

## A Field of Exciting and Diversified Opportunities: An Interview with Donna Brinton

Innhwa Park  
University of California, Los Angeles

Donna M. Brinton retired in November 2006 from her position in the Department of Applied Linguistics & TESL at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) to devote more time to her work in international teacher development. She currently serves as Senior Lecturer in TESOL at the Rossier School of Education, University of Southern California. Looking back at her invaluable contribution during the 27 years of service at UCLA, we come to appreciate the breadth and depth of her career. She served in the capacities of Academic Coordinator of the UCLA ESL Service Courses, Lecturer in Applied Linguistics, and Associate Director of UCLA's Center for World Languages. She is the co-author and co-editor of several professional texts including *Content-Based Second Language Instruction*, *The Content-Based Classroom*, *Teaching Pronunciation*, *New Ways in Content-Based Instruction*, *New Ways in ESP*, and *Heritage Language Education: A New Field Emerging*. She has also co-authored several English language textbooks, on-line content-based lessons for EFL learners<sup>1</sup>, and numerous articles in refereed journals and edited texts. For twelve years she also co-edited *The CATESOL Journal*.

Adding to this impressive list of professional achievements, she has conducted short-term international teacher training and program evaluation in Thailand, Vietnam, Myanmar, Korea, Japan, Taiwan, New Zealand, China, Canada, Mexico, Guatemala, Colombia, Bolivia, Argentina, Chile, Paraguay, Brazil, Israel, Senegal, Mali, South Africa, Mozambique, Madagascar, Mauritius, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Syria, Lebanon, Tunisia, Morocco, Libya, and Curaçao. Finally, with co-authors Marianne Celce-Murcia and Janet Goodwin, she recently completed the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition of *Teaching Pronunciation* and is currently working on the second edition of *The Structure of Modern English* (with Laurel J. Brinton).

In this interview, Donna reflects on her years at UCLA, her involvement with different projects such as teacher training and program evaluation, and her experience in material development. She also shares her thoughts on publishing and attending academic conferences. As someone who has held numerous significant roles such as lecturer, teacher trainer, educational consultant, and author, Donna gives insightful advice to current graduate students in the field of Applied Linguistics and TESL.

**Innhwa:** *I feel very fortunate to have had the opportunity to learn from you while you were teaching at UCLA, and to be able to have this continuing relationship with you. Thank you very much for doing this interview with us.*

**Donna:** It's my pleasure, Innhwa.

**Innhwa:** *First of all, I would like to ask you to briefly talk about your experiences at UCLA. What are some of the highlights? What did you enjoy the most while you were at UCLA?*

**Donna:** Okay, sure. I first came to UCLA as a student in 1976, and I began working as a faculty member as a lecturer and also as a coordinator of the media center in 1979. So it was a very long period of time that I worked at UCLA, and I was privileged to work with some amazing people while I was there. When I first started as a student and I was TAing, my graduate teaching supervisor was Kathi Bailey, who is one of the major names in the field, and I felt that that alone was a tremendous privilege. While I was at UCLA, as our department chair I experienced, Russ Campbell, who was a major mentor figure for me, Evelyn Hatch, John Povey, of course, John Schumann, who held that position for I think almost 14 years, and then at the very end Lyle Bachman, and I believe that Olga took the chair while I was still at UCLA.

**Innhwa:** *Right.*

**Donna:** So I saw different leadership styles, and I think that I also grew in terms of my ability to do administration, interacting with those various administrative styles. We had fabulous faculty when I was a student, and especially during my younger years at UCLA. Marianne Celce-Murcia, who was my major mentor figure, was the chair of my MA thesis. And then later I collaborated quite closely with her. I also collaborated very closely on a number of international teacher education projects with Russ Campbell.

So I would say of the faculty at UCLA, those are the two that I worked most closely with professionally. When I was a very young student still at UCLA, I worked quite closely with Diane Larsen-Freeman who was on our faculty. She was actually the original chair of my Master's thesis and then she left after my first year there, and I began working real closely with Marianne. Just about everybody who's anybody in the field came through UCLA in some capacity or another. In many cases, they came as visiting professors, people like Andrew Cohen, Kathi Bailey herself came back as visiting professor, Ann Snow, Michael Canale, probably a lot of names that you don't even know. And just the climate that generated, of knowing everybody in the field I think was really important.

