**

Asynchronous interaction includes an online discussion fora. A weekly student host directs students to perform certain tasks as outlined in the online course guide.

All discussions are facilitated by the course professor, who helps to guide the students. The online discussion forum plays an integral part in AU's online programs by facilitating the out-of-class interaction among students that is necessary for the effective exchange of ideas. The online discussion forum ensures that learning and interaction do not end when the synchronous class session does.

**7. Describe how the PDO helps students understand the local contexts in which they are studying so that they can work together with others in the global context of your online PDO.**

Course participants have come from regions as diverse as Africa, Asia, Europe, and North and South America.

Many courses involve peer review procedures. For example, the participants in the classroom-based evaluation course develop an original language test. Before they pilot the test with students who represent the target population, they pre-pilot it with colleagues or classmates. This process typically leads to in-depth discussions of the course participants' own students' proficiency levels, language learning goals, various challenges, and so on.

The learning management system includes learner training components regarding intercultural communication in the online context. For instance, the introduction of a recently offered course provides the following guidelines to teacher trainees:

- Welcome differences of opinions. Take into consideration the fact that other students and faculty members may have different communication styles, learning styles, cognitive patterns, beliefs, and/or values than your own, and recognize that these differences help to diversify the program and contribute to the overall learning experience.
- Realize that it is sometimes more important to try to understand than to try to be understood.
- Provide feedback contextually, e.g., "From my perspective as a high school English teacher in Japan, I feel...."
- Be sensitive to the possible impact that your comments may have on other members of the community.
- Try not to assume too much. Attempt to clarify issues that are not clear to you before responding to the comments of others.
- Give fellow students, faculty members, and staff members the benefit of the doubt. Assume that their intentions are positive, or that there may be some factor that you are not aware of in a given situation.
- Be an effective communicator. Take into consideration the fact that the community consists of people from different cultural backgrounds and various native languages. Please make an effort to explain yourself in a way that will be understandable for all members of the community.

**8. Describe how the PDO helps prepare students for the local contexts in which they will work.**

One of the advantages of an online program is that students are able to complete their studies while living and working in their local contexts. They are therefore able to contest course input against the realities of their own professional contexts. Students work in a wide range of contexts, from elementary, through secondary, to adult education, and higher education in ESL and EFL, in both developing and developed countries. Through the discussion fora, the synchronous classes, and informal contact with one another via email and Skype, participants are able to share their experiences. In their informal feedback as well as their formal end-of-course evaluations, students commonly report that collaborative learning through membership of a global community of scholars is one of the great strengths of online

learning.

Despite these advantages, there are huge challenges in studying at a distance. Access to resources, particularly library resources, has been a perennial problem since the beginning of the program, a problem that is particularly pressing for those students who are completing a thesis and need to complete an in-depth literature review.

## 9. Explain the characteristics of the teacher educator(s) working in the PDO.

All professors are required to hold an earned doctoral degree and have extensive international teaching, publishing, and research experience. Anaheim University does not use tutors/teaching assistants in the MA-TESOL program.

While previous experience of teaching online is desirable, it is not required. The University offers its own online training program to introduce new faculty to the University's online learning platform and webcam technology. The University's TechSupport Department provides ongoing assistance to all faculty members, as well as to students.

Each new faculty member undergoes a one-on-one training session with a member of the University's TechSupport Department. In addition, each faculty member watches a "Making Classes More Interactive" video tutorial and PowerPoint presentation, and takes a follow-up quiz to check comprehension. In most cases, new professors sit in on online classes taught by more experienced professors, prior to teaching on their own.

## 10. Describe the non-teaching support staff in the PDO.

The ratio of students to support staff is 15:1. These support staff are responsible for:

- admissions advisement and processing;
- advisement of University policies and procedures;
- new student orientation;
- course scheduling;
- course registration;
- liaising with the University bookstore;
- processing tuition payment and refunds;
- processing proctored examination approval form;
- maintaining course records and filing of grades;
- processing student and faculty end-of-course surveys;
- assistance with course/program withdrawal;
- transcript services;
- graduation services;
- assistance with problem resolution; and
- technical support.

