

## **Report on an ILTA Proposal**

### **Proposal title: Establishing the NileTESOL “Testing, Assessment, and Evaluation” Special Interest Group**

This proposal requested funding for launching the NileTESOL “Testing, Assessment, and Evaluation” Special Interest Group (TEA SIG) in order to help address the current challenges associated with the culture of "testing" in Egypt and hopefully contribute to assessment reform attempts. It is envisioned that this community will be involved in a number of outreach activities for language teachers and professionals in Egypt, including assessment literacy workshops, a website for assessment literacy purposes, as well as a mailing list and social media tools to help this growing community of professionals to connect and share experiences.

We organized the launching event on January 29, 2013 as part of the NileTESOL annual conference. We invited two language assessment experts to give formal presentations as part of this event: Dr. Hanan Khalifa of the University of Cambridge Language Examination Services (UCLES) and Dr. Deena Boraie, Dean of School of Continuing Education at the American University in Cairo. About 30 participants attended the 3-hour launching event.

Dr. Khalifa talked about assessment in student-centered classrooms and she discussed different related terminology, such as assessment for learning, learning-oriented assessment (LOA) as well as frameworks which have influenced these concepts. Also, she addressed issues related to the role of the newly established SIG in developing assessment literacy in Egypt. Dr. Deena Boraie’s presentation focused on the mismatch between theory and practice in our assessment practices. She argued that assessment reform is unlikely to succeed unless assessment activities are aligned with learning theory.

Atta Gebрил and Elizabeth Arrigoni gave a presentation entitled “*Why do we need a professional organization for language testers in Egypt?*” The presentation focuses on why we need a professional organization for those interested in language testing. Also, they provided a detailed description of the goals of the TEA SIG and suggested activities that will be organized during this coming year. Upon finishing the presentation, they solicited feedback from the participants about the types of activities that they would like to the TEA SIG to organize. For a complete list of the presenters and topics, please see Appendix A.

Since this is the first SIG to be established under NileTESOL, changes had to be first be made to the NileTESOL Constitution during the General Assembly (GA) as described in Appendix B & C to allow for the creation of SIGs and their activities. It is now official that the TEA SIG is the first of its kind in the NileTESOL organization.

We have now finished developing assessment literacy materials and will be uploaded soon on the TEA SIG website. We also finished negotiations with the internet hosting company and the TEA SIG website should be up and running by the end of 2014. We are also planning to have two workshops during the Fall semester in two cities outside Cairo.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank the International Language Testing Association (ILTA) for their generous support without which this TEA SIG would not have been possible.

**Appendix A: Testing, Evaluation, & Assessment (TEA) SIG Agenda  
January 29, 2013 (CC P019)**

10:00-10:10	<p><i>Introduction</i> <i>Atta Gebril &amp; Elizabeth Arrigoni</i></p>
10:10-10:50	<p><i>Assessment in a student-centred classroom</i> <i>Hanan Khalifa</i></p> <p>In this presentation, features of a student-centered classroom are discussed. Also, the question of "what form should assessment take in student-centred classroom?" is addressed. In doing so, Dr. Khalifa will share emerging concepts such as assessment for learning and learning-oriented assessment (LOA) as well as frameworks which have influenced these concepts, namely, the CEFR. She will illustrate how LOA might play out in practice and what needs to be in place to drive the concept forward. Her last point touches upon the importance of assessment literacy leading to an informal discussion about the role the NileTESOL TEA SIG can play with regard to assessment literacy in Egypt.</p>
10:50-11:30	<p><i>Inconsistencies between current learning &amp; assessment theory &amp; practice</i> <i>Deena Boraie</i></p> <p>Discussions on education reform that focus on developing students' critical thinking skills and lifelong learning are meaningless. Change is unlikely to be achieved unless assessment practice is aligned with current learning theory. Dr. Boraie will discuss the inconsistencies between current learning and assessment theory and practice to show the way forward.</p>
11:30-11:45	<p>Break (refreshments &amp; snacks will be served)</p>
11:45-12:45	<p><i>Why do we need a professional organization for language testers in Egypt?</i> <i>Atta Gebril &amp; Elizabeth Arrigoni</i></p> <p>This presentation focuses on the current assessment practices in Egypt and the need for a professional organization for language testers in this context. In addition, the presenters will provide more information about the goals of the TEA SIG and the suggested activities that will be organized by this newly established body. Feedback will be solicited from participants about the types of activities that they would like to the TEA SIG to organize.</p>

**NileTESOL January 2014**  
**RATIONALE and IMPACT STATEMENT**  
**accompanying the amendment to establish SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS (SIGS)**

NileTESOL Special Interest Groups (SIGs), in keeping with the goals of NileTESOL itself, seek to provide members of NileTESOL with opportunities for professional development, networking, and scholarly discussion and debate within a specialist area of English Language Teaching. SIGs will promote active involvement and participation of interest NileTESOL members by offering opportunities for the exchange of ideas and expertise within a specific area of interest (such as Assessment, Young Learners or Professional Development).