Also when I was just beginning to work at UCLA, we had the opportunity to put together the first SLRF, Second Language Research Forum conference, and so we knew everybody who was doing the groundbreaking work in second language acquisition. We had brownbag lunches with Steve Krashen coming over from USC

to talk about his ideas, and Tracey Terrell coming and talking about his. And of course even the students that I studied with when I was an MA student at UCLA, Mike Long was a doctoral student, and I remember taking second language acquisition from Diane Larsen-Freeman with Mike Long in the classroom. It doesn't get any better than that.

**Innhwa:** *Definitely not.*

**Donna:** I mean you've got these ideas that are being batted around that you barely understand, but you know that you're really, truly in the presence of excellence there. So I think that I had female mentor figures like Marianne, Evelyn, Frances Butler, Mary McGroarty, and it was very important for me to see and learn from them. In terms of the male mentor figures, also what I think I learned was the generosity, the kind of academic generosity that these people had, the open door policy, "Hey, come on in. Sit down. Talk to me," that was Russ Campbell. And he and Marianne, of course, and really all of the other faculty members treated us as if we were their equals. I never felt that I was being treated as a graduate student, but more as a colleague. Russ used to call us "young teacher researchers." And, he truly meant that.

So those, I think, were probably the things that I enjoyed the most. The collegiality that was a part of our earlier years at UCLA. Us, graduate students, every week or two would organize a dinner on Friday and everyone was invited and we just would rove around L.A., having these dinners at different people's houses. We had end-of-the-year affairs, picnics, and wine tastings.

**Innhwa:** *That sounds great.*

**Donna:** And it was – it was a different era, of course. There was less pressure on people at the university and there were fewer budget crises.

**Innhwa:** *Since your retirement in 2006, I know that you've been involved with a lot of different governmental projects.*

**Donna:** I have.

**Innhwa:** *And I know very well that you've been traveling all over the world. Would you tell us about the range of projects you've been involved with?*

**Donna:** Sure. I actually started doing that type of work during summer months in the early 90s. The first government project that I ever did was in Thailand. Most of these projects are with the Department of State's Office of English Language Programs and I work as something called an English Language Specialist, which is a

position that you can hold from, it's a minimum of ten days and I believe a maximum of six weeks. And they fall into a number of categories. One type of assignment that you might have as an academic specialist is to simply attend conferences that are taking place and give talks at conferences. I have sometimes been on these kinds of lecture circuits in countries where I was either one of the main speakers or the plenary speaker of a conference, and might have also done several other talks at that conference. In that case, you're usually traveling around the country. You see eight or nine different cities in the country. And from the perspective of the sort of getting to see the country, that's fabulous. From the perspective of preparing for those, it's also good because you usually do three or four talks and you repeat them a lot of different times. However, that type of assignment is probably the least rewarding because you don't get to know people as well.

**Innhwa:** *True.*

**Donna:** A second type of project is where you are asked to do a specific project at a particular site. I think you know a little bit about the work that I did in Uzbekistan with Barry Griner. That was a two-year-long project where we were asked to work with the University of World Languages' IELTE program, which is the teacher preparation program for English teachers nationwide. It's the most regarded teacher preparation program within Uzbekistan. They brought us to help them with their English teaching curriculum and also to help with teacher development. As we got more familiar with the program, we broadened our aims based on our assessment of what they did, and included in that was also the opportunity to bring those faculty to the United States for a three-week intensive program here at UCLA. That's probably the single most rewarding project I've ever been involved with because we forged such close relationships with those teachers. I still am in touch with almost every single one of them.

Most of them had never been to an English-speaking country. So being able to bring them here to UCLA and hire the best people that I knew at UCLA to help them with the issues they had was great. For example, they wanted to work on their own pronunciation, and I was able to get Janet Goodwin to work with them on improving their own personal pronunciation of English as well as how to teach pronunciation. Yeah, so that was really very fun.

**Innhwa:** *I see.*

**Donna:** I guess the other thing that I've really enjoyed—you said "range of projects"—is the range of things that I have done, including also doing program evaluation. Last summer I was in Bolivia and I was asked to do an evaluation of one of the bi-national centers there. I've done that a couple of other places as well. And I just got back from South Africa, where I was trying to help them implement

content-based instruction at a bilingual university in Orange Free State. These experiences give me the kind of face validity as a teacher educator that I think is really important because I know what the issues are in places like Mali, Libya, Myanmar or Orange Free State.

