

An Interview with Dr. William Grabe

Kristen di Gennaro, Rebekah Johnson

Editorial Board members Kristen di Gennaro and Rebekah Johnson recently had the pleasure of speaking extensively with Dr. William Grabe, the guest speaker at the 2006 APPLE Lecture sponsored by the Programs in TESOL and Applied Linguistics at Teachers College, Columbia University.

Dr. Grabe is Professor of English at Northern Arizona University, where he teaches in the Applied Linguistics Program as well. A regular speaker at international conferences, such as TESOL and AAAL, Dr. Grabe served as President of the American Association of Applied Linguistics from 2001-2002. His research interests include second language reading, writing, and literacy, among other topics. His 1996 book with Robert Kaplan, *Theory and Practice of Writing: An Applied Linguistics Perspective* (Longman), is essential reading for anyone interested in second language writing. His more current research interests include written discourse analysis, and literacy with recent publications *Teaching and Researching Reading* (Longman, 2001), co-authored with Fredricka Stoller, and a compilation of essays co-edited along with other former students of Robert Kaplan, *Directions in Applied Linguistics* (Multilingual Matters Ltd., 2005). He has also served as Editorial Director of the *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*.



We thank Dr. Grabe for graciously talking to members of our Editorial Board and K. Philip Choong for his technical assistance on the recording of the interview.

Click on each of the questions below to watch the interview.

1. [How did you first become interested in the topics of L2 reading, writing, and literacy?](#)
2. [According to some, reading and writing are two aspects of the same construct, perhaps the construct of composing ability. Would you agree with this perspective?](#)
3. [What do you believe is the first step for L2 learners of English in building reading skills? Is it building a large vocabulary base, reading extensively, or something else?](#)
4. [When it comes to developing L2 writing skills, what would you recommend teachers focus on with beginning and intermediate writers?](#)
5. [You have written that many teachers rely on things that “work for them,” rather than turning to reliable evidence in the research supporting particular instructional practices. How do you suggest teachers blend their own experiential knowledge with significant findings in research on reading and writing theory, assessment, and instruction?](#)
6. [Do you think online media will greatly alter our current construct definitions of reading and writing? If so, how? What will this mean for future teaching and assessments of these skills?](#)
7. [As you describe in your review of L2 writing theory and practice, L2 writing models are derived in part from L1 writing research and theory-building. How might L1 writing](#)

theory and practice benefit from greater awareness of the research by their colleagues in L2 writing?

8. Some L2 writing researchers have proposed different standards or assessment criteria for L1 and L2 writers. Do you agree with separate sets of criteria for these two types of writers? If so, how might such criteria differ?
9. In this era of increased standardized testing (or increased uses of standardized tests) at all levels of education, K-12 and Higher Education, what do you see as the role of TESOL and its affiliate organizations in supporting or resisting such tests and uses?
10. As President for AAAL, you initiated the Fund for the Future of Applied Linguistics, the aim of which is to fund student attendance at the AAAL conference. What advice would you offer TESOL and AL students who want to pursue research on L2 reading and writing theory or assessment?
11. What are your most recent research interests? Are there any articles, chapters, or books we can look for in the near future?