

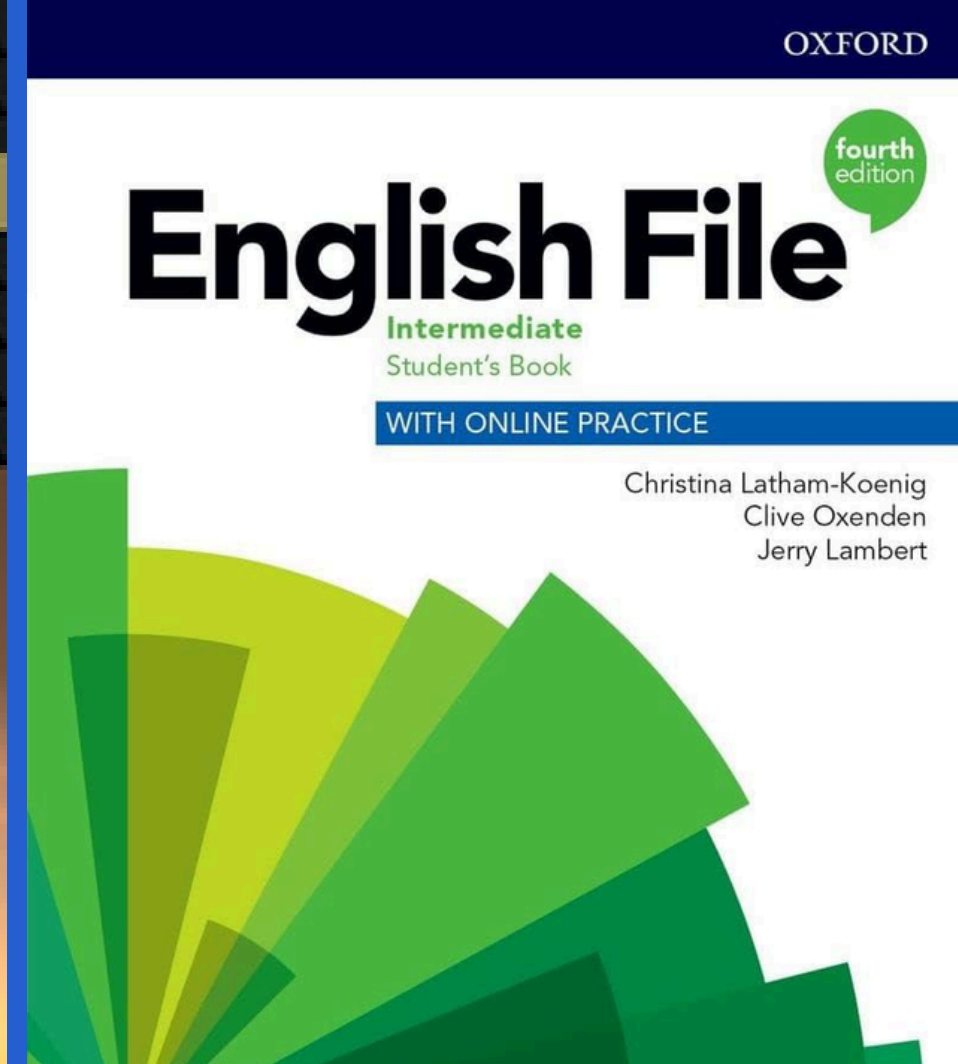
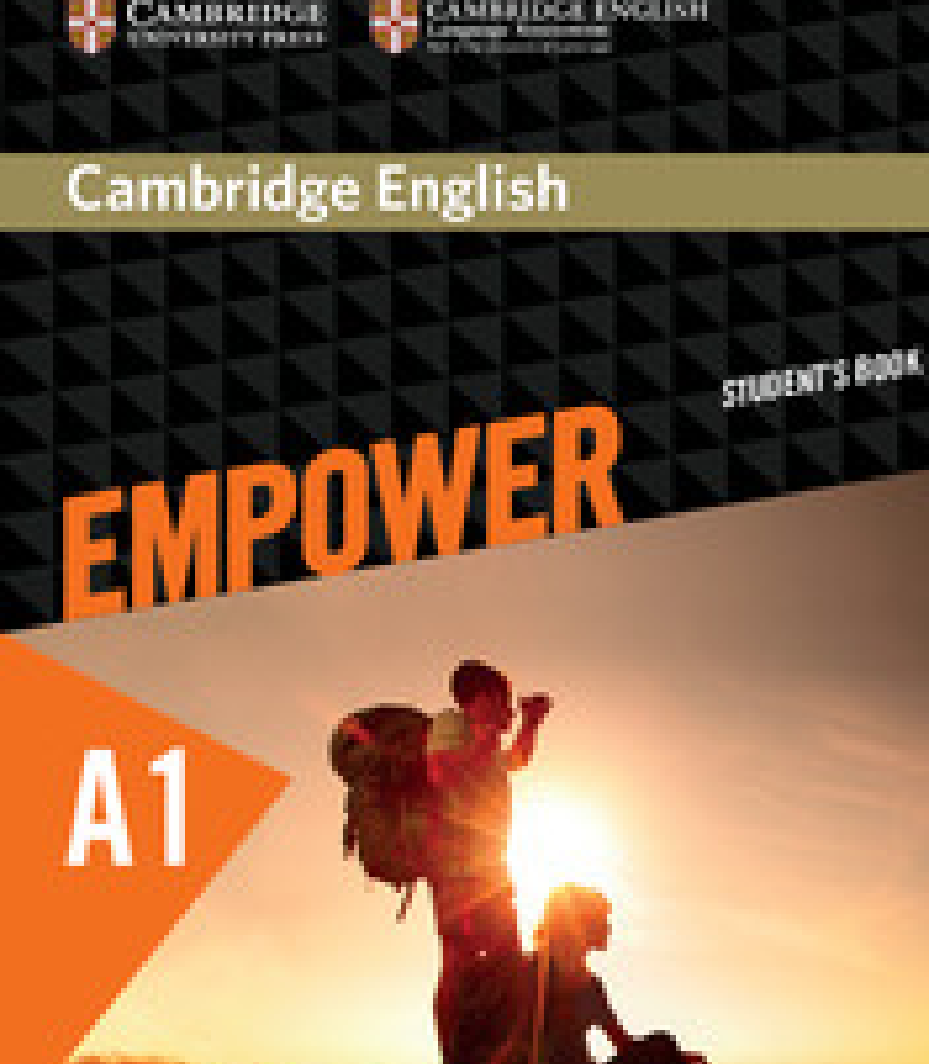
The End of TENOR: Towards English with a Purpose