**Innhwa:** *Right. You've done a lot of work in teacher training in the States and also in other countries. You mentioned that your work in Uzbekistan is one of the most rewarding experiences. What are some common challenges when working with different cultures, and perhaps different governmental systems? Can you recall any particular difficulties?*

**Donna:** Sure. I think the trickiest thing when you're doing international teacher education programs is probably assessing before you go what the likely level of expertise is going to be, so you don't pitch what you're doing either too high or too low.

**Innhwa:** *Right.*

**Donna:** Fortunately, when I worked for the U.S. Department of State, I'm usually in contact with a person who is called the Regional English Language Officer, and these are trained English language specialists who work for the government and they are able to give me that information that I need to plan effectively for the program that I'm going to be delivering.

**Innhwa:** *So they're the people who work for the government as well.*

**Donna:** They work under the Department of State, and there are a limited number of them scattered throughout the world. They're my primary contact people. So for example, this summer I'm going to Tunisia and I'm working with an English language officer who is based in Rabat, Morocco, whose territory is all of North Africa. She is probably one of the most qualified of the English language officers that I've worked with. I trust her implicitly, and she and I are already beginning to plan for that project.

**Innhwa:** *I see. It sounds like there is a lot of planning to do before you go.*

**Donna:** Yes, there's a lot of planning before you go. Now sometimes when I'm working on projects that aren't State Department funded, I may have less pertinent information that's given to me. For example, when I went to South Africa just recently, I only had one contact person at the university there, and I took that opportunity to ask her as many questions as I could. And fortunately, since she was attending TESOL, I was able to meet her before I actually went to South Africa, so that ended up being a very good process.

**Innhwa:** *Right.*

**Donna:** In terms of pitching what you do, sometimes there is also the issue of English language proficiency that you have to deal with, because although these are teachers of English, depending on which country we're talking about, they may or may not be terribly proficient themselves. To give you an example, I worked in West Africa with a project involving teachers of English in the Islamic schools, and basically if you speak a few words of English and you teach in an Islamic school, you become the English teacher. And it's then very difficult to do methodological training of people, who are struggling to understand, what it is you're telling them about such as communicative language teaching or assessment or program standards. I believe that takes a certain amount of expertise to be able to do that.

**Innhwa:** *For sure.*

**Donna:** But on the other hand, those are fascinating people to work with because they're like sponges. They need everything, they want everything, and they're just tremendously receptive to what you do. So I probably had more fun working with my 25 participants in Mali and Senegal than I've had anyplace else.

And then the opposite extreme of that is going to a country where there's already been a lot of expertise sort of brought in from the outside, and I've literally had, you know, teachers tell me, "So, you know, who are you? Why are you here?" And I would prefer not to go to those countries—not because I care so much about the attitude of the teachers, but I want to be someplace where what I'm doing is useful to the teachers. So from that point of view, I loved being in West Africa, and I loved the work that I did in Argentina, Chile, Bolivia, Thailand, and Libya. I was four weeks in Libya, and they hadn't had English language training from the U.S. perspective for over 30 years because the country had been very closed. We just recently established an embassy there again.

**Innhwa:** *That must have been very rewarding.*

**Donna:** Yeah. Yeah. So those were very interesting experiences.

**Innhwa:** *You've also been to Korea, where I come from. I had such a wonderful experience attending your seminar this past winter at Sogang University in Korea. Would you tell us a little bit about your visit to Korea?*

**Donna:** Sure. I've had several different projects in Korea. The original one was with Russ Campbell, working with middle school teachers who had won a national competition. We had 50 teachers who were being funded by a private language school. They were so excited to learn, and they were extremely open to everything

that we had to say to them. So that was a fabulous experience.

And then more recently I evaluated middle school instruction and the needs of middle school teachers in the province surrounding Seoul. That was also a fascinating experience.

**Innhwa:** *Now, I would like to ask you about your experience in material development. You have published many different types of ESL teaching materials throughout your career. I believe that many graduate students in the department will be curious to know how you got started with the process.*

**Donna:** How did I start... I actually started as a TA at UCLA. I was teaching the very beginning level class through UCLA extension. It was the pre-university class in the evenings offered through UCLA extension. This was back in the late '70s. And there were not very appropriate materials at the time. I just remember wanting to teach this course more effectively.