## 11. Explain the learning assessments used in the PDO.

From the commencement of the program, students were required to complete a masters thesis as the culminating experience. The thesis provides students with an opportunity to identify an issue or problem arising out of their prior coursework and/or their own professional experience. They then design and carry out an original piece of empirical research, and present the results in a substantial written report. Writing a thesis in a face-to-

face environment is challenging; it is even more so in a distance education setting.

Over time, in reviewing program completion rates, we realized that the single biggest impediment to graduating was the completion of a thesis. As a result, and to reflect current practices in MA programs worldwide, in 2011 we introduced a research portfolio as an alternative to the thesis. From 2012, students have had the choice of completing either a thesis or a research portfolio, depending on their educational and professional goals.

There is no teaching practicum. We generally only accept experienced teachers in the masters program, because we believe that a masters degree is a post- not pre-experience degree. The assumption is that those doing the degree will be teaching at the same time as they do the degree. During the course they are encouraged, and indeed expected, to apply the knowledge and skills they are acquiring to their daily teaching lives.

It is quite rare for individuals without experience to apply for and be accepted in the program. However, we do not have teaching experience as an entry requirement, as it then becomes a "Catch 22" for individuals who want to break into the field. The classroom management and observation course requires some contact with classroom instruction. Occasionally, we have experienced teachers doing the course who are not currently teaching and who, for various reasons (e.g., young children at home) have difficulty getting access to classrooms. In this case, we negotiate alternative options for them. There is no doubt that individuals with no experience whatsoever are at a disadvantage. However, as indicated above, there are ways of compensating for this lack, and we do our best to help them deal with this disadvantage.

Tools for measuring student outcomes vary according to the nature of the subject. Students are assessed through projects, assignments, contributions to the learning process (i.e., the discussion forum and online tutorial classes), and an appropriate number of proctored examinations appropriately spaced throughout the program of study.

Assignments vary in terms of their focus. Some are relatively cognitive in nature (for example, "carry out a critical analysis of a piece of published research"), while others are more practical (for example, "develop a curriculum module for a specified group of learners"). Assessable pieces of work and other evidence of learning are evaluated in terms of the established grading criteria and rubrics. The relative weighting given to these criteria varies according to the nature of the subject matter on which a given course is based.

As far as possible, assignments are designed to integrate theory, research, and practice. Initially, there were no formal examinations. However, accreditation through the Distance Education and Training Council brought with it a requirement to introduce proctored examinations in several courses.

**12. Explain the mechanisms used to evaluate the PDO.**

The following six steps summarize the procedures followed by Anaheim University in collecting, analyzing, and acting on assessment and evaluation data for quality assurance.

Step 1: Student learning outcomes

Faculty members review student learning outcomes and progress through a given course. The review includes all assessable pieces of work. Student achievement data are

fundamental to the quality assurance of the program, and are used as the point of departure for the overall evaluation of the institution.

Step 2: Student evaluation

At the conclusion of each course, students complete a student evaluation questionnaire. The questionnaire is completed online and includes both qualitative and quantitative questions. Responses are collated by the Student Services team and a summary is sent to the faculty members involved in teaching the course and the Dean/Chair of that faculty. Filtering the evaluations through Student Services is intended to ensure students' anonymity. Also, at any time, students can directly contact all faculty members and senior administrators, including the Chair, the Dean, and the President, to share observations or concerns about the teaching in their courses.

Step 3: Faculty evaluation

At the conclusion of each course, the professor (or professors in the case of a jointly taught course) submits to the Dean/Chair, copied to Student Services, a brief evaluation report on the course. This report need be no longer than a paragraph or two, and will summarize issues or problems that need to be addressed. These can include administrative and technical issues as well as any problems that arose in relation to any of the students on the course.