Dr. Jennifer J. MacDonald

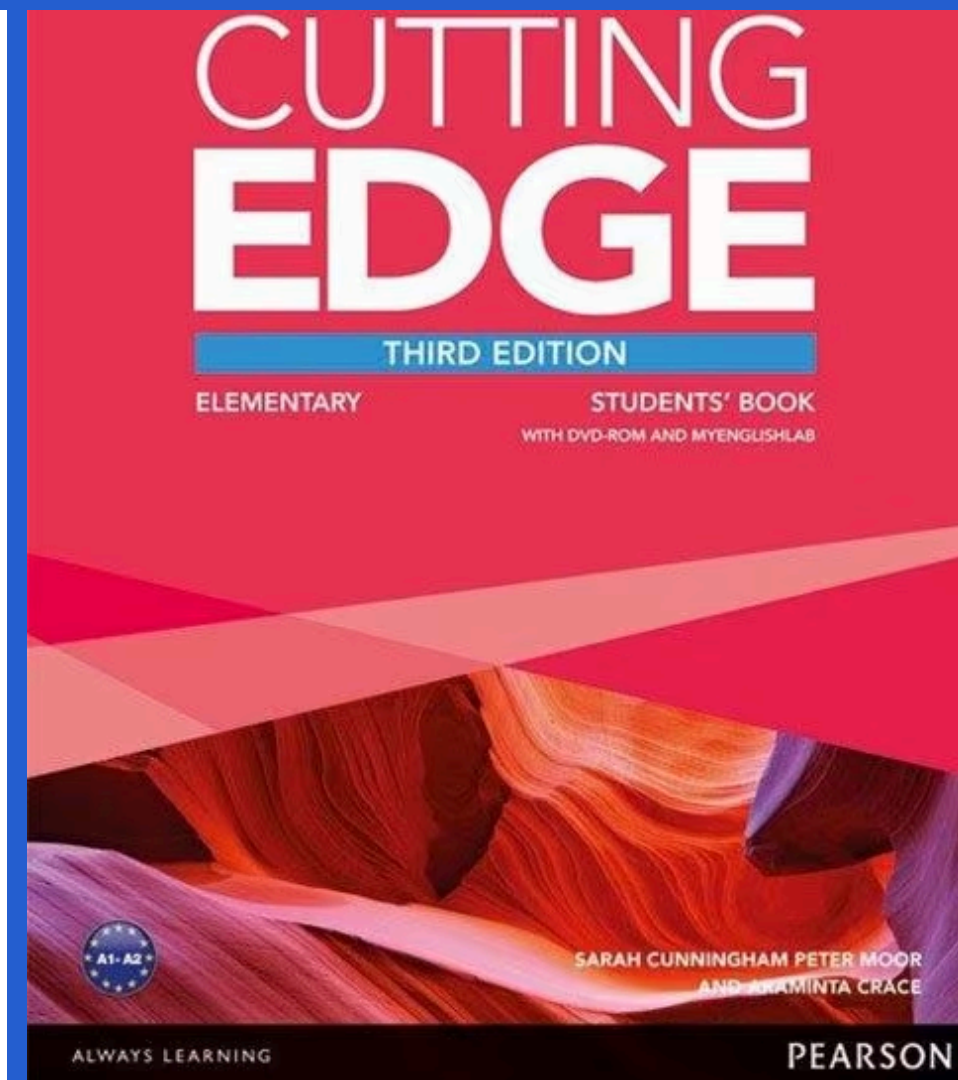
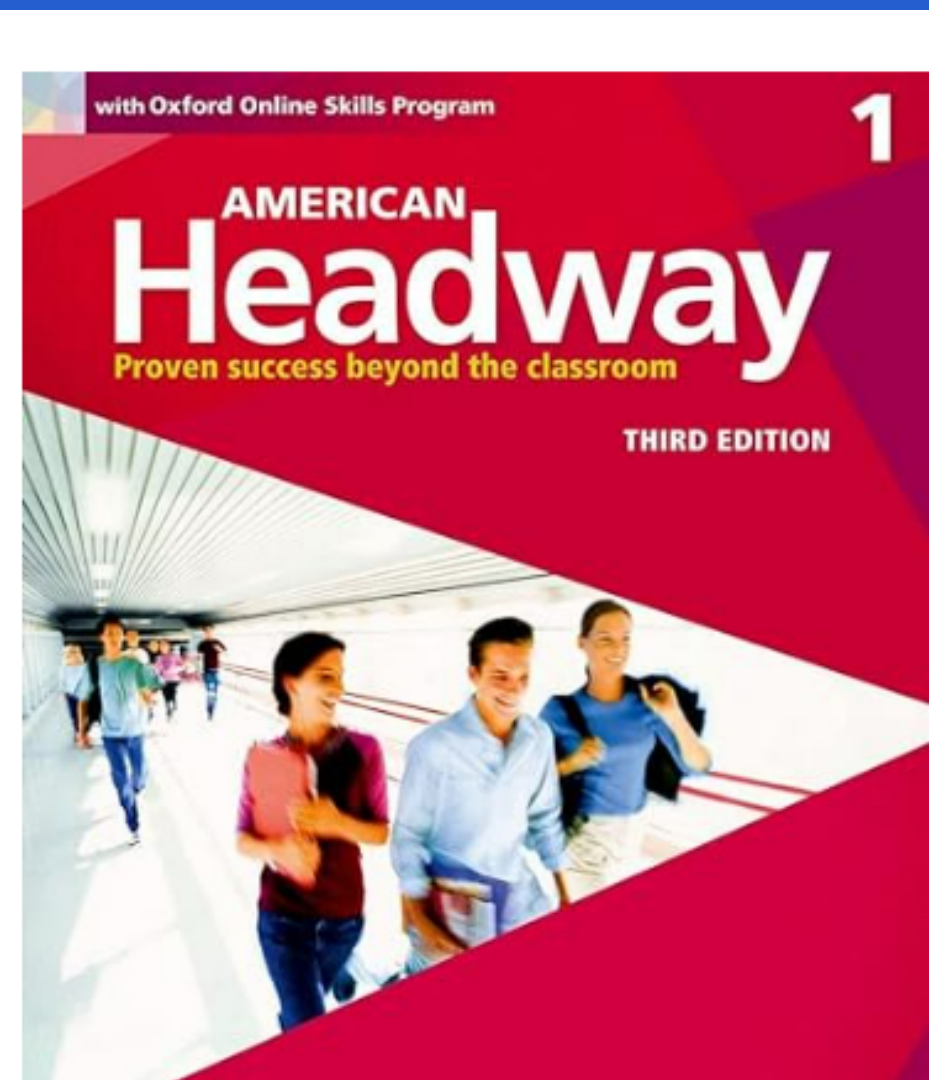
May 25, 2024

TESL NS Conference





TENOR



Teaching English for No Obvious Reason

=

"General English"

vs.

English for Specific or Academic Purposes

Today's Session

What do we mean by TENOR/General English and ESP?

Trends away from General English in Canadian ELT and elsewhere

The Case for Non-General English

Adapting our teaching, curriculum development, and ELT program leadership

About Me

Sharing observations through the lens of a

- ELT Program Leader
- Professor
- Languages Canada board member
- Author
- Researcher



TENOR

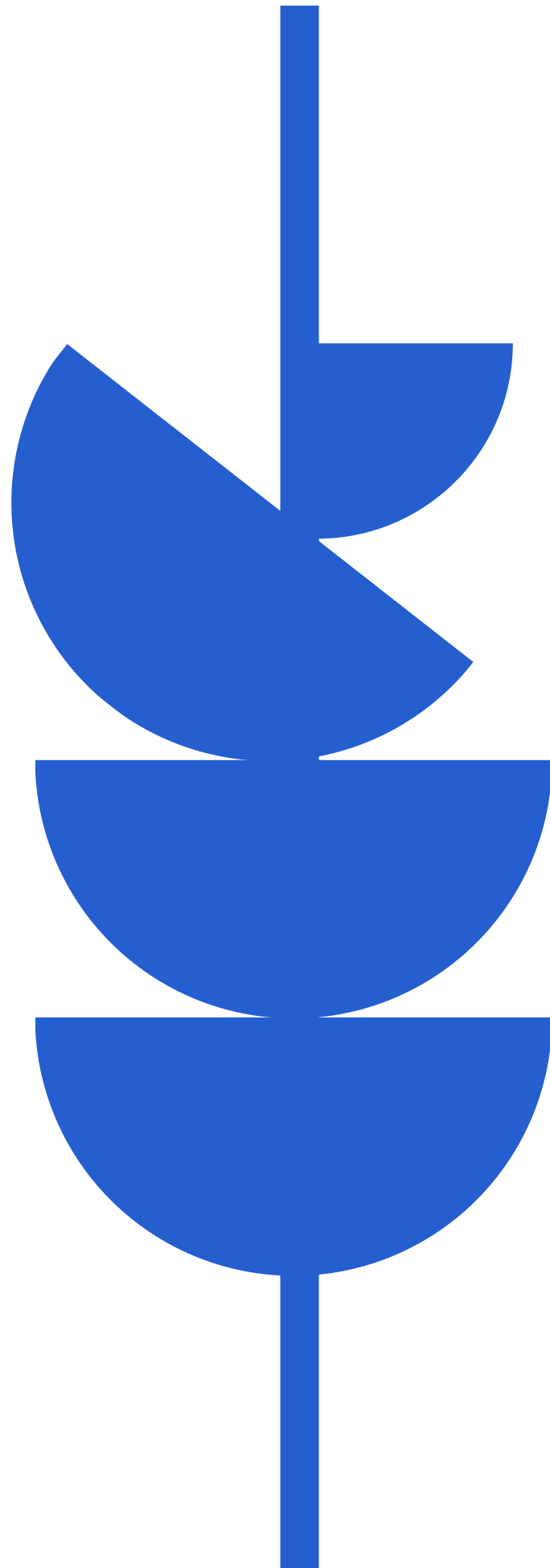
(Teaching English for No Obvious Reason)