And it was Marianne who introduced me to another one of her former students, Regina Neuman. She said, "I think the two of you should sit down and talk because you've both been developing materials that would be useful for students at that level." And we had what at the time was a kind of revolutionary idea, which was to use a sort of soap opera plot for this pre-academic text and to take photos of real people and create these situations between real people. So we took photos of all of our friends and they became the characters in the book.

**Innhwa:** *I see.*

**Donna:** And they did things that normal people did. This was one of our reactions to the materials at the time, which had Mr. and Mrs. Perfect America with their perfect family and the family dog living in Centerville, U.S.A. and things that we didn't feel our students could relate to at all. And so we were told early on by people, "That's a great idea to publish a textbook, but you don't know how hard it really is." But when we sent the materials off to three publishers, we got an immediate response from Prentice Hall saying, "We're interested in doing these materials," and we ended up signing a contract and publishing this book. It was a two-volume text which I think makes more money than any other text I've ever written. Seriously.

**Innhwa:** *Really? That was a good start then.*

**Donna:** Yeah, it was a good start. It got adopted as a textbook by Puerto Rico. An adoption is a big thing for ESL teaching materials, and it did quite well. It's been out of print for a number of years now, but that gave me the necessary confidence

to think of myself as somebody who could write materials and publish them.

**Innhwa:** *Right.*

**Donna:** The second project also had to do with work I was doing at UCLA. These were teacher resource or teacher training materials. I started, I believe in 1978 or '79, teaching in a program called Freshman Summer Program here at UCLA. It was a program for high-risk entering freshman students who had been identified by UCLA as probably not able to make it through their freshman year because of their language skills. This had nothing to do with ESL. This was actually based on admissions data. Also figuring in, I think, socioeconomic data. These were mostly first generation college attendees. And the group that I began working with were all second language speakers of English. So they were placed into an ESL course.

The revolutionary thing at the time was that we were linked to a content area course, in my case *Introduction to Psychology*. But remember, this was back in the late 1970s, where this hadn't been done or attempted. And I was very fortunate to have another teacher that I worked with, Ann Snow. We collaborated a lot, sharing ideas on how to do this effectively, how to throw away all of our existing textbooks and really work to teach language through these content materials. And after our first summer of doing it we said, "This is what we think we should've been doing all along. This is so much more meaningful to the students." And we were already sort of converted to this new idea and we started thinking about presenting. We put in some abstracts to TESOL, but we also started thinking sort of halfheartedly writing up some description of what was then called the adjunct model.

**Innhwa:** *I see. So this is when the adjunct model began.*

**Donna:** Yes, this is when the adjunct model began. And we heard from Evelyn Hatch and then also from Marianne Celce-Murcia that there was a person we needed to meet at the University of Ottawa who was doing the same thing we were doing. So we were introduced to her at a TESOL conference in New York City, Mari Wesche. And we started talking to her and she said, "Oh, absolutely. That's exactly what I'm doing. By the way, I have a sabbatical coming up and I'm looking for a place to do my sabbatical. Do you think that I could come to California and maybe we could start writing some materials?" and that's what happened.

Again, we were told, "That's a whole different type of thing, to publish materials for teacher resource materials." When we put together a prospectus, and I think maybe a chapter or two, and sent it off to a publisher, it got back sort of fairly negative reviews saying, "Never heard of this approach" and "Doesn't hold much promise for the future. Content-based instruction, never heard of it." But we had a second publisher that we then sent it off to and the second publisher said, "We like this

very much and we want to publish it.” And so that’s how that book came about.

And then I also was beginning to work on journal editing. I was asked to be one of the advisory board members for the *CATESOL Journal*, which is our state affiliate journal. After serving a very short time on the advisory board, the then co-editor resigned and I was asked to come on as co-editor. So I ended up spending something like maybe 12 years or 14 years of my life editing the *CATESOL Journal*, and that I think also was very instrumental in helping me with my own writing skills. It gave me a very broad view of the field, an understanding of the writing process, and the mentoring process. So I think that was also a formative kind of influence on me.

From then on it’s just sort of been projects come to me or I think up projects and bring other people on board. Mostly in my case, they’ve been teacher resource types of texts, such as *Teaching Pronunciation* or *Content-Based Second Language Instruction*. We also worked on Heritage Language Education fairly recently in honor of Russ Campbell. I’ve also done a few ESL projects, like the Insights text that we did as an ESL faculty at UCLA, and that was also a very interesting experience in sort of getting our ideas about what we think is good instruction translated for others to see.

