



TEAL NEWS

The Association of B.C. Teachers of English as an Additional Language

SPRING ISSUE 2010



Traditional Welcome Dance at Opening Ceremonies (Alan Klein)

Global English - Cambodian Style

by Dr. Alan Klein, UBC and Layne Kriwoken, UBC

When Westerners think about Cambodia the majestic ruins of Angkor Wat and the horrors of the Khmer Rouge regime are often the first ideas that come to mind. However these images, though crucial to understanding the country's past, do not give a full picture of its present-day reality. Cambodia today is a vibrant, developing nation of over 14 million people, many of whom use English as their lingua franca for global communication.

Over the last six years the annual CamTESOL conference, sponsored by the Australian organization IDP, has played a vital role in improving the quality of English teaching in Cambodia. The conference has now developed to a point where key positions and responsibilities lie in the capable hands of Cambodians who have been mentored to take over leadership roles. Looking out over the enthusiastic participants at the conference's opening session, we felt very fortunate and honoured to be part of this flourishing Cambodian English education movement.

This year's conference in late February, "One World: World Englishes," hosted over 900 Cambodians and 300 international participants in Phnom Penh. It also attracted well-known international plenary speakers such as Andy Fitzpatrick, who spoke on viewing English as a hybrid 'multilingual' language and the implications for Southeast Asia. The majority of workshops would fit into any TESOL conference, such as Joann Crandall's presentation, "What's in a Word?"

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Contributors

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Letter from the President

Dear Members,

The BC TEAL 42nd Annual Conference, held April 30 and May 1, was a resounding success and we have many people to thank. Conference Co-Chairs, Lois Armerding and Nila Gopaul, upheld a long tradition of event planning and provided a professional development experience that all could appreciate. The many conference committees demonstrated an 'Olympic' effort as the team put in hundreds of volunteer hours to make this conference such a hit. I hope all BC TEAL Members, and non-members, recognize and applaud the commitment of these individuals.

No doubt the annual conference is a highlight for second language educators in British Columbia. The response to the 60 plus presentations was very positive. More people attended this year's conference, (an estimated 12% increase over last year); as a result many sessions were filled to capacity, creating a dynamic environment fostering professional development and challenging us to engage with our peers. Congratulations to all presenters and attendees; your energy, enthusiasm, and commitment to life long learning are key to the success of events such as this.

This recent conference was a big event, and the quality of plenary speakers and workshops was testament to the fact that our profession is thriving on elevated professional and business levels. I look forward to future opportunities to raise our industry's profile, and I encourage you to get more involved. If you are new to the field or a veteran, you have an important part to play. It is as simple as attending or presenting at one of the PD events (conferences or sessions), encouraging your peers to join TEAL, joining one of the Special Interest Groups (SIGS), or submitting an article to the Newsletter. There are many opportunities. Take your pick.

Due, in a large part, to those who have advocated for recognition, the field of teaching English as an additional language has continued to gain momentum and respect over the past decades. There are also many EAL practitioners who have overtly engaged in the network of their professional associations, and I congratulate and commend those of you who maintain your membership with BC TEAL. The work we do is vital. A great many need the education and training we provide not only to

meet the fundamental human need to communicate, but also to advance toward their dreams. What our profession offers cannot be understated or undervalued, and we must continue to make this message clear to those outside our field.



Letter from the Editor

I recently had an enlightening conversation with a colleague who talked about a time that she had become "unteachable". She wasn't learning from students and she wasn't learning from her peers. She recognized this within herself, and rather than resign herself to becoming the unteachable teacher, made the conscious decision to once again become "teachable".

How many among us in this profession - or any profession, for that matter - have become unteachable? How many of us don't bother to become members of TEAL because we don't see that it has anything to offer us? How many of us choose not to be active members of our professional community? How many of us choose to stay rooted in the professional training received years ago that may now be out of date? How many of us don't bother to attend TEAL conferences or other professional development sessions because we've heard it all before?

I believe the answer to many of the questions above is "too many". Is this a cynical observation? Absolutely. Is it realistic? I think so.

Luckily, I know that there are people in this profession who choose to remain engaged and who strive to stay teachable, regardless of their years of experience or the number of degrees to their names.

I also believe that sometimes people will go through stages where there is lack of enthusiasm for, connection to, or frustration with one's chosen profession. Some people give up and choose to move onto another career or another goal. Some choose to make an effort to become reinvigorated.