Abbott (1980; 1981)

A context where “[...] the future needs of the learners [are] either heterogeneous (English for mixed groups) or [are] difficult, even impossible, to specify.”

English as a compulsory school subject, etc. Often associated with younger learners, public contexts, etc., lower levels.

Commonly referred to as General English



English for Specific
Purposes (ESP) learners
are “goal-oriented learners
who do not want to learn
English for social or
cultural reasons but they
usually follow a utilitarian
goal to learn it for their
well-defined occupational
or academic needs”

(Robinson, 1991 as cited by Javid,
2015)



English for Specific Purposes

(Dudley-Evans and St. John,
1998)

- Occupational or Academic Purposes
- Designed to meet specific learner needs
- Makes use of the underlying methodology and activities of the disciplines and professions it serves
- Depends on the language (grammar, lexis, register), skills, discourse and genre relevant to these activities
- May be related to or specifically designed for specific scientific fields



Content-Based Instruction

Brown, H., & Bradford, A.
(2017).

- Content acts as a vehicle for language learning
- Intended outcomes are language/performance-oriented
- Students are assessed on language learning outcomes
- Content-learning outcomes are peripheral or at a general knowledge level
- Also known as Content-Based Language Teaching (CBLT)

Changing Demand for ESP



Changing Demand: National Curricula

Mainland China College English
curriculum moving from English for
general purposes to English for Specific
Purposes (Yu and Liu, 2018)

Paradigm shift in Cambodia, Japan,
Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong (Terauchi
et al., 2019; Petraki and Khat, 2022)

Ukraine, Brazil ESP
Project/Programme, elsewhere in
LatAm and Europe





Shandong University of Finance and Economics Business English Course

Textbook includes

- Business skills (negotiation, selling, running meetings, etc.)
- Authentic readings from the Financial Times
- Glossary of business terms
- Case Studies: methodologies used in many business schools

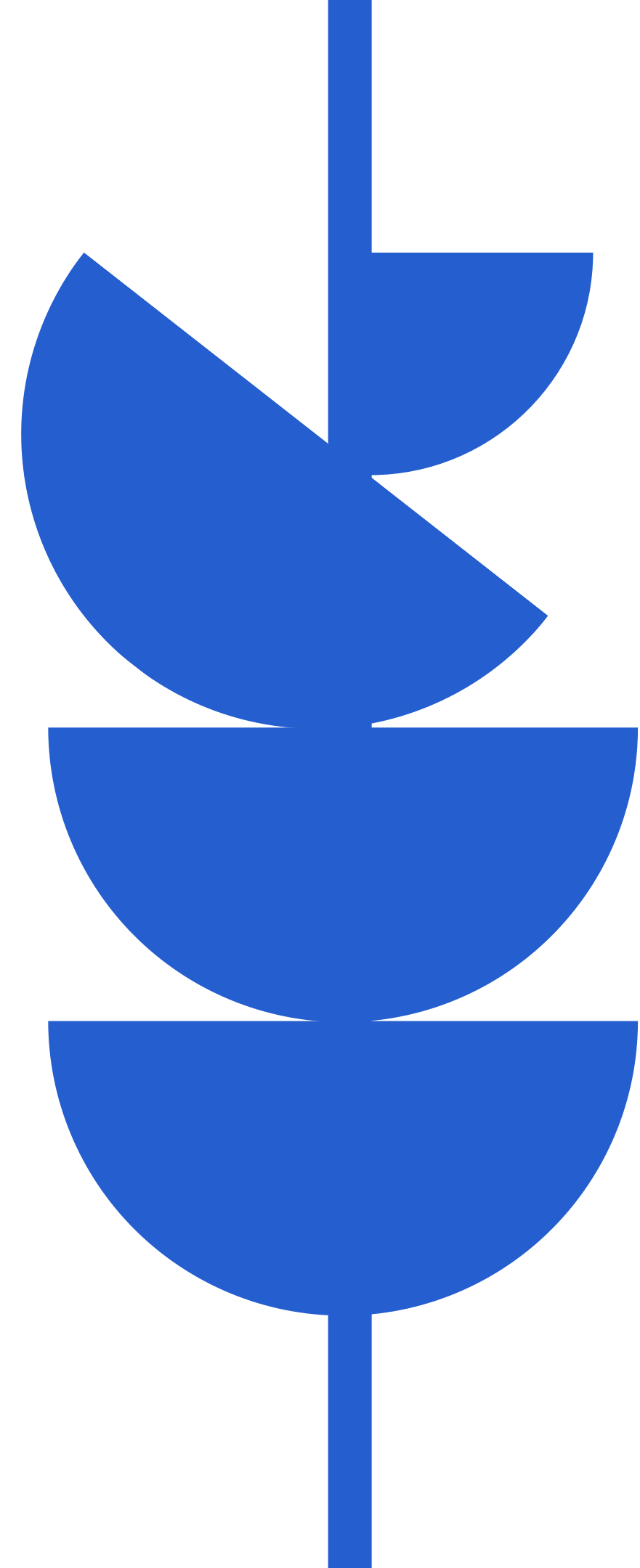


Changing Demand: Governmental Funding Bodies

“Institutions want the best ROI on their scholarship dollars. We no longer fund *just* English courses. It has to be English *plus...*”



