

The UMBC Teaching English to Speakers of  
Other Languages Program

# Technology and Language Learning Virtual Sessions

April–May 2025



# The UMBC Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages Program Presents

## Technology and Language Learning

Virtual sessions  
dedicated to  
technology and  
Language Learning



Regina Kaplan-Rakowski



Kelly Arispe



Lincoln Bain IV



Boris Vazquez-Calvo



Sina Werner

Free registration  
(Check each  
session)

This is a series of  
virtual sessions  
addressing  
technology and  
language learning and  
teaching.

**Regina Kaplan Rakowski** is an Assistant Professor of Learning Technologies at the University of North Texas. Her research interests include immersive learning technologies (e.g., virtual reality, augmented reality, mixed reality), emotional responses to learning technologies (e.g., motivation, presence, anxiety), and computer-assisted language learning.

**Kelly Arispe** is Launch Director for the School for the Digital Future and Professor of Spanish in the Department of World Languages. As launch director, she leads the development of the school's mission, vision, values, and strategic goals and supports the vitality of existing and new programs.

**Lincoln Bain IV** is a researcher, educator, and curriculum designer specializing in Digital Game-Based Language Learning (DGBLL), game-enhanced language learning, Digital Identity, and multimodal composing. He is currently completing his Ph.D. in Second Language Acquisition and Teaching at The University of Arizona.

**Boris Vazquez-Calvo** is an assistant professor of language education (English and Spanish). His research explores technology-mediated language learning, informal language learning, and digital literacies, including fan practices that foster language use, development, and socialization in online environments.

**Sina Werner** is a postdoctoral researcher at Leuphana University, Germany, and a trained secondary school teacher. Her research focuses on TBLT and CALL. In particular, she explores students' interactions in different settings (e.g., breakout rooms, VR-based environments), Virtual Exchange, and Blended Mobility.

# The UMBC Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages Program Presents

## Immersive Learning with Virtual Reality

A virtual seminar session

Monday  
April 7  
4:30–5:30 pm  
Eastern US Time

Register for this virtual session [here](#)



**Regina Kaplan-Rakowski (PhD)**  
*University of North Texas*

High-immersion virtual reality (VR) is an emerging technology that enables personalized, adaptive language learning. This immersive technology offers omnidirectional, sensory-rich experiences, allowing learners to practice languages in realistic, interactive, and safe spaces.

This talk will overview recent research on the role of VR in developing language skills and competencies, while also addressing the challenges of integrating VR into language curricula. Practical examples of VR language learning applications, along with their benefits and limitations, will be highlighted. The audience will gain a deeper understanding of the potential of VR in language education and its future pedagogical implications.

**Regina Kaplan-Rakowski** is an Assistant Professor of Learning Technologies at the University of North Texas. She also serves as the Vice President of the Computer-Assisted Language Instruction Consortium (CALICO) and Associate Editor of the Australian Journal of Applied Linguistics (AJAL). Her research interests include immersive learning technologies (e.g., virtual reality, augmented reality, mixed reality), emotional responses to learning technologies (e.g., motivation, presence, anxiety), and computer-assisted language learning. She serves on the Editorial Board of Educational Technology & Society (ET&S) and the Journal of Technology and Teacher Education (JTATE).

# The UMBC Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages Program Presents

## Adopting and Adapting Open Educational Resources for Language Teaching and Learning

A virtual seminar session

Monday  
April 14  
5-6 pm  
Eastern US Time

Register for this virtual session [here](#)



**Kelly Arispe (PhD)**  
*Boise State University*

In this talk, I explore how Open Educational Practices (OEP) empower language educators to move beyond traditional textbooks and copyrighted materials by adopting and adapting Open Educational Resources (OER). OER are openly licensed materials that allow teachers to adopt and adapt them while fostering collaboration, creativity, and equitable access to high-quality resources. Drawing on my work with the Pathways Project—an international network of K-16 language teachers who co-create, revise, remix, and share over 900 language teaching activities—I will illustrate how OEP has the power to transform language instruction.

**Kelly Arispe** is Launch Director for the School for the Digital Future and Professor of Spanish in the Department of World Languages. As launch director, she leads the development of the school's mission, vision, values, and strategic goals and supports the vitality of existing and new programs. Arispe regularly teaches upper-division Spanish courses in Spanish linguistics in the department and was formerly Coordinator for Teacher Education in World Languages. She defines herself as a community-engaged scholar and is the Director of the Pathways Project, an Open Educational Resource (OER) Repository that hosts over 900 activities to support world language teaching for ten languages adopted and adapted by teachers from primary, secondary, and university levels

# The UMBC Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages Program Presents

## Digital Game Based Language Learning and Teaching

A virtual seminar session

Monday  
April 21  
6-7 pm  
Eastern US Time



**Lincoln Bain IV (MA)**  
*University of Arizona*

Register for this virtual session [here](#)

In this presentation, "Leveling Up Language Learning: Practical Digital Game-Based Strategies for the ESL Classroom," I will explore the potential of digital game-based language learning (DGBLL) for K-12 ESL educators. As digital games continue to shape how students engage with language in informal spaces, educators can leverage this naturally motivating medium to create immersive, communicative, and meaningful learning experiences. This presentation will provide a theoretical foundation for how games can enhance language acquisition while offering practical, classroom-ready applications.

Through hands-on demonstrations, I will showcase how games can be used for vocabulary development, conversational practice, storytelling, and collaborative problem-solving. This session will equip you with new strategies and digital tools to engage and empower your ESL students through the world of games.

**Lincoln Bain IV** is a researcher, educator, and curriculum designer specializing in Digital Game-Based Language Learning (DGBLL), game-enhanced language learning, Digital Identity, and multimodal composing. He is currently completing his Ph.D. in Second Language Acquisition and Teaching at The University of Arizona, where his research focuses on integrating avatars, esports, and digital gaming practices into second language education.

# The UMBC Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages Program Presents

## Fandoms, Fan Translation, and Memes in Language Education

A virtual seminar session

Monday  
April 28  
4:30–5:30 pm  
Eastern US Time

Register for this virtual session [here](#)



**Boris Vazquez-Calvo (PhD)**  
*University of Málaga, Spain*

In this talk, I explore how fandom culture, fan translation, and memes transform language education. Drawing on insights from the New Literacy Studies and the concept of affinity identity, I examine how practices like fansubbing, scanlation, and fanfiction found in digital affinity spaces empower learners to learn and use languages, negotiate meaning, co-construct knowledge, and shape their identities.

By the end of the talk, you'll walk away with preliminary, practical ideas for integrating fan practices like fan translation and meme creation into your language teaching, blending formal and informal learning to create engaging, digitally informed environments.

**Boris Vazquez-Calvo** is an assistant professor of language education (English and Spanish). His research explores technology-mediated language learning, informal language learning, and digital literacies, including fan practices that foster language use, development, and socialization in online environments. Recently, his work has focused on preservice language teachers' identities and digital literacies.

# The UMBC Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages Program Presents

## Group Interaction in Breakout Rooms

A virtual seminar session

Monday  
May 5  
4:30–5:30 pm  
Eastern US Time

Register for this virtual session [here](#)



**Sina Werner (PhD)**  
*Leuphana University, Germany*

This talk will give you an insight into how secondary school students worked on a task-based project in breakout rooms during the COVID-19 pandemic. It will give you an overview of their group dynamics and how they approached technological challenges. Besides uncovering how students interacted, the talk will present ideas on how to best support FL students during technology-mediated group work.

**Sina Werner** is a postdoctoral researcher at Leuphana University, Germany, and a trained secondary school teacher. Her research focuses on TBLT and CALL. In particular, she explores students' interactions in different settings (e.g., breakout rooms, VR-based environments), Virtual Exchange, and Blended Mobility.