Many of you were likely at this year's TEAL conference - the 42nd - which was entitled "Taking Stock: Teaching and Assessing in a Global Context". I think it's also a good time for us to "take stock" of ourselves, to assess ourselves, and to ask, "Am I still teachable?"

If you've read this far, I assume you are, and I commend you for it. If you found inspiration at the TEAL conference - whether from a particular speaker or a chance reunion with an old colleague - why not use that momentum to kick yourself into action? Visit an ESL blog and interact with others in the field who might be a world away, or join a BC TEAL SIG and meet your peers locally. Set up a PD session at your school, or write an article for us. Keep active, and stay "teachable".

Happy Reading.



P.S. This is my last issue as editor. It's been a steep learning curve, but I've met some fabulous people along the way and had a lot of fun. The next issue will be co-edited by Patricia Nicoli and Lydia Skulstad. I look forward to future issues of TEAL News that bear their personal stamps.

Global English, Cambodian Style



Break-time Between Workshops (Layne Kriwoken)

Teaching and Learning Vocabulary". However, one section of the conference was devoted specifically to "ELT in the Mekong" with presentations like "Letter Writing Project Between Cambodia and Japan."

The English Language Institute (ELI) at UBC provided us the opportunity to be two of the over 250 presenters at the conference. Alan co-produced a video with a Cambodian graduate student studying in the United States titled "Beyond the TOEFL Score: Succeeding at North American Universities," and Layne presented the workshop "Building Confidence in Lower-Level Proficiency." Following the conference, we were also able to conduct these same workshops for graduate TESOL students at the Royal University of Phnom Penh.

Additionally, the staff of the ELI at UBC generously sponsored twelve Cambodian government teachers from the provinces, whose salaries are about US\$50 a month, to take part in this professional development opportunity, and the ELI was the only language institute to provide that level of commitment. During the two days of their attendance, the participants seemed eager to be there - coming early, taking notes, asking questions, and sharing ideas. We enjoyed watching acknowledgment of UBC's contribution as it continuously scrolled across the large video screen used at the conference!

The CamTESOL conference clearly demonstrated that English provides incredible opportunities for Cambodians to improve their lives and, equally, that Western educators have an important role to play in building the infrastructure and knowledge base of teachers in the country. Yet, as Andy Fitzpatrick said in his remarks, the indigenous Englishes being created in countries such as Cambodia have their own purposes and characteristics. What we learned from the conference is that Westerners need to respect this reality - and the temporary nature of our role - as we collaborate with educators in developing

countries and provide them with the tools they need for success in their own contexts.

In the next issue of TEAL News there will be a follow-up article focused on the current challenges which face both Cambodian teachers and students.

If you would like more information about sponsoring a Cambodian teacher for next year's CamTESOL conference, please contact either of us at the emails noted below.

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Dr. Alan Klein alan.klein@ubc.ca



Alan Klein (Layne Kriwoken)

Dr. Alan Klein is an instructor at UBC's English Language Institute. From 2004-2006, he was a Senior English Language Fellow in Cambodia for the U.S. State Department and taught at the Royal University of Phnom Penh and the Royal University of Agriculture. He has a particular interest in how international students adjust to the cultural demands of academic study at North American universities.



Layne Kriwoken (Alan Klein)

Layne Kriwoken is currently teaching at UBC's English Language Institute. Previously he spent over a decade with immigrant services in Canada as a language instructor and employment counselor. He has also taught English in Thailand, Taiwan, South Korea, and Yemen.

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1 Topic, 3 Takes

Weighing the Pros and Cons of Standardized Testing

Standardized testing is a heated topic in the world of education. Proponents of standardized testing argue that results can be empirically documented, and, consequently, test scores can be shown to be valid and reliable. Valid and reliable tests can be generalized and compared across a large population of schools and students to determine the effectiveness of programs and teaching.

Opponents of standardized testing argue that these tests define the curriculum and narrow the focus of instruction. Teachers will teach to the test, and, consequently, what is not taught is not learned. This is not quality teaching because teaching to the test disfavours higher-order learning and creative thinking, which may be essential skills for full integration in Canadian society, and are essential skills for instilling values of participatory democracy.

Regardless of the position one takes toward standardized testing, the reality is that these tests exist, and often their implementation is imposed. Governmental agencies might push settlement organizations to use standardized tests to produce quantifiable results in the practice of adult education to determine funding levels. Universities wish to attract international students, but require certain scores on standardized tests before students can be admitted. ESL programs often have to grapple with the 'test du jour' to deliver quality programming that acknowledges these tests, but doesn't focus solely on them.