Changing Demands: Universities

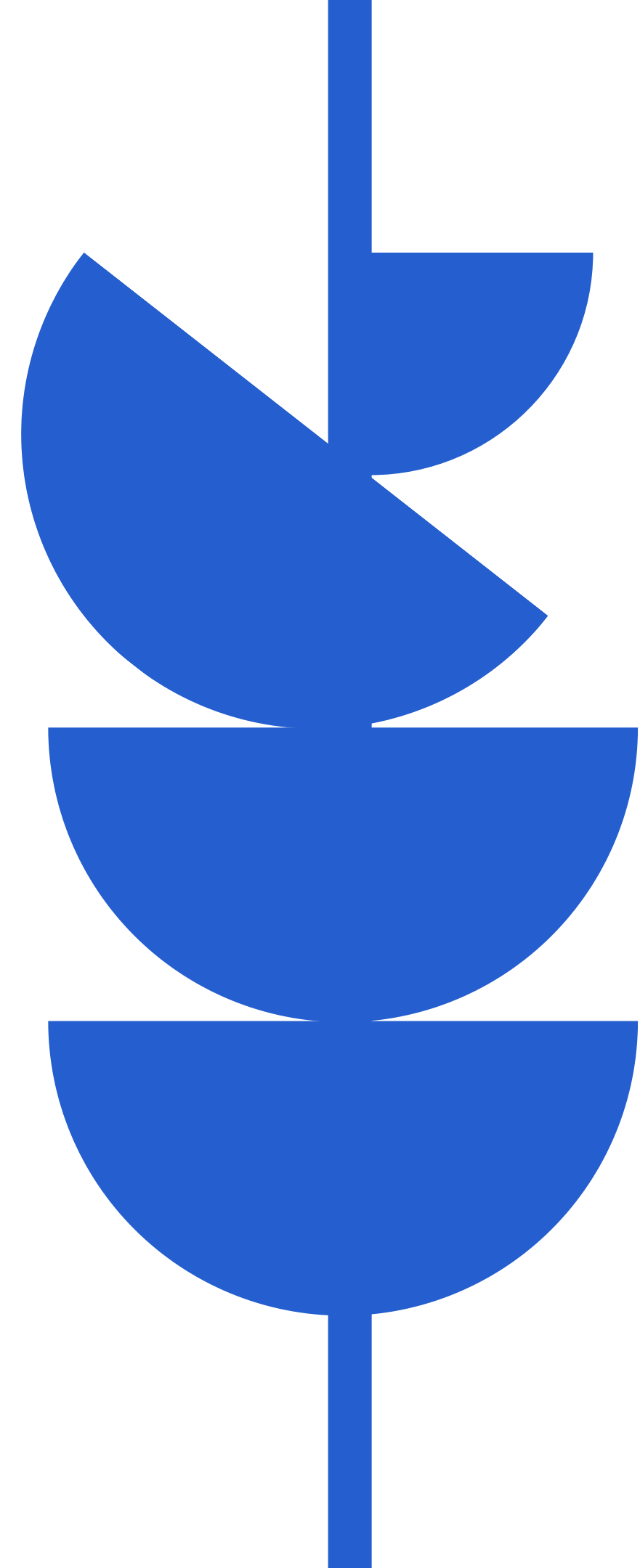


Dalhousie University Dept. of English Language Studies

Global Citizenship and the Sustainable Development Goals



Changing Demand: Families



English Course at University of Toronto for Youth



What's behind
these trends?



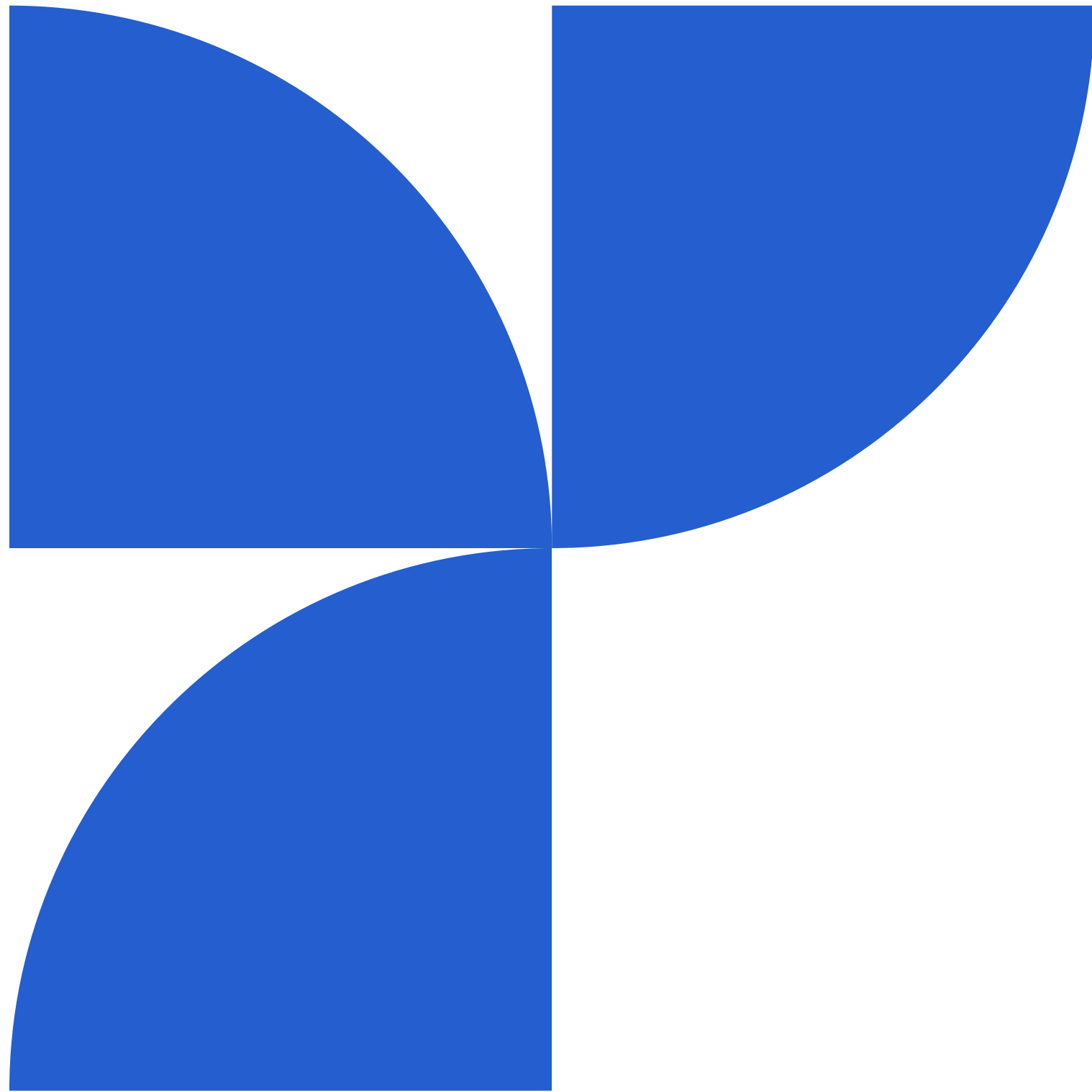


What's behind these Trends?

Better, more accessible and and higher quality English language education worldwide

Students are becoming proficient in English at a younger age than ever before (Bonard, 2023)