**Innhwa:** *Right. That reminds me of the highly anticipated new edition of Teaching Pronunciation that you’ve been working on with Marianne and Janet. I believe that the new edition of the book is coming out soon.*

**Donna:** 2010 we think, we’re told.

**Innhwa:** *I see. Can you tell us about the revision process? What were the major changes that you wanted to incorporate as you revised the book?*

**Donna:** Sure. I actually think I should say the three of us were dreading being asked to revise this book. Like we would joke that hopefully it will just die a natural death and we wouldn’t be asked to do a second edition of the book, not because we don’t think it’s a good book. It’s actually a book I’m very proud of and I’m very proud to have worked with Janet and Marianne on that book, but it was a huge project to begin with. We were told initially, because it’s this sort of two-in-one approach, it’s what you need to know about teaching pronunciation, the sort of foundational knowledge and how to teach it. And we were told that’s just too big of a job for anybody to do. It’s actually why I got brought on board as the third author of that text, because Marianne and Janet were feeling that it was too big of a project for the two of them.

It was published in 1996 I believe, and so the primary changes that we wanted to

make were to update it and bring it more in line with what is known about teaching pronunciation today. Primarily in the area of intonation, there's been a huge amount of research. And we felt that that section of the text was very out-of-date and just sort of an embarrassment to the field. Much research has been done since that time, bringing more of a discourse orientation in general to the teaching of pronunciation.

Just yesterday, I was talking on the phone with one of my colleagues at San Francisco State and he said, "Yeah, Donna, that new directions chapter, that really doesn't read like new directions anymore." And I said, "Yeah, we actually changed the title of that because we decided that five years from now or ten years from now, we don't want that same thing to happen." So I think bringing it more in line with what is known today was our goal. We also wanted to make people aware of a whole wealth of new resources that are out there, especially online resources.

One of our reviewers, who did a fabulous job of reviewing the text said she felt that one of the weaknesses of the current text first edition was that we had felt compelled to create all the activities ourselves, and she said, "Why don't you think about getting the rights to some very exciting activities from existing pronunciation textbooks and then using those as examples of what can be done to teach certain aspects of pronunciation effectively?" And I think that was maybe one of the best suggestions that we got from reviewers, because of course the three of us have some good ideas about how to teach pronunciation, but we also want to introduce the beautiful books that are out today that have great ideas for teaching pronunciation. So the new edition will have a lot of authentic samples from pronunciation textbooks and even some multi-skills textbooks that are out there on the market. I think it will make the text look more authentic as well.

**Innhwa:** *That sounds great. I look forward to reading the new edition. You've mentioned throughout the interview that you keep in contact with numerous colleagues from all around the world and that you run into them at conferences such as AAAL or TESOL. I know that you are very active in attending and presenting at different conferences. What do you enjoy the most about going to those conferences? Do you have any suggestions as to how us, graduate students, can benefit the most from attending those conferences?*

**Donna:** I've been accused of being one of those people who mainly goes to conferences to network, and I think I am guilty as charged. The thing that I get the most out of at conferences is interacting with people. And since I spent 27 years of my life at UCLA, you can imagine that there are numerous students that I know who went through UCLA and finished an MA or a PhD. At any given conference I attend, there are probably 50 or 60 of those people that I want to catch up with and talk to. In many cases, those people have become my collaborators on projects or

they were collaborators in the past. I also truly enjoy going to the exhibits at conferences since I am so really involved in materials development. I literally spend a lot of my time just going around and looking at what is out, talking to publishers about what they're interested in seeing, and talking to authors that I know about what projects they're doing and the new trends that they see. And I would say that I probably do spend more time doing that than actually attending sessions.

When I go to smaller conferences where I know fewer people, and I've lately been to a lot of those kinds of conferences like MEXTESOL or RELC (Regional English Language Centre) or Argentina TESOL, I spend a lot more time going to sessions simply because there are sessions that I would never have a chance to see at TESOL or CATESOL or AAAL. And AAAL I have sort of a different strategy, because AAAL is a little further from my area of interest and expertise, so I tend to use AAAL as an opportunity to really educate myself. I go to more sessions there than say I might at TESOL. TESOL is my major networking event. And then lately, for example, I went to a conference in New Zealand that had no concurrent sessions. And that was marvelous because you were forced basically to sit and listen to every talk at this conference, and many of them on topics that I would have never chosen to go to. But it formed this wonderful sort of coherent group of people that talked to each other about all sorts of issues, and I really valued that.