In this 1 Topic, 3 Takes, the issue of standardized tests is discussed by three participants who chose not to opt for anonymity.

David Munro is the Centre Exams manager for Cambridge ESOL Examinations Centre.

Stella Chung is the Program Manager - Language Training at S.U.C.C.E.S.S..

Eddy White is an ESL instructor who recently completed a Ph.D. in Applied Linguistics, with a focus on classroom-based assessment.

Do you think that standardized tests are helpful to teachers, policy makers, and taxpayers?

DM: Perhaps the first question to ask is, what do we mean by "standardized tests"? There is such a variety of both type, and to be frank, quality, that any discussion on the topic needs to have this point established first. For example, it could certainly be argued that developing globally recognized standards of achievement is not only useful but fundamentally necessary; on the other hand, the utility of a test which yields little more than a cryptic number based on a rather dubious set of assumptions is debatable, to say the least. In the face of increased demand by taxpayers and other stakeholders for an easily understandable measure of achievement, it is all too tempting for policy makers and even teachers to fixate on a percentage, a number, or a letter grade, without first answering the most basic questions of a) what are we measuring, and b) why are we measuring it?

SC: Standardized tests might not be the best tool to measure learners' learning outcomes, but without any standardized tests, teachers, policy makers, and taxpayers would lack conformity to evaluate their program objectives and learning outcomes.

EW: It depends on the context. In some cases, standardized test can actually interfere with effective learning and teaching. I suspect teachers may be more resistant to this than policy makers and taxpayers.

Are standardized tests fair to all economic, social, and cultural segments of a diverse student population?

DM: Again, the first questions to ask are, what are we assessing, and why are we assessing it? Examples and questions in an exam may favour knowledge of cultural content rather than comprehension of material presented. More fundamentally, by its very nature, a paper-based objective multiple choice test will tend to favour students who are primarily visual or auditory learners, and may disadvantage students whose strengths tend to be more kinaesthetic, musical, spatial-relational, etc. On the other hand, it may be necessary to use a norm-referenced, psychometric type of test in order to identify a student's deficits in reading, language processing, written output, etc.

SC: No test is ever fair to any group of learners since tests are often limited by the type of questions and allotted time. But if learners are informed what they will be expected to do at the end of a program or training, they are in control of their learning. They can find ways that suit their learning styles to meet the program objectives. No class has ever had a homogeneous group in any learning environment. Each learner has his or her own learning styles, but if a diverse student population has the same learning objectives and expectations, standardized tests can be employed.

EW: If the tests are effectively constructed and are being piloted to meet validity and reliability requirements, then yes, they could be fair. This is often

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1 Topic, 3 Takes, continued

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not the case, however, and some population segments may be discriminated against.

Do you think teachers can use standardized tests to help improve the effectiveness of their teaching?

DM: I read an article recently about the need for increased “assessment literacy” among teachers of English as a second/foreign language. At one point it said that all too often, tests are something we merely inflict upon students, who in turn see them as a game of “guess what the teacher wants”. It still boils down to the basic questions of “what am I testing, and why?” or, “what do I want my students to learn, and how will I know when they’ve learned it”? There are still far too many classes, going by the rather nebulous title “Conversation”, that sort of drift along with no real identifiable objectives, but then suddenly have a grammar or vocabulary component tacked on at the end to give them an air of respectability. On the other hand, an entire publishing industry has sprung up around the notion that this or that method (usually rote memorization) is guaranteed to boost one’s test score by 50 points in two weeks. “Teaching to the test” then becomes an epithet, conjuring up images of docile drones labouring away in silence under stark fluorescent lights, when in fact, a well-designed, valid, and reliable test that is correlated to well-defined, functional criteria may have a very positive “washback effect” on a course. “Teaching to the test” then becomes teaching students what you want them to learn, and knowing they’ve learned it when they pass the test.

SC: The standardized tests can definitely be used as a means to remind teachers what their learners are expected to do at the end of a program. This helps teachers to plan various ways to help their learners to meet the learning outcomes.

EW: No, not really. Improving their assessment literacy and use of

formative assessment would better serve teacher effectiveness.

When should standardized tests not be used?

