

IV National Encounter for Innovation in Language Teaching: Navigating Challenges

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Speaker Bios

Anderson Cárdenas



Bio: Anderson Marcell Cárdenas holds a master's degree in English Language Teaching with an Emphasis on Autonomous Learning Environments and an ICELT from Cambridge University. He has been an academic consultant for SED Bogotá and the British Council, helping public and private institutions design, implement, and evaluate bilingual programs. He was also the head of the international test center at Centro Colombo Bogotá, coaching teachers and test-takers on test-taking skills.

Andrés Bernal



The Language Proficiency Company

Bio: Mr. Bernal is the Global Alliances Director at Avant Assessments. With over 20 years in education, including more than 8 years as a school leader, he directed a second-language program in South Carolina serving over 26,000 students, inspiring linguistic and cultural growth. He led initiatives to close the performance gap in ESOL programs, with exiting rates up 150% in three years, and expanded South Carolina's Bilingual Literacy Seal for Spanish, Mandarin, French, German, plus a dual-language immersion program.

Andrés Becerra



Bio: Andrés Becerra is a Normalista Superior with a bachelor's in Language Teaching (English & Spanish) and an MA in Technology & Innovation for Education. He has 17 years as an English teacher, academic coordinator, and curriculum designer in Colombia. He holds diplomas in Education & Mass Media and in Education & Virtuality. He currently works as Academic Consultant for Pearson Education in Colombia & Ecuador, specializing in ELT methodologies and innovative curriculum processes.

Andrés Felipe López



Bio: Andrés Felipe López is an ELT professional with over 10 years in bilingual education, curriculum development, and leadership. He holds a degree in Modern Languages from Universidad del Quindío and is pursuing an MA in Cultural Studies at Pontificia Universidad Javeriana. He's currently Professional Learning & Development Consultant for Cambridge University Press & Assessment in Colombia.

JoEllen Simpson



Bio: JoEllen Simpson has served as General Director of the Centro Cultural Colombo Americano de Cali since 2004 and will retire this year. She holds a PhD in Linguistics from the University of Florida and has been a professor in the MA in TEFL at Universidad ICESI since 2014. Her research focuses on L2 writing and feedback practices. In her free time she enjoys reading, painting, jewelry making, cooking, and gardening.

Dr. Marlon Valencia



Bio: Dr. Marlon Valencia is Associate Professor and Chair of Global Communication and Cultures at Glendon College, York University. He teaches critical applied linguistics and coordinates the Certificate in Teaching English as an International Language and Special

Mobility Initiatives. His research interests include learner/teacher identities, multiliteracies, visual ethnography, photovoice, and auto/duo-ethnography.

Laura Maldonado García



Bio: Laura Maldonado García is the Academic Success Manager at Speakology AI, an innovative language learning platform that helps students build oral proficiency through personalized, AI-powered speaking practice. With experience supporting schools and educators across the U.S. and Latin America, Laura is passionate about empowering teachers with tools that promote real-world communication and student engagement. She specializes in training educators on integrating technology effectively in language instruction.



María Angélica González Palacios



Bio: María Angélica González Palacios is a seasoned language educator with extensive experience teaching English and Spanish in both national and international settings. She has worked at institutions such as Colegio Cristo Rey, Corporación Universitaria Minuto de Dios, and the Centro Cultural Colombo Americano, and has also taught in the United States at Georgia Southern University, The College of Wooster, and A. R. Johnson Health Science and Engineering Magnet School. A Fulbright alumna, she holds a Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) in Spanish P-12 Education from Georgia Southern University and a Bachelor's degree in Foreign Languages from Universidad del Valle.