Step 4: Dean/Chair evaluation

The Dean/Chair reviews student and faculty evaluation data, and then reports to the President if there are any issues arising out of the course on which action needs to be taken.

Step 5: Annual Retreat

As part of the annual residential session held each year in the MA-TESOL program, the TESOL faculty members conduct a retreat. During the retreat, individual courses are reviewed, as is the program as a whole. Based on information yielded by Steps 1 – 4 above, the faculty members decide on modifications and revisions to (a) program objectives and curriculum, and (b) course objectives, content, instructional material, and assessments. These may be relatively minor (for example, adding or deleting specific program objectives) or relatively major (for example, replacing an existing course with a new one).

Step 6: Annual Report

An annual evaluation report on the program as a whole is provided by the Dean. This report is sent to the President, who subsequently distributes it to the Board of Trustees.

Anaheim University is nationally accredited by the Distance Education and Training Council (DETC), an accrediting commission established in Washington, DC in 1926. The Accrediting Commission of the Distance Education and Training Council is a recognized member of the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA). The DETC Accrediting Commission defines, maintains, and promotes educational excellence in distance education institutions, reviewing an institution's mission and objectives; student services; qualifications of administrators, faculty, and staff members; educational program objectives; curricula and materials; admission practices; and financial responsibility. The DETC is listed by the U.S.

Department of Education as a nationally recognized accrediting agency. Anaheim University operates in accordance with the requirements set forth by the Bureau for Private Post-Secondary Education for the State of California.

**13. Discuss the challenges involved in offering this PDO online.**

The University's online learning platform is user-friendly and TechSupport provides guidance as necessary, thereby minimizing the challenges to faculty members and students. Individual students with limited computer skills may face challenges as they begin the program, but generally these can be resolved quickly with one-on-one assistance from TechSupport. Increasingly, as most members of the population become computer-literate, there are fewer and fewer individually challenged students. The greatest technological challenges overall usually occur when the University introduces new technology to upgrade its online offering. As with all new processes, there is a learning curve and some students and faculty members require more guidance than others.

The most recent technology introduced was the use of high-definition webcams for the real-time online classes. The transition was extremely smooth and received very positive feedback from students and faculty members alike. The University credits this success to the rigorous testing conducted before the launch and the efforts of the TechSupport Department in guiding faculty members and students.

Anaheim University schedules its synchronous activities to provide greatest ease of access to the greatest number of its students. Therefore, these activities are mostly scheduled for early evening on Fridays in California, which is Saturday morning in Asia. Unfortunately, Friday evening in California is the middle of the night in Europe and Africa, which presents challenges to students from those areas. As enrollment increases in those geographical areas, additional synchronous activities could be scheduled at more convenient times for those students.

**14. Describe the successes of the PDO and explain how they are documented.**

Student satisfaction surveys are conducted at the end of each course and ask for feedback on the following: Students rate five factors on a scale of 1-10 (10 being the highest) and respond to questions 6-8 on a yes/no basis. They also provide open-ended feedback. Consistently, responses average in the top percentiles.

The University also conducts alumni surveys in line with accreditation and state approval requirements. These Anaheim University graduates are working as teachers in private and public schools and in universities, both in the US and overseas. Some work as operators of their own language schools. MA-TESOL Graduate Okon Effiong was honored with the Award for International Participation at the 46th TESOL Annual International Convention and English Language Expo.

Anaheim University has received various awards for its role in pioneering online education. Its administrators have been recognized within the US government and the University has received numerous medals at international innovation conventions. Dr. David Nunan received a congressional citation from the United States House of Representatives for his services to English language education through his pioneering work in online education at Anaheim University.

The international faculty includes some of the best known figures in the field. All of the faculty members have doctoral degrees. Their awards and notable achievements include teaching awards, prizes for professional books in the field of TESOL/Applied Linguistics, awards for service to TESOL International, publisher outstanding achievement awards, and former TESOL International presidents.