DM: Because standardised tests often appear to be more objective, they are prone to misuse; for instance they are often used to advance certain political agendas that may not serve the best interests of the students. On the other hand, a test may be well designed, neutral, adjusted for socio-cultural factors or learning differences and so on, but may simply be inappropriate for the learning outcomes of the course; for example, a standardised achievement test may not be suitable as a mid-term formative assessment, whereas criterion-referenced portfolio assessment may capture students’ strengths and weaknesses more accurately.

SC: If the results of the standardized tests do not serve any purpose, the learners would not be interested in taking the tests and the teachers would not be able to evaluate what the learners have been taught.

EW: When the tests have little or no connection to the objectives and learning goals of a course, they should not be used.

Do you think some really good students do poorly on standardized tests?

DM: Once again, one has to ask, what do we mean by “really good”, doing “poorly”, and “standardized tests”? I recall one particular student from Italy in a TOEFL class I taught several years ago. He turned in a brilliantly written, 3-page essay in response to a TWE prompt that did not fit any of the assessment criteria in the book. I sat down with him and told him that his essay could either score a ‘6’ (top score), or a ‘0’ (did not complete task) depending on how the assessor chose to apply the criteria. Although it was a brilliant, thoughtful, and creative piece of writing, it was as though he chose to ignore the basic requirements of thesis statement, topic sentence, supporting arguments and

conclusion. One could either say that he was a “really good student who did poorly on a standardised test”, or that he couldn’t be bothered to apply himself to the task set before him.

SC: In reality, tests create anxiety and some good students might do poorly on tests. But since it is a standardized test, they can re-take the test to meet the standardized requirements. This is like getting a driver’s license. A novice driver is expected to meet standardized driving skills in order to operate a vehicle on the road.

EW: Sure. For example, you could have a student with very good academic essay writing skills do poorly on a standardized test that does not assess this skill.

Do you think standardized tests are a good assessment for how well a student is learning?

DM: At the risk of sounding like something out of an old cowboy movie, I have to say that a standardized test is simply a tool, and whether it is good or bad depends on how it is used—or constructed, for that matter. Objective, norm-referenced tests that give us a snapshot of a student’s ability at a particular moment may be better suited to use as placement tests, whereas achievement tests benchmarked against a framework of reference would, as the name implies, tell us more about how well a student has achieved the aims of a course. Ultimately, however, there is no substitute for a good teacher’s expert judgment on a student’s progress over the duration of the course.

SC: If the standardized tests are well planned and well designed, I believe they can be one of the good assessment tools that reflect how much the learners have gained from programs whose learning outcomes are clearly listed.

EW: Again, it depends on the objectives of the particular course. Standardized tests can simply test students’ test taking abilities or memorization skills, not the degree of learning taking place.

Wired Teacher article

Same Old, Same Old or Old New, New Old?

by Barbara Siennicki



Barbara Siennicki is CALL Head Teacher at the English Language Institute at UBC. The past in the present seems to be a recurring theme with her. Barbara's very first presentation for TEAL, with Vivian Howard in 1986, was entitled "Aristotle in the ESL Classroom." Her favourite tense is the present perfect.

Something Old:

For some of us, it may be hard to believe that anything having to do with computers can be regarded as classic, but that just might be for those of us who still remember when automobiles had cassette players. At the TESOL conference in Boston this April, the Electronic Village had a series of presentations that were designated as Electronic Village Fair Classics. Presenters in this category had been invited to repeat a presentation they had given in the past. One that caught my eye concerned a website - Nicenet - that first appeared in 1997. Obviously it is still current since, according to statistics published on the site on May 4, 2010, it had 52,000 users sign on in the previous month alone. While this number may not seem impressive when compared with, say, Facebook, keep in mind this is not a social networking site and it has no advertising whatsoever. Its purpose is to provide a class management system to teachers and students that requires no technological skill on the part of the teacher or user, no institution-based server space,

no time at all to set up, and no money. Yes, it is free.

In brief, this is what you can do at this site:

- Post a class schedule (assignments, due dates, suggested timelines)
- Post topics for discussion
- Post links
- Send changes (modifying due dates, for example) at any time; students will be notified immediately at their own email address as well as on the course site
- Have students post their assignments for other students to read and discuss
- Send private emails from the site (teachers and students)

Unless limited by the teacher, students may also do most of the above, including setting up their own websites (useful for smaller discussion groups, for example).

Setting up a class is a snap. The teacher simply signs on, gives a name to the course, and receives an access code. The teacher can either type in the names of all students or, more commonly, give the access code to the students who sign themselves in.