SIGs will adhere to the objectives of NileTESOL as delineated by the NileTESOL Constitution, which are to:

- provide a professional forum for discussing and debating issues related to the teaching and learning of English and in English;
- provide opportunities for professional development to the members of the association and the profession at-large keeping them up-to-date with the latest developments in the field;
- encourage the development of research relevant to teaching / learning of English and in English;
- offer opportunities for networking among members of the association and other professionals;
- provide opportunities for professional service and leadership development within the ELT community;
- contribute to the continuous improvement of standards of the teaching of English and teaching in English.

SIGs will be expected to submit a yearly plan to the NileTESOL Board of Directors (BoD) about the events or activities they hope to offer SIG members, as well as a report that describes all activities and events taking place during the previous calendar year.

Any member of NileTESOL is eligible to join a SIG or to propose the establishment of a SIG to the BoD. Once a SIG is approved, the BoD may appoint a SIG leader for the first year, after which time, the SIG members will nominate and elect SIG leaders according to their by-laws.

NileTESOL cannot provide financial support to SIGs, but it will provide support in the following ways:

- Encouraging NileTESOL members to join SIGs of interest;
- Providing space to meet in at the annual NileTESOL Conference;
- Publicizing SIG events through NileTESOL channels such as the organization's mailing list, website, newsletter and Facebook page.

**Proposed amendment to the NileTESOL constitution  
to allow for the creation of Special Interest Groups (SIGs)  
(to be submitted to the general membership at the 2014 General Assembly, January 29, 2014)**

---

**Article 3**

Special Interest Groups (SIGs) of NileTESOL may be established at the discretion of the Board of Directors upon the request of such a group.

1. SIGs shall present a Statement of Purpose and a set of Bylaws to the Board of Directors for approval.
2. Once a SIG is organized it must provide a proposed action plan to the Board of Directors within two months after the Board of Directors approves its establishment. Thereafter, SIGs shall provide an annual report as well as periodic updates on their activities to the Board of Directors at the discretion or request of the president of NileTESOL.
3. NileTESOL will support SIGs in the following ways:
  - a. by providing free publicity of its activities through NileTESOL channels of information such as its mailing list, website and information space in the NileTESOL newsletter;
  - b. by encouraging membership of SIGs in various ways;
  - c. by allowing SIGs to have rooms in which to meet at the NileTESOL Annual Conference.
4. The NileTESOL Board of Directors may appoint a NileTESOL member to lead the SIG for the first year after the SIG is established and serve as liaison to the Board of Directors.
5. SIG members must be NileTESOL members.

NileTESOL Special Interest Groups (SIGs), in keeping with the goals of NileTESOL itself, seeks to provide members of NileTESOL with opportunities for professional development, networking, and scholarly discussion and debate within a specialist area of English Language Teaching. It is believed that SIGs will promote active involvement and participation by offering opportunities for the exchange of ideas and expertise within a specific area of interest (such as Assessment, Young Learners or Professional Development).

SIGs will adhere to the objectives of NileTESOL as delineated by the NileTESOL Constitution, which are to:

- provide a professional forum for discussing and debating issues related to the teaching and learning of English and in English;
  - provide opportunities for professional development to the members of the association and the profession at-large keeping them up-to-date with the latest developments in the field;
  - encourage the development of research relevant to teaching / learning of English and in English;
  - offer opportunities for networking among members of the association and other professionals;
  - provide opportunities for professional service and leadership development within the ELT community;
  - contribute to the continuous improvement of standards of teaching of English and teaching in English.
- SIGs will be expected to submit a yearly plan to the NileTESOL Board of Directors (BoD) about the events or activities they hope to offer SIG members, as well as a report that describes all activities and events taking place during the previous calendar year.

Any member of NileTESOL is eligible to join a SIG or to propose the establishment of a SIG to the BoD. Once a SIG is approved, the BoD may appoint a SIG leader for the first year, after which time, the SIG members will nominate and elect SIG leaders according to their by-laws.