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# Soo Hyon Kim Assistant Profess of English (COLA) travels to New Zealand

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## Soo Hyon Kim

### Assistant Professor of English

In November 2015, I traveled to Auckland, New Zealand to present a paper at the 14<sup>th</sup> Symposium on Second Language Writing. *The annual symposium, since its inception in 1998, has been devoted to moving forward the field of second language writing and encouraging interdisciplinary collaboration among scholars situated in fields such as applied linguistics, composition and rhetoric, education, and foreign language studies. The symposium is typically held at an international conference site every other year; for example, in past years, it has been hosted at universities in Japan, Spain, Taiwan, and China (<http://sslw.asu.edu/>).* This year, the symposium was hosted at the Auckland University of Technology and was organized around the theme: *Learning to write for academic purposes: Advancing theory, research and practice.*

The title of the talk I gave at the symposium was "Mixed Methods Research in Second Language Writing." It was a report on my on-going research efforts to shed light on the methodological practices in the field of second language writing. Because second language writing researchers investigate complex issues encompassing texts, writers, and discourse communities, they frequently conduct mixed methods studies that combine both quantitative, numeric data as well as qualitative, narrative data. An important problem, however, is that there has been little—if any—explicit discussion about the effective use of mixed methods. I addressed this problem in my talk, pointing to possible ways that the second language writing research community could integrate quantitative and qualitative research approaches and tools to better capture the complexity of the issues that we study in the field.



Brochure for 2015 Symposium on Second Language Writing in NZ



Prof. Kim speaking at the symposium

Another important goal I had for attending the symposium, aside from giving my presentation, was initiating research collaborations with scholars from other institutions that have also seen a dramatic increase in the number of incoming international students, as UNH has in the past few years. As the TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) Coordinator in the Department of English, I have been exploring ways that UNH can better prepare international students for higher level academic writing courses in the University writing program and other writing intensive courses in their majors. At the symposium, I was able explore potential collaborations with scholars from several institutions with expertise in conducting needs analyses for Intensive English Programs in university settings. I plan to build upon these conversations to find ways to help international students at UNH successfully integrate into the fabric of the University both in terms of their academic work and acculturation.

After the conference, I had the opportunity to visit the Maori Cultural Center in Rotorua which preserves and showcases the cultural heritage of the Maori, the indigenous people of New Zealand. Particularly memorable was participating in a *pōwhiri*, a traditional ceremony to greet visitors to the Maori Village. Learning about the history of the Maori, their traditional customs, and the Maori language was another opportunity to reflect on the vital role of language learning and teaching in cultural exchange, international collaboration, and mutual understanding.

I am grateful for the generous support I have received from the Center of International Education and the English Department which made it possible for me to attend and present at the Symposium on Second Language Writing. Presenting at the conference allowed me to meet with *second language writing specialists from all over the world, to discuss important issues surrounding second language writers in educational and professional contexts. Presenting at the symposium also served as an opportunity to share my research and enhance its visibility, as well as establish ties and potential collaborations with scholars across various institutions with the goal of findings ways to meet the emerging areas of need at an increasingly international UNH.*



Sculpture at Maori Village in New Zealand



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