One strong point for teachers is that there is some degree of control over viewers to the site. Only those who have the key can access it. It allows students to have the pleasure of posting their material for others to read without the embarrassment of having absolutely anyone who wanders into the site seeing spelling or grammar errors.

Another plus is that unlike in Vista or similar more elaborate class management systems, it

is easy to correct an error. One simply clicks edit and makes the correction.

Just as easy as editing text is the teacher's freedom to enable or disable permissions to perform various tasks including entering the class.

Interested? Here's the URL: <http://www.nicenet.org>.

Two caveats, neither particularly frightening: First, students should type assignments in Word and paste them into the Conference area rather than writing them directly in the empty text boxes. Doing so ensures the site won't timeout before the student finishes his homework. Secondly, although the site says that first and last names are optional information, students (and teachers) should put them in. In some schools, the teacher may write a title (e.g., Mr.) for his first name if that's what the class is accustomed to calling him. Students may want to put in fictional names, but they'll need to let the teacher know what they are. If the names are left blank, the writer will be identified as Anonymous 2154683 with the teacher and each unnamed student having a different number - not exactly a friendly-looking class list.

Something New(er):

I am reluctant to tell you about this next site - SlideShare - because some people find it addictive. Here, you can find slide shows on just about anything. Fortunately, most of them don't have sound, otherwise no one would ever bother going to class or to a conference again. I believe it first appeared in 2006.

<http://www.slideshare.net>

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Wired Teacher article, continued

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Again, the TESOL Conference in Boston led me to this site, this time after the fact. I was in correspondence with one of the presenters who mentioned he'd posted his presentation on SlideShare. No longer does one have to apologize for a shortage of handouts, as happened at a few TEAL presentations in May. The presenter can simply upload the material on SlideShare and avoid the post-conference flurry of collecting email addresses and sending out copies individually. Since viewers may comment on the slide show, presenter and participants can still obtain feedback and maintain contact with one another.

Unlike Nicenet, SlideShare claims to have 25 mm. monthly visitors and 70 mm. monthly pageviewers. The fact that SlideShare distinguishes between visitors and pageviewers may cause you to suspect there's more than meets the eye with this site. You're right. While the site is free for users (if you're just viewing and not uploading a presentation, you don't even have to fill in the free registration), advertising on the site is moderately aggressive. (I delete all cookies after using the site on my home computer.) The site itself seems to be directed at those in marketing and business although that should not dissuade you from visiting it since the presentations range from cute puppy pictures to what appear to be slideshows based, perhaps, on erudite journal articles or thesis defense presentations from across the globe.

Like Wikipedia, to which teachers used to give the "begone, vampire" sign but now consider it a good starting place (but never a final destination) for research, SlideShare also seems a fine place to begin discovering what is going on right now, around the world, in various disciplines. Having been carried away by what I saw on the site, I wondered if I could find a presentation about Nicenet that would save me some time preparing for a workshop I was doing for teachers at my institution. The good news: I typed in Nicenet and instantly found a presentation that demonstrated how to use it. The bad news: it was in Spanish. That led me to investigate where the presenters' institution (Universidad de Carabobo) was located (in Bárbula), and then where Bárbula was (in Valencia, no not that one, the one in Venezuela) and then what happened in this place (Bolivar's victory in battle that brought about independence for Venezuela and in which his faithful dog was killed) and then a picture of a statue of the dog and then I warned you. SlideShare is a good place to start, but beware of taking on yet another site that will lead you and your students away from itself and off in all directions while the assignment due date looms. Bad for time management, but perhaps a nod to the now much maligned 'old fashioned' idea of Renaissance humanism once aspired to by those who used to have cassette players in their cars?

Hey, is there a SlideShare presentation on Renaissance humanism? No, but look, here's one called "Would You Hire a Renaissance Man?" . . . sorry, can't get this article finished, Shawna . . . have to watch this slide show.



Truth or Dare?

[you decide...]

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Mary Ashworth Memorial Scholarship Fund at UBC

The Mary Ashworth Memorial Scholarship Fund has been established at the University of British Columbia to honour the life and works of Dr. Mary Ashworth, who passed away peacefully at her home at St. Mary's Lake, Salt Spring Island, B.C. on January 20th, 2009.

