

Submitted to the Office of Sponsored Programs and University Initiatives  
Arkansas Tech University  
September 30, 2018

Final Report  
Professional Development Grant

Rebecca Todd Garvin, Ph.D.  
Department of English and World Languages

## RESTATEMENT OF PROFESSIONAL ENHANCEMENT OPPORTUNITY AND RESEARCH TOPIC

I needed funds to attend the tenth annual Linguistic Landscape Workshop (X-Scapes) at the University of Bern, in Switzerland, May 1-5, 2018. Linguistic Landscape (LL) researchers document and study signage—all languages, symbols, icons, and images marking public spaces. This subfield of sociolinguistics is my primary area of research. As I have mentioned before, this international research group, sociolinguists and language scholars from leading institutions around the world, meets by invitation-only. The annual workshops have been hosted by universities in: Tel Aviv, Siena, Strasbourg, Namur, Addis Ababa, Cape Town, UC Berkeley, Liverpool, and Luxembourg. Due to my research in this area, I have been invited to attend the yearly LL Workshops since the initial meeting in 2008. This year was especially important because I am now on the editorial board of *Linguistic Landscape: An International Journal*, published by John Benjamins. This journal is a direct by-product of the high caliber of LL research and scholarly activities among this group. The editorial board meets once a year at the workshops. For my presentation, I digitally photographed and then analyzed the extreme messages at one LL site in a rural community in Middle Tennessee. I photographed this site for the first time in the summer of 2016, before the US presidential elections, and then did a follow up of the site in the summer of 2017 and again in the spring of 2018. This site was on a main highway and therefore, visible for all passers-by. This area of applied linguistics is modern language study that looks at authentic language usage in public spaces—linguistic landscape research documents, describes, and analyzes the impact of public literacies in local and global communities. As a sociolinguist, linguistic landscape research has been relevant in every course I teach at Arkansas Tech University. I regularly teach undergraduate courses: Composition I, Composition II, and Introduction to Film Studies. In these courses, I emphasize the use and analysis of multi-modal texts and visual rhetoric. I have also taught graduate courses in TESL Methods, Language and Society, Teaching People of Other Cultures, Discourse Analysis, and a special course called Multimodal Text Analysis. Currently, I am teaching a new course designed for upper division undergraduate and graduate students called Seminar in the Rhetoric of Public Discourse. This area of study is so relevant as it studies language usage and visual literacies that all my students encounter in everyday contexts.

## BRIEF REVIEW OF PROFESSIONAL ENHANCEMENT OPPORTUNITY AND LL RESEARCH

The purpose of this workshop is to present and critique current LL research with the goal of publication, articulation, and advancement of this growing sub-field of sociolinguistics. Through affiliation with this group, I have two book chapters in edited texts and am working on two more book chapters, accepted for publications, based on presentations at the Liverpool Workshop and the one I presented at the LL7 at UC Berkeley. One book chapter focuses on the study of the LL at the Japanese-American Internment Camp Cemetery at Rohwer, AR. This will be co-

written with my ATU colleague, Mr. Yasushi Onodera. The other book chapter has been accepted in an edited volume that will be edited by two members of this group. Since the workshop in May, I continue to peer-review and am working on a book review to be included in one of the upcoming *Linguistic Landscape* journal publications. My own work has been cited several times in recent publications of this journal. At the editorial board meeting in May, a list of supporting universities was disseminated. I was proud to see Arkansas Tech University on the list. (see appendix). I could not have attended this workshop without the support of the Faculty Professional Grant from the university.

## SUMMARY OF OUTCOMES

At X-Scapes in Bern, my presentation was rescheduled to come right before Professor Alistair Pennycook, of the University of Technology in Sydney, Australia. He has written several seminal texts in areas of critical applied linguistics and language and globalization. Not too intimidated, my presentation, "Reification of hate and extremism in a rural American LL," was received with much interest and anticipation. I used power point technology that included digital photos of political signs and focused on possible interpretations of opposing discourses and ideologies in the LL text at this site. I argued for a clearer understanding and acknowledgment of the subjective positioning of the researcher who interacts with politically offensive messages on a personal, emotional level. In Dr. Pennycook's words, "That was deep." Other scholars there provided excellent feedback and asked meaningful questions. This network of international scholars have been most supportive of my work and enabled me to participate in the shaping LL study.

Also important outcomes, I usually integrate some aspects of linguistic landscape study and visual rhetoric into as many courses as possible. I want students to notice signage and critically analyze the forms, functions, and meanings embedded in languages and literacies that surround them. I am convinced that knowledge of this area and the impact of public visual literacies in virtual and geographical spaces can be useful in life as well as every field of study.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Linguistic landscape study is one of the most exciting and fastest growing sub-fields in sociolinguistics. My dissertation was a linguistic landscape study. I began publishing in this area in 2010. Since then, I have been asked to contribute to journals and edited volumes based on my dissertation, publications, presentations and interactions with this community of international scholars. As I stated last year, it is difficult to find time for research and writing. It would be wonderful to have support, perhaps through course releases, to complete scholarship activities. I think the university benefits from this kind of exposure in wider academic communities.