

Applied Linguistics Winter Conference (ALWC) 2016: A True Meeting of the Minds

by Anna Ciriani Dean

On March 5, the NYS TESOL community came together for the 37th Applied Linguistics Winter Conference at Teachers College, Columbia University. This year's topic, Meeting of the Minds: Interdisciplinary Approaches to Language and Education, invited experts with a diverse range of interests and backgrounds to join in conversation over common themes across TESOL and applied linguistics. And converse they did.

Thanks to the dedication of 20 committee members, 42 volunteers, and the NYS TESOL Executive Board, the conference successfully lived up to its title. With presenters from 26 institutions, hailing from seven U.S. states and four countries, and with seven enticing exhibitors, there was bound to be an animated exchange. As more and more attendees made their appearance throughout the day, for a total of about 175, the conversation took flight. Between presentations, workshops, and buzzing coffee breaks, everyone got their fill of new concepts, new methods, and certainly caffeine.

This openness to other perspectives and merging of theory and practice culminated in the plenary speech, delivered by Dr. Drew Fagan of the University of Maryland. Dr. Fagan's message was clear: We as educators must reconcile research findings with instructional realities, for a more rounded understanding of our mission and approaches. Regardless of one's background, this idea resonated with everyone in the room, making for a true "meeting of the minds."

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Photo 1: Two volunteers working at the registration table.



Photo 2: Presenter Cassandra Puls leading one of the morning sessions.



Photo 3: Conference attendees perusing the exhibitor tables.



Photo 4: Conference attendees listening carefully to a presentation.



Photo 5: A group of attendees collaborating in one of the workshops.



Photo 6: Dr. Drew Fagan giving his plenary speech in the afternoon.



Photo 7: Audience members listening attentively to Dr. Fagan's plenary.



Photo 8: A few (but not all) of the ALWC 2016 committee members at the end of a successful day. From left: Aklima Hossain-Joldic, Jordan Van Horn, Rocky Wood, Jean Choi, Allie Hope King, Hector González Álvarez, Yu Han Lin, Lilla Kim, Anna Ciriani-Dean.