Donations to the Fund will be used to create an endowed scholarship for UBC graduate students focusing on teaching English as a second language (TESL). Every year, an outstanding TESL graduate student will be recognized for her or his academic achievement and the scholarship money will assist the recipient with the cost of continuing her or his education at UBC. This scholarship will be a fitting and lasting tribute to Mary for her outstanding contributions to ESL teaching and to language policy in Canada and beyond.

Many BC TEAL members may remember Mary Ashworth as a driving force behind the founding of BC TEAL. As Pat Wakefield, a founding member of BC TEAL and a dear friend of Mary, says, "Mary advised and encouraged the five founding committee members of BC TEAL, working quietly behind the scenes. Mary played a key role in designing the BC TEAL Foundation, whose first award was named in her honour. Her many students have gone on to play key roles in BC TEAL over the years."

Known for being an eloquent and tireless educational activist, Mary Ashworth pioneered teaching ESL in Canada. She spent her career championing tolerance and diversity in Canada's social and educational systems by helping to shape the attitudes of future ESL teachers. She was an outspoken advocate for the language rights of immigrants and on Canadian language policy and pedagogy.

Mary was born in England on June 3, 1923 and emigrated to Canada after World War II, during which she served her country in the WAAF. She spent the first year in Toronto and worked as a secretary in an office of the CPR. When Mary came to live in Vancouver, B.C., she attended Normal School should this be capitalized? -Shawna Williams 4/21/10 2:22 PM and began her long and illustrious teaching career.

As an elementary and secondary school teacher in British Columbia from 1955 to 1967, Mary witnessed first-hand the plight of non-English speaking children in the classrooms of the time. She took the lead in training new teachers to teach ESL at a time when the field was still in its infancy. During her tenure as a Professor in Language Education at the University of British Columbia (where she earned her B.A., and M.Ed., and was awarded a Professor Emerita of Language Education status, honorary doctorate, an alumni award and award of distinction), Mary developed the ESL program, which grew from one course into a full year program, along with graduate programs at both the master's and doctoral levels. As a result, UBC became established as the only training facility for ESL teachers in Canada outside of Toronto at that time.



Mary travelled tirelessly across the country conducting workshops and delivering keynote addresses. She sat as the chairperson for several professional planning committees and acted as a consultant to school boards, provincial departments of education, and First Nations groups grappling with the need to understand English while preserving their own language. She also taught in Africa (Uganda in 1966 and Ethiopia in 1969), and participated with the Canadian Teachers' Federations' "Project Overseas".

Mary's achievements were extraordinary. She played a vital role in global research, development, and instruction related to ESL, teacher training, and multicultural education. She wrote and published seven books

on teaching English to immigrant children. Her first book, *Immigrant Children and Canadian Schools*, published in 1975, described what was happening across Canada for immigrant children. Her ideas in this book were hailed well ahead of public policy and practice at the time. It was the first book on the topic to appear since 1918. She also published over 40 chapters and articles in other books and journals.

In 1988, then City of Vancouver Mayor, Gordon Campbell, declared the week of March 14 to 20 as "ESL and Mary Ashworth Week". A conference entitled, "ESL in the 90's: Multicultural Education and Policy" was dedicated to Professor Ashworth for her work as a pioneer in the field of ESL teacher training in British Columbia.

Please consider supporting UBC Faculty of Education's efforts to make Mary's memory live on as well as make a difference in the lives of graduate students who are pursuing advance studies in the field of TESL, for many years to come. The UBC's fundraising dollar goal for this scholarship fund is \$30,000. We have already reached 50% of that goal through the generous gifts from family and friends of Mary Ashworth. Once we reach our dollar goal, an endowment fund will be formally established at UBC which will support \$1,000 each year toward an outstanding graduate student in TESL.

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For more information on other ways to donate to the Mary Ashworth Memorial Scholarship Fund, please contact Jacqueline Doering at 604-827-5213 or at jacqueline.doering@ubc.ca.

Thank you very much for your support!!

BC TEAL Conference Highlights

by Nila Gopaul and Lois Amerding, Conference Co-Chairs

BC TEAL was not without its painful sense of exile and loss as thrice we looked for a place to call home for the 2010 conference. It was the start of an adventure. With some effort and three taps of our heels, we selected the British Columbia Institute of Technology's downtown campus to hold the 42nd BC TEAL Conference on April 30 and May 1, 2010. Notwithstanding the initial bumps and financial costs, the end result was a very successful conference. Our great team of volunteers devoted long hours and was dedicated to making everything fit together – even though it was the first time organizing a conference for many of us. We had 14 committees in total, made up