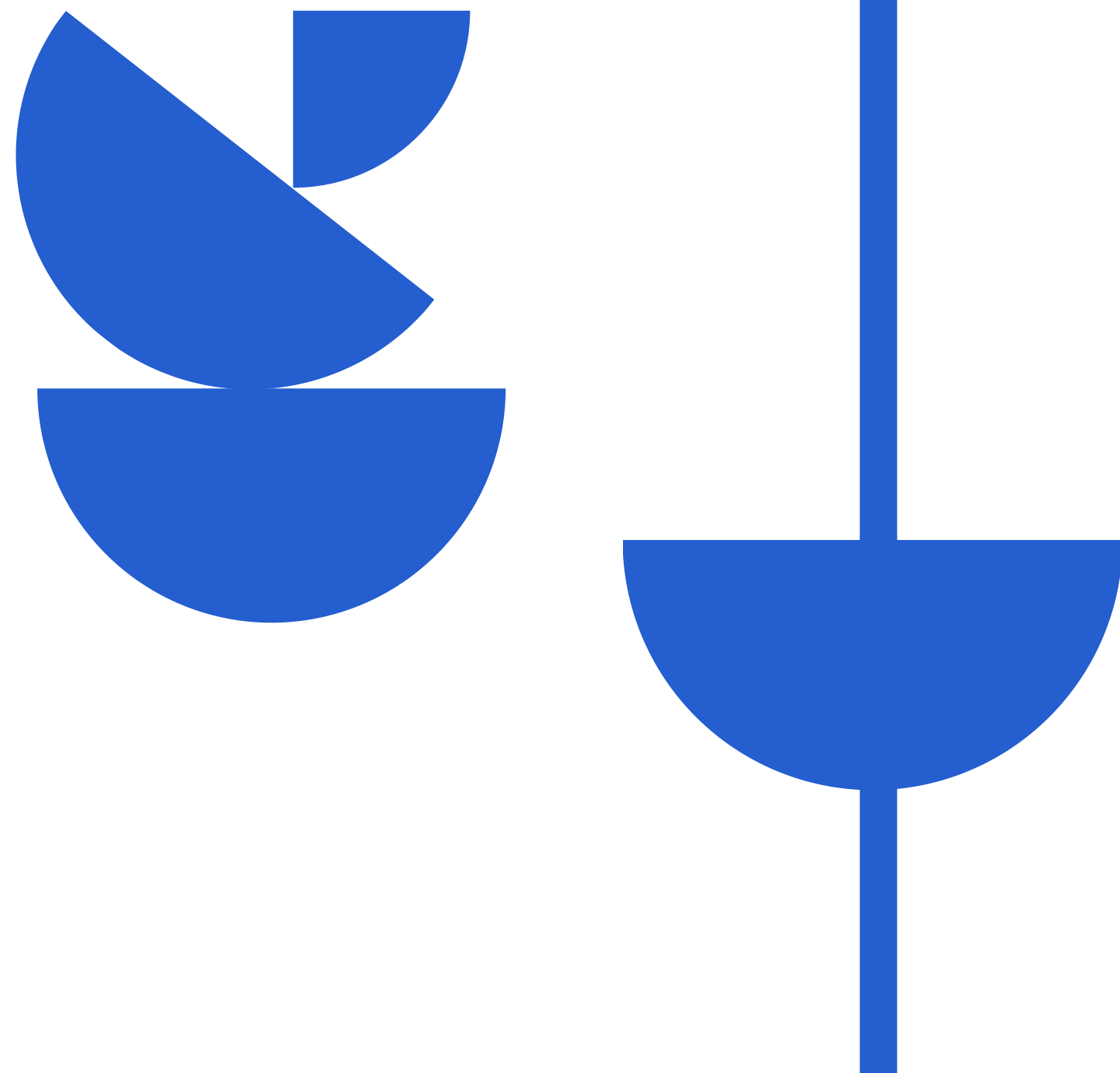
“...Investing in the development of a unique and highly specialised education offer” will help to convince students that there is still value in studying English abroad.” (Bonard, 2023)



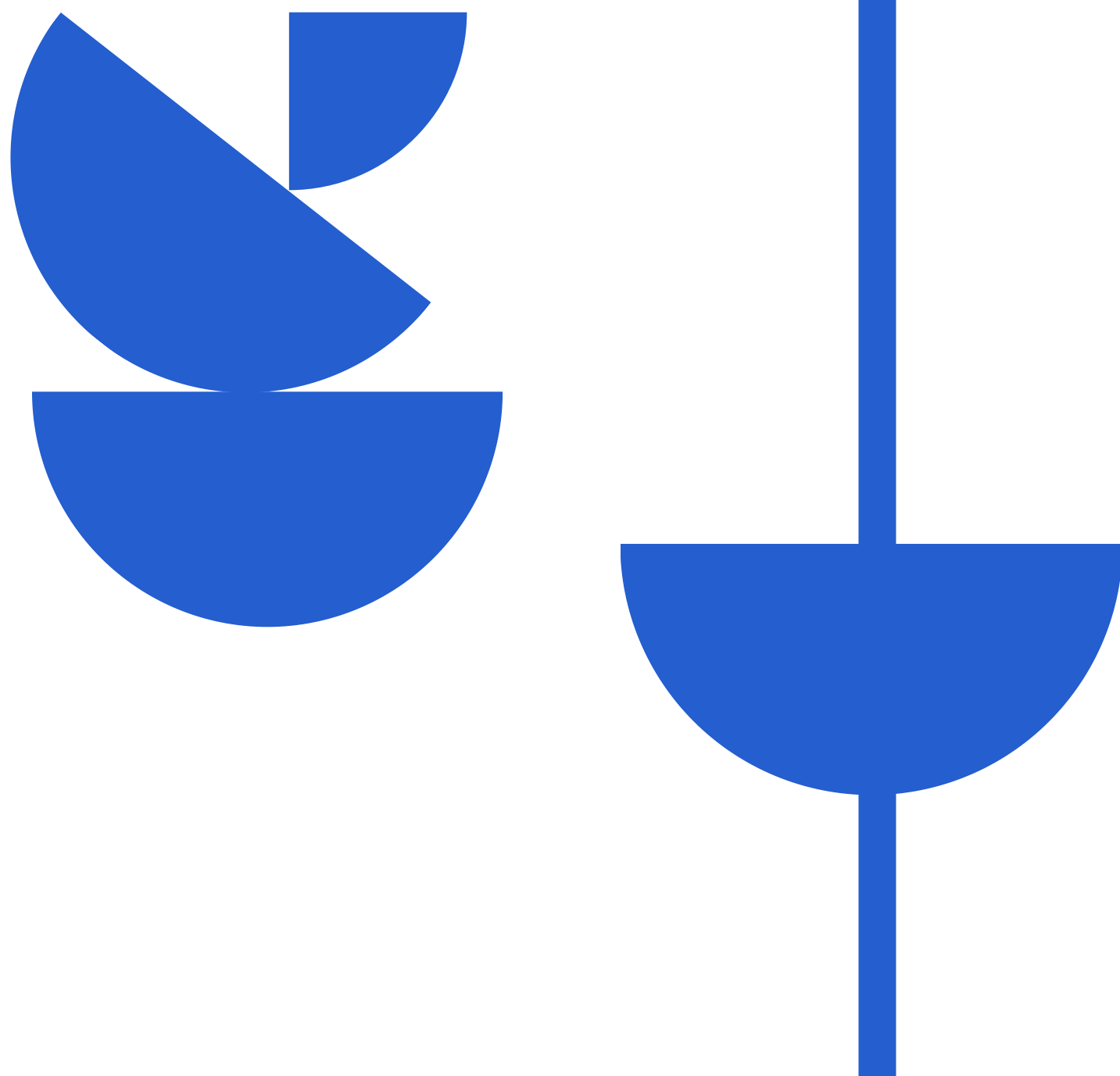
What's behind these Trends?

Neoliberal environment:
everything, including education, is
perceived in terms of it's value to
the economy

Emphasis on Return on Investment
(ROI); increasing one's value to the
workforce



The difference between TENOR learners and ESP learners is marked with specific learning objectives, learning independence and high motivation of the later group (Dudley-Evans and St. John, 1998).



5C

EVERYDAY ENGLISH

Why did you become a florist?

Learn to give reasons, results and examples

P Voiced and unvoiced consonants

S Giving yourself time to think

1 LISTENING

a Discuss the questions.

- 1 What hobbies and interests do you have?
- 2 Could any of your hobbies become a job? Would you like to do those jobs?

b You are going to watch Rachel and Becky talking about Rachel's job. Discuss the questions.

- 1 Why do you think Rachel became a florist?
- 2 What might the advantages of the job be?

c Watch or listen to Part 1. Do Rachel and Becky mention your ideas?

d Watch or listen to Part 1 again. Complete each sentence with one or two words.

- 1 Tina spent the morning _____.
- 2 Tina _____ to be in the photos.
- 3 Becky thinks that being a florist is good because you can be your own _____.
- 4 Becky doesn't like dealing with other people's _____.
- 5 Rachel suggests that Becky could be a _____.

