

Chair's Report 2022-23

The last year has once again been a year where the BALEAP community has either been teaching mostly online, adopting a hybrid approach and since the new academic year been teaching face-to-face. Moving into the summer Pre-session courses this year many institutions are offering students the option of either attending in person or choosing an online option. This may also set a trend that will possibly continue in the future. Fortunately, given the experience we have all gained since the COVID epidemic of teaching online, this may prove to be less daunting than it was in the past.

Over the course of the last year, I have been busy with the handover from the previous Chair, Sarah Brewer, who has been incredibly supportive in helping me become familiar with all the necessary duties and expectations that come with the role. I am indebted to her for all her assistance and her patience. My focus has been on liaising with other Executive Committee members re events, the 50th Anniversary celebration at Manchester University, the upcoming biannual conference at Warwick University, the BALEAP JEAP news, the handover of the Treasurer role, reviewing the Membership fees and participating in the everyday emails that are take place between members of the Executive Committee.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

When Bella Reichard stepped down as Treasurer to take on a new job, we held elections for the role and Ben Brown took over from Bella in January 2021. We were fortunate in that Bella was able to work closely with Ben initially and then following the handover period Sarah continued to support Ben and myself as incoming Chair. I in turn continued to support Lai Blaj-Ward as the new Chair of the BALEAP Accreditation Scheme. As Sarah herself has mentioned before BALEAP is very fortunate to have dedicated and enthusiastic Executive Committee members who take on these volunteer roles in addition to daily jobs and often take up a significant amount of time.

The committee has continued to be exceptionally active over the last year and I have chaired our regular meetings (in June and November 2022 and one in March 2023) as well as a Financial Strategy meeting in September 2022. This meeting was an opportunity to review our financial planning, in particular the outlays needed to sustain ongoing activity related to funding membership projects, the SIGs, the TEAP scholarship and other TEAP activity and suggestions from the membership on new possibilities for funding.

WHAT'S IN A NAME

BALEAP was founded in 1972 as *SELMOUS* (Special English Language Materials for Overseas University Students) and changed its name to *The British Association of Lecturers in English for Academic Purposes* in 1989 and then to *BALEAP* in 2010 dropping the full name and meaning.

What many of us have noticed is that whenever we speak to people who are not familiar with BALEAP we find ourselves having to explain that it is no longer the full name that is in use, but only the acronym.

Since taking over as Chair of BALEAP I have been approached by many members asking – “When are we changing the name of BALEAP to reflect the strapline – The global forum for EAP professionals?”

As we are significantly updating and improving our website, this seems an appropriate time to consider a possible name change. We recognise that this is not a new topic and has been raised on numerous occasions. In August 2022 we sent out a survey to the BALEAP membership asking for initial thoughts and comments. The results of which were then shared and discussed further with four different focus groups:

1. BAS Assessors Focus Group
2. Directors Focus Group
3. International Focus Group
4. Individual Members Focus Group

The majority agreed that a change is due in terms of finding a suitable name that reflects what we do (and focussing in particular on the ‘B’ and ‘L@’ in BALEAP), but most felt that we need to keep the ‘EAP’ as part of the change. A much smaller number thought we should change EAP to Academic Education/Communication or Academic Literacies.

Although we have not committed ourselves to changing the name, we are keen to get further input from BALEAP members and there will be a session at the upcoming BALEAP conference where we hope to focus on an meaningful and appropriate name.

JEAP NEWS

Since the launch of the first eight BALEAP Special Interest Groups in 2020, SIGs have gone from strength to strength, and we now have three additional SIGs that were introduced in the last two years. BALEAP SIGs are proposed and run by BALEAP members to develop specific interests, to build on common experience, to share expertise and to meet the needs of the wide range of practitioners working in the field of EAP.

We now have eleven SIGs addressing:

- Academic Literacies
- Creative Disciplines
- Developing, Teaching and Testing Academic Listening
- Doctoral Education
- Law
- Social Justice
- Science, Technology, Maths and Engineering
- Teacher Education in EAP
- Technology Enhanced Learning
- Testing, Assessment and Feedback

- Transnational Education

Created during the period of lockdown, SIGs have become truly versatile and inclusive online communities with an international membership spanning time zones and geographical divides. To promote these, we invited individual SIGs to showcase their activities in instalments of the BALEAP news in JEAP. Thus far we have had Transnational Education, Law and Creative Disciplines, as well as one BALEAP news focussing on the biannual conference.

LIAISING WITH OTHER ORGANISATIONS

I am currently an inspector for Equals (<https://www.eaquals.org/>) as well as still an Assessor for the BALEAP Accreditation Scheme (BAS). BALEAP and Equals have signed a MoU and are having ongoing conversations about the possibility of doing a joint pilot assessment of an HE institution to see how feasible it is to do this and if successful it may lead to further future joint assessments.

CLiE

From Sarah's report last year: *In 2021 I was approached by the Chair of CLiE (Committee for Linguistics in Education - <https://clie.org.uk>) with a suggestion that BALEAP should be represented on the committee to give a voice to concerns relating to linguistics in Higher Education. CLiE is a joint committee of the Linguistics Association of Great Britain (LAGB) and the British Association for Applied Linguistics (BAAL) and as 'experts in language and how it works' recognised that many of their concerns were shared by language specialists in HE. Their aim is to make 'evidence-based comments on education policy, curriculum & assessments' and representation on the committee gives BALEAP an opportunity to contribute.*

I have now taken over as representative for BALEAP.

ELECTIONS

We held elections for several BALEAP Executive positions, and the results are as follows:

Web Officer (April 2023- April 2026): JOANNE RAYNOR

TEAP Officer (April 2023- April 2026): BEE BOND

Testing Officer (April 2023- April 2026): ANNA ZIOMEK

Ordinary Members (April 2023- April 2026):

- LAURA CONNOLLY
- NATASHA INGALL
- ANDREW HEWITT

The results for the second elected position for the Ordinary Member roles was a tie. As the rules and regulations of the BALEAP organisation do not give guidance in such a situation, the BALEAP Chair and Executive Committee have offered a position on the committee to both candidates. As a voluntary organisation, we are indebted to those who put themselves forward, and this has been seen as the fairest

result. I am sure our members will feel the same. In the unlikely event such a situation occurs in the future, we will be establishing written guidelines for similar contexts.

The SIG Officer role is still outstanding, and a call for nominations has been sent out.

FUTURE PROJECTS

- Website – developing a new website.
- Membership fees – revisiting membership fees.

ANNUAL TRUSTEES REPORT

This has been written for the period 1 August 2021 – 31 July 2022 and is presented here along with the accounts for this period.

Conrad Heyns
April 2023