

Plenary Speaker



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Kevin Anderson began his TESOL career in 2011 in Boston, Massachusetts, where he worked at a private language institute. In 2015, he moved to Doha, Qatar, where he taught at the Community College of Qatar until 2024. There, he taught foundation English and college composition courses while also gaining experience in educational management, assessment design, curriculum development, accreditation, and educational technology. In 2024, he joined the U.S. Department of State's English Language Fellow Program. During his first year, he was based at the Peradeniya National College of Education, where he taught general English and TESOL methodology. Now in his second year of Fellowship, he is based at Eastern University in Batticaloa. He holds master's degrees in TESOL and English Literature.

Fear of Peers: A Case Study of Speaking in the Sri Lankan Context

This paper examines the relationship between Sri Lankan students and the core skill of speaking English. Drawing on an informal needs analysis of 240 pre-service English teachers and American Corner students, the paper examines students' self-reported needs and emotional relationship with speaking in English. Results shed light on the demotivating factors associated with speaking in front of others. Moreover, the paper acknowledges the myriad challenges of assessing speaking but also highlights the need for educators to differentiate between speaking activities that prompt students to read out loud and activities that encourage students to interact extemporaneously.

Keywords: speaking; learner motivation; language anxiety; affective filter