2 USEFUL LANGUAGE

Giving reasons, results and examples

a Complete the sentences with the words/phrases in the box.

for instance such as like because of

- 1 That's _____ Tina. She spent the morning cleaning up!
- 2 Oh, lots of things. _____, all I seem to do is deal with other people's problems, _____ issues with their pay or holidays.
- 3 Becky I wish I had a job where I could travel the world, spread my wings, be free! Rachel _____?

b Listen and check your answers.

c Add the words/phrases in the box to the table.

as a result because because of due to for example
for instance like since so such as

Giving reasons	Giving results	Giving examples

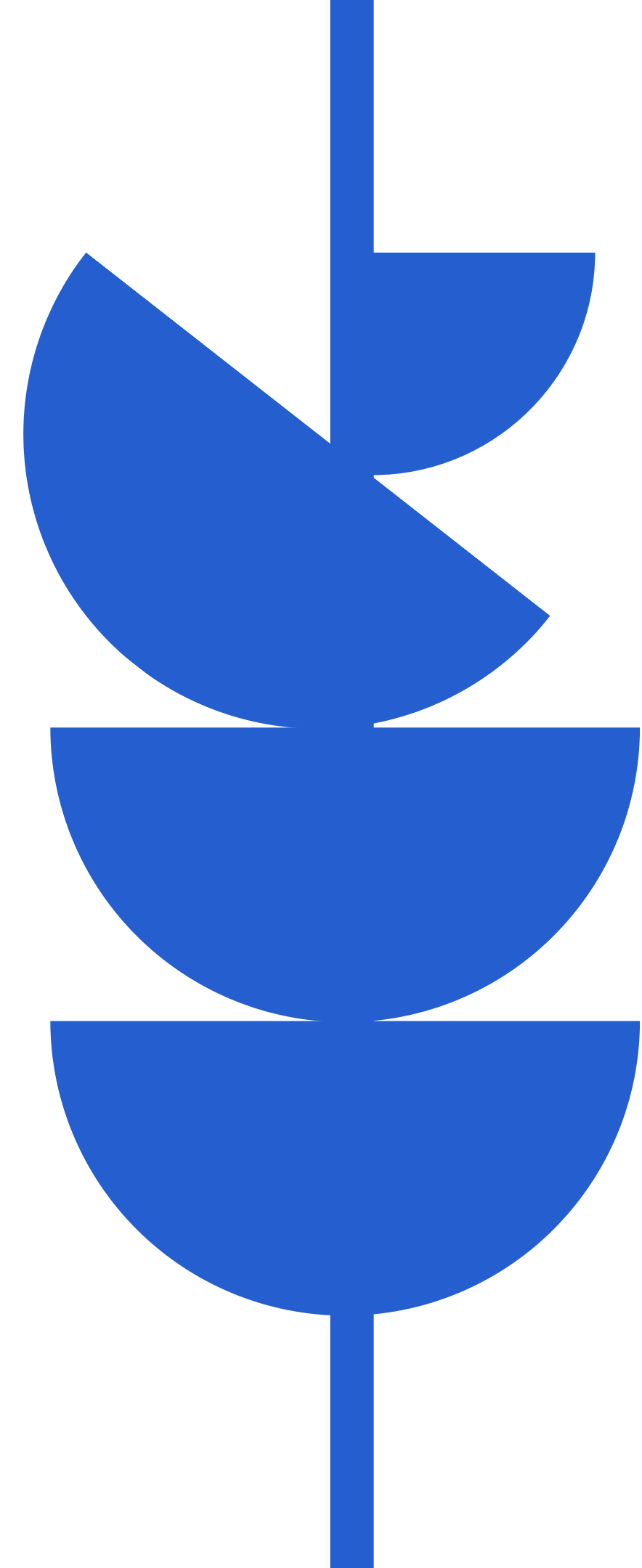
d Read this conversation and underline the correct words/phrases.

- A** So, do you still want to be a vet?
B Oh, yes. That's my dream. I've always wanted to work with animals, ¹for example / ²due to, in a zoo or something like that.
A A zoo! Wow, that would be good.
B Well, I need to do lots of things first, ³since / ⁴like finding the best university to go to.
A I see. And is it easy to become a vet?
B Not really. It takes years at university ⁵because of / so all the things you have to study. But that's OK. I really want to do it, ⁶so / ⁷for example I'm sure I won't find it too difficult.
A Well, if there's anything I can do to help, ⁸so / ⁹such as looking at university websites, let me know!

What's behind these trends?

Separation of language and culture
learning

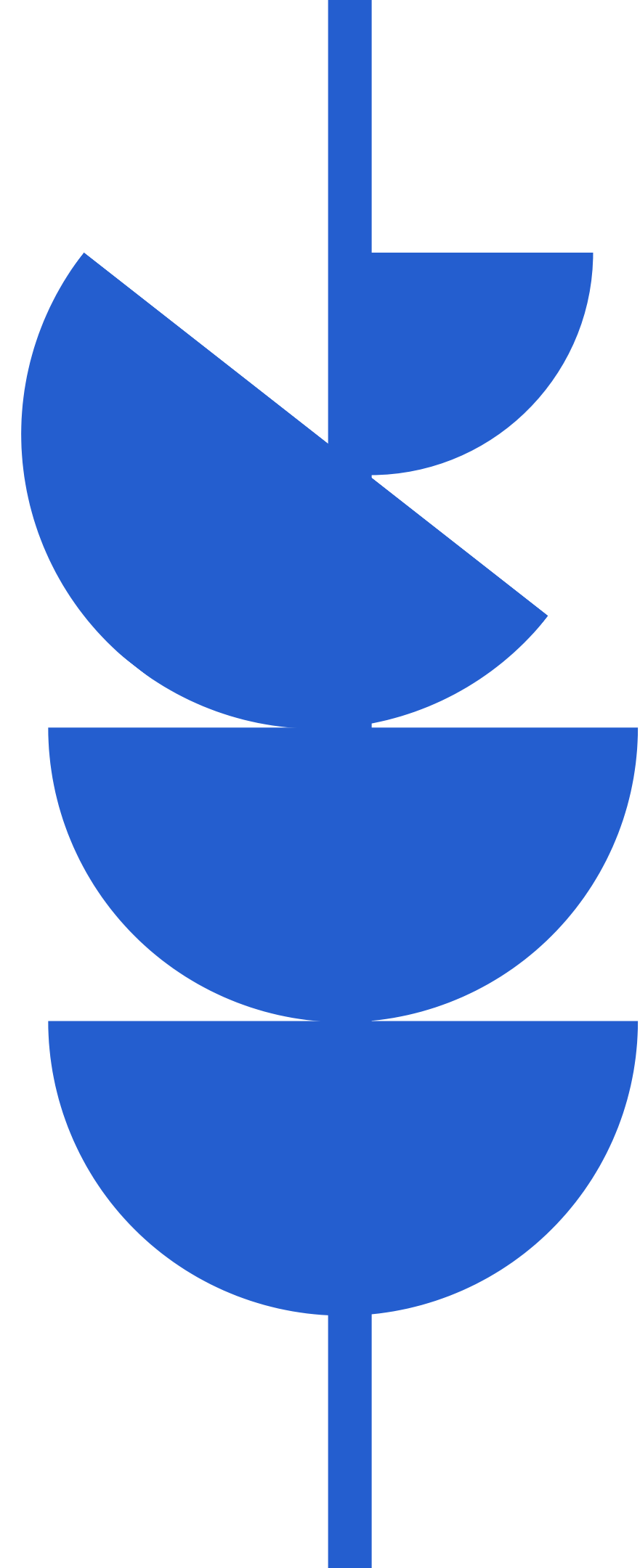
Rise in English as a Lingua Franca /
English as an International
Language, where its purpose is
better defined, as a global means of
communication



Things are
different
than in
1980

“I cannot see how [approaching all English language teaching situations from an ESP viewpoint] this could be done in TENOR situations other than by imposing specific purposes upon the learner. [...] we would be limiting the children's roles instead of opening up a range of possibilities for them;”
(Abbott, 1980)

Non-General English
can provide
direction,
motivation,
relevance in the era
of English as an
international
language.



What does this
mean for us?



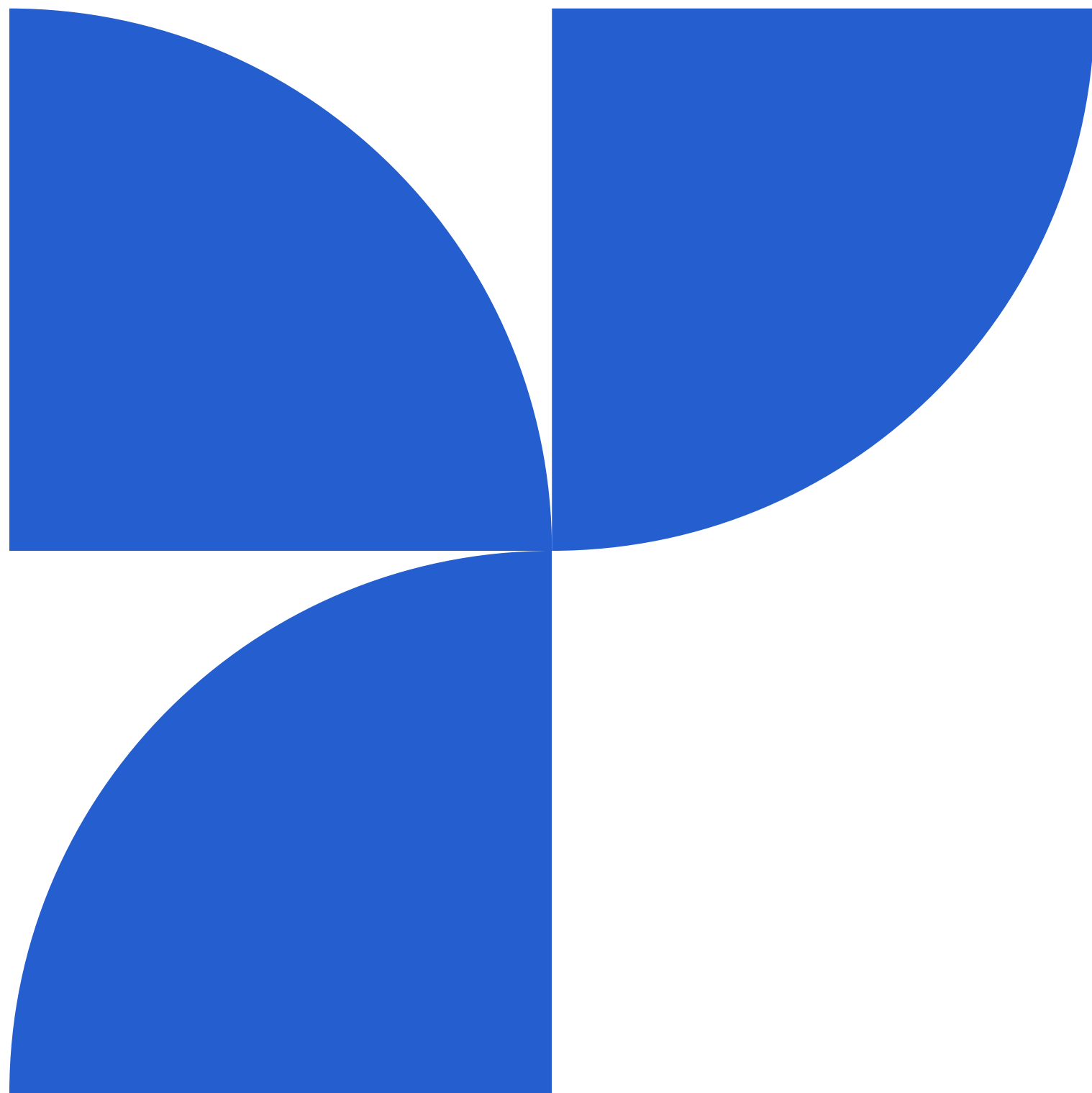


For Leaders

Consider complementing General English programming with ESP

Collaborations with departments, institutions, etc.

Training for instructional staff in specific approaches: ESP, EAP, CBI, etc.



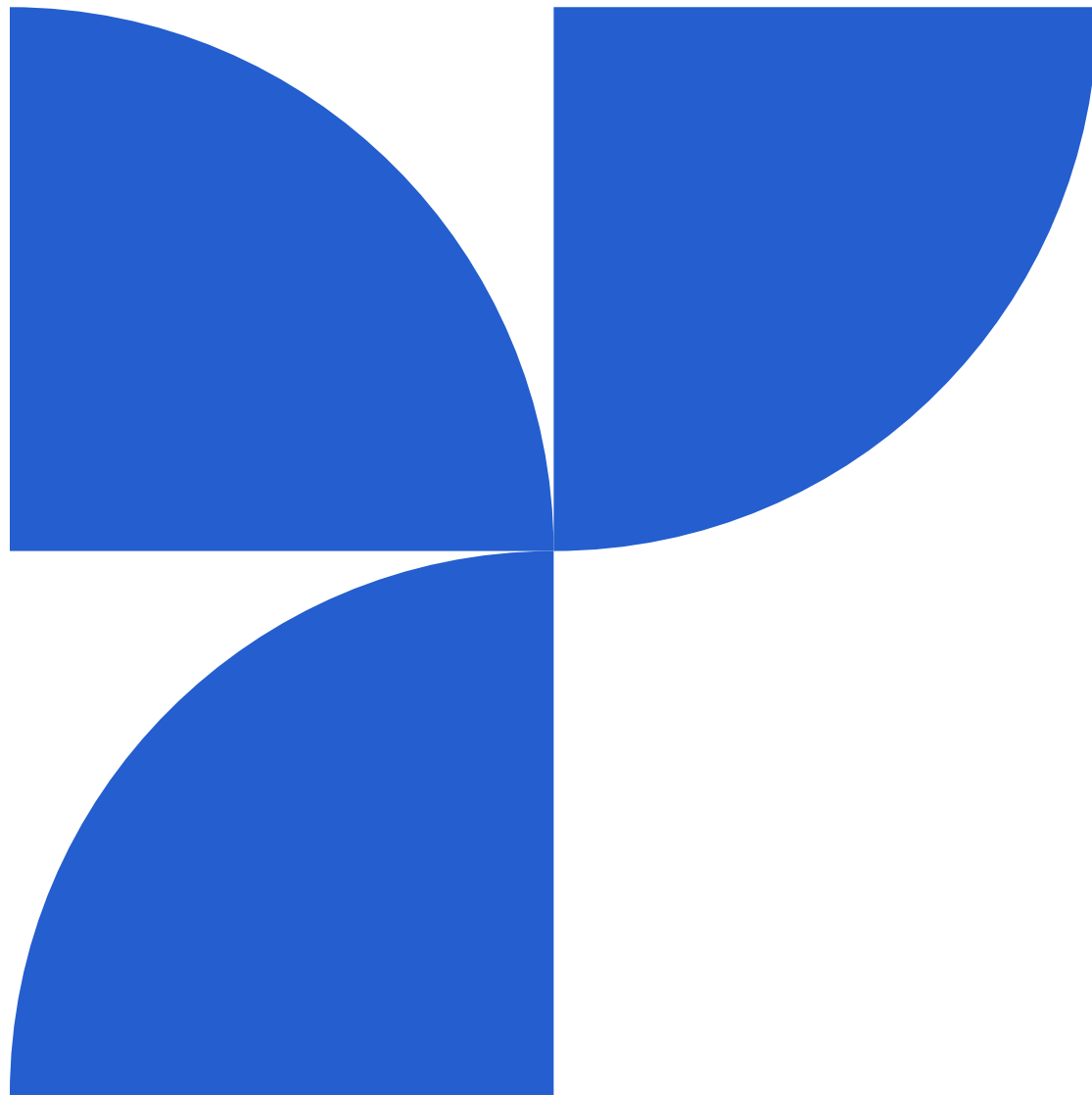
For Curriculum Designers

Even with heterogeneous groups, incorporate disciplinary/genre awareness as key skills.

Consider content-based approaches; a functional syllabus; focus on transferrable 21st-century skills

Can you amp up needs assessment? It's one of the key pillars of ESP curriculum design

For Teachers

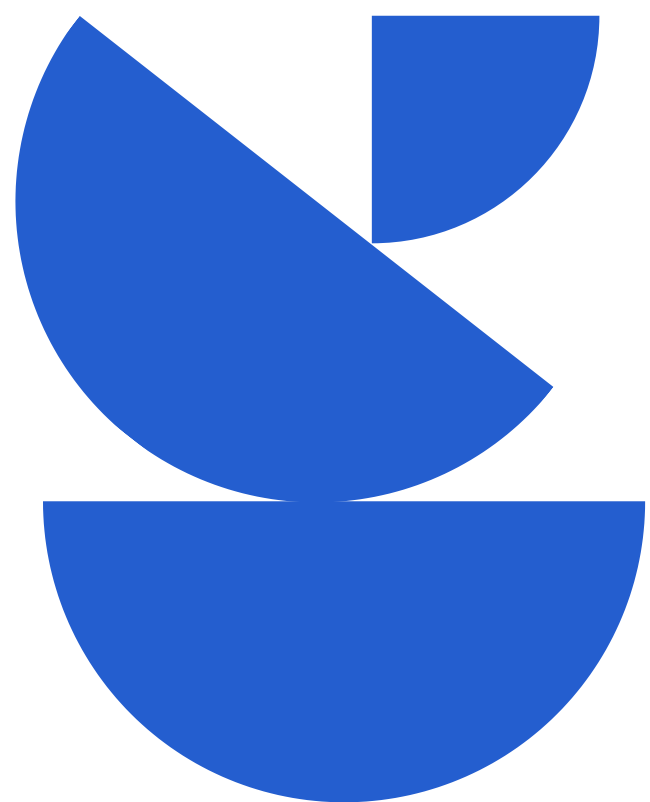


Consider taking an ‘ESP perspective’
(Celani, 2008):

- (1) Considering learners’ reasons for learning and their learning necessities;
- (2) Building basic capabilities and abilities for defined purposes;
- (3) Using previous knowledge, or what the learners bring with them to the learning situation, i.e. what learners have, do and can do in the learning process;
- (4) Allowing learners a voice; making language use meaningful; enabling students to see reasons for learning;
- (5) Helping students develop sound individual strategies for learning; changing unhealthy study habits; breaking the old tradition of memorisation and repetition of teacher-transmitted knowledge.



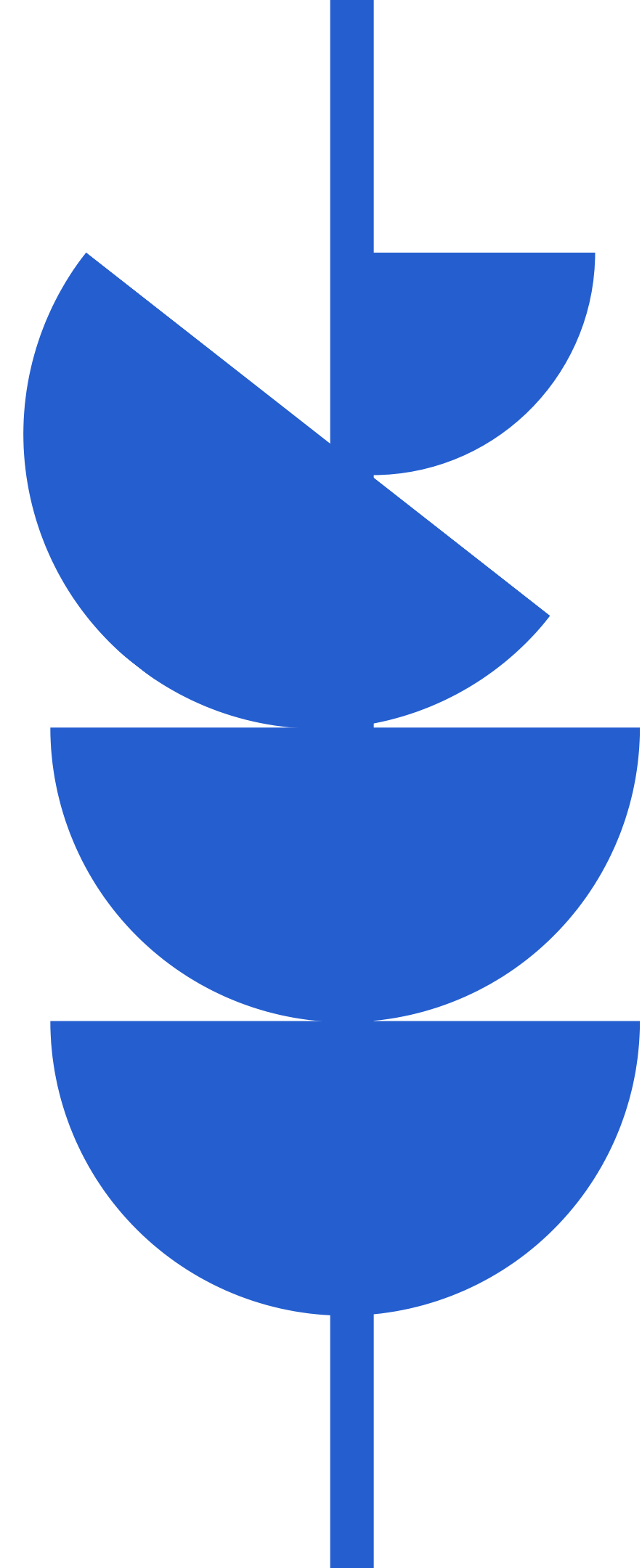
How might you
incorporate this
into your work?



Thank you!
jennifermacdonald.ca



References



Abbott, G. (1980). ESP and TENOR. ELT Documents, 107, 122–4.

Abbott, G. 1981. 'Approaches to English teaching'. In Abbott, G. and P.G. Wingard (eds) *The Teaching of English as an International Language: A Practical Guide*. London: Collins.

Bonard (2023). Global ELT Annual Report.
<https://www.bonardeducation.com/insights/elt-annual-report-2023>

Celani, M. A. A. (2008). When myth and reality meet: reflections on ESP in Brazil. *English for Specific Purposes*, 27(4), 412-423.

Javid, C. Z. (2015). English for specific purposes: Role of learners, teachers and teaching methodologies. *European Scientific Journal*, 11(20).

Petraki, E., & Khat, K. (2022). Challenges and constraints in the design of an ESP course in Cambodia: implications for higher education institutions. *Asia Pacific Journal of Education*, 42(2), 260-275.

Terauchi, H., Noguchi, J., & Tajino, A. (2019). *Towards a New Paradigm for English Language Teaching*. Routledge.A

Yu, X., & Liu, C. (2018). Curriculum reform of college English teaching in China: From English for general purposes to English for specific purposes. *ESP Today*, 6(2), 140-160.