So in terms of advice for people, I think don't undervalue the networking aspects of the conference. I told my recent students to volunteer at conferences because this is how you meet all the big-name people. My current students actually volunteered at the regional CATESOL, and they said they met all these names of people that they'd been reading about, and they said that was invaluable for them. So I think that's a really important one.

Also, don't be afraid to approach people and introduce yourself and talk to them. At TESOL this year, I had a woman who came to one of my sessions and said, "I'm doing doctoral research on language across the curriculum, and I'm wondering if we could find an hour for me to interview you as part of my study?" And it was a fabulous conversation and I enjoyed that more than probably any other aspect of TESOL this year, just this chance to hear what she'd been doing. So get to know people that you might not otherwise get to know, and just pick several things that you know nothing about, so that you can use it as an opportunity to educate yourself.

**Innhwa:** *That's great advice. I should definitely attend more sessions that I know less about.*

**Donna:** Right.

**Innhwa:** *You wear many different hats as a teacher, teacher trainer, material developer, author, supervisor, evaluator, and so on. This might be a hard question to give an answer to. Could you pick one thing that you enjoy the most, or are they all related in one way or another?*

**Donna:** I tend to think they're all related although my teaching ESL or EFL is pretty much in the past. I don't do a lot of that anymore. However, without having done that, I wouldn't be able to do the kind of teacher education programs that I do, I wouldn't have the face validity as a practitioner that I do, I wouldn't be able to develop materials as effectively as I am able to, and a lot of the teacher training that I do or the work that I do for say State Department involves things like evaluating programs or simply doing teacher observation.

**Innhwa:** *Right.*

**Donna:** The recent trip to Korea, where I went into middle school classrooms and observed the Korean teachers teaching their lessons gave me tremendous insight into the needs that Korea has in terms of implementing its new policy of Teach English in English. The TEE policy. And so it is all part of a bigger package. I think what we used to say in the department was that we had this sort of teacher practitioner model of working with the TAs, where those of us who taught the teacher education classes had one foot in the language classroom and one foot in the teacher training classroom. And that's what made our program as successful as it was, that we could also invite people to come into the classrooms where we were teaching and have them see really truly experienced and excellent teachers at work and then translate that into the curriculum that we were designing and the materials that we were developing. So I think that's really important. I don't know if I can say I enjoy any one of those the most.

**Innhwa:** *Is there any areas that you would like to get more involved with?*

**Donna:** Well, I think more recently I've been doing more evaluation of programs. In my earlier career, I think I was more known as a methodologist, and therefore, I was asked to lecture about methodology or about how to teach pronunciation or about how to implement content-based instruction or just sort of more general what is communicative language teaching. And then I started getting these requests to do things that were more sort of program evaluation related. I did an evaluation of BYU (Brigham Young University), Hawaii's TESOL program, and USC's Rossier School program. I did several evaluations of bi-national centers that were having difficulty, the evaluation of the language situation in Korea, which was a much larger scope, the evaluation component of the Uzbek four-year undergraduate TESOL program, and then this upcoming evaluation of the language village in Tunisia. So I like that a lot.

I think that that's where I can bring all these hats together because you're looking at the actual classroom teaching, you're looking at the training that the teachers get, you're assessing the materials that they're using and their evaluation instruments. You're also looking at whether or not they're being supervised, how they as teachers are being evaluated. I feel like I'm in my more mature years, and I'm positioned pretty well to do that.

**Innhwa:** *Definitely. After making such evaluations, do you often get to see the changes being implemented?*

**Donna:** Depends on the project, I think. For example, this Korea one I'm not sure that I'll go back and I'm not sure that I'll see what happens with that. But certainly BYU, Hawaii, they continue to keep me involved. With the Rossier school I've actually voluntarily been working with them to help redesign their curriculum. So I'm definitely seeing very concretely what our evaluation team, it was a team of three, recommended being implemented. They took it tremendously seriously and they're really trying to figure out how they can improve their program as a result of that.

**Innhwa:** *That must be very rewarding.*

**Donna:** That's very rewarding. And it's actually been a lot of fun, just working with the faculty there.

**Innhwa:** *Last but not least, what would be your word of wisdom for graduate students who are interested in having their careers in Applied Linguistics and TESL?*

**Donna:** I think making yourself as diversified as possible goes against the current in a sense that when you're in a PhD program and you're having to make your way through that difficult process of finishing up the doctoral dissertation. You're sort of forced into this very narrow channel, and that's a necessity. It's hard to be thinking very broadly if you have to focus and finish up on what it is you're doing. But I think that what I've seen with a lot of our former students when they emerged from that process is that they began to think of themselves as "This narrow channel is me." That I think is disastrous in terms of today's job market, because to rule out the other things that are a part of our profession is to rule out possibilities. And because I'm in touch with so many of our former UCLA students through professional organizations or just through personal contacts, I know that many of them are involved in a whole range of things totally unrelated to the topic of their MA thesis or doctoral dissertation.

**Innhwa:** *Right.*

**Donna:** That's not to say that your doctoral dissertation and your research focus aren't important, and many people do make that their life's work. But I think that it's really important to realize that our field, being as small as it is, is one in which the more diversified you are, the better you're going to be able to find interesting possibilities for yourself.

**Innhwa:** *Right. I believe that's great advice for myself.*

**Donna:** Yeah. I think it's also sort of tempting to say, "I only now do research-type of work and I'm no longer interested in practice." You probably know my views on that, which are that research certainly informs practice. It's a very important thing. But I think practice also informs research, or should.

**Innhwa:** *For sure.*

**Donna:** And I think the more that we sort of bifurcate, the more dangerous it is, and I've seen that in many university programs. Think more broadly about what you could do in the future and how you could keep your research interests, but also parlay those into other areas of our field.

Our field is a very rich field and it gives us a lot of possibilities. You look at the things that I've done and I've done a whole wide range of things. That's because I've always sort of not translated myself as "I only do content-based instruction." Well, no, I actually do pronunciation and methodology and all these other things. And I'm glad that I do.

**Innhwa:** *Right. Research and practice go hand in hand.*

**Donna:** I believe they do, yeah.

**Innhwa:** *Donna, thank you so much for doing this interview with IAL. It's been an honor for me, and I look forward to talking to you again in the near future.*

**Donna:** You're so welcome. We will most definitely do that.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> <http://exchanges.state.gov/english/teaching/resforteach/ejournals/language-and-life-sciences.html>

## REFERENCES

- Brinton, D. M., & Neuman, R. (1982). *Getting Along: English Grammar and Writing*. Books I and II. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall.
- Brinton, D. M., Snow, M. A., & Wesche, M. (1989). *Content-Based Second Language Instruction*. Boston, MA: Heinle & Heinle.
- Brinton, D. M., & Master, P. (Eds.). (1997). *New Ways in Content-Based Instruction*. Washington, DC: TESOL.
- Brinton, D. M., Kagan, O., & Baucus, S. (Eds.). (2007). *Heritage Language Education: A New Field Emerging*. New York: Routledge, Taylor, & Francis.
- Brinton, L. J., & Brinton, D. M. (forthcoming). *The Structure of Modern English: A Linguistic Introduction* (2nd ed.). Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Celce-Murcia, M., Brinton, D. M., & Goodwin, J. (1996). *Teaching Pronunciation: A Reference for Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Celce-Murcia, M., Brinton, D. M., & Goodwin, J. (with Barry Griner). (2010). *Teaching Pronunciation: A Reference and Course Text* (2nd ed.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Frodesen, J., Holten, C., Jensen, L., & Repath-Martos, L. (1997). *Insights: A Content-Based ESL Text for Academic Preparation*. Books 1 and 2. White Plains, NY: Addison Wesley Longman.
- Master, P., & Brinton, D. (Eds.). (1998). *New Ways in ESP*. Washington, DC: TESOL.
- Snow, M. A., & Brinton, D. M. (Eds.). (1997). *The Content-Based Classroom: Perspectives on Integrating Language and Content*. White Plains, NY: Addison Wesley Longman.

**Inhwa Park** is a doctoral candidate in the Department of Applied Linguistics at the University of California, Los Angeles. Her research interests include discourse and conversation analysis, institutional interaction, and pedagogical discourse. She is currently studying question-answer sequences in pedagogical discourse using a conversation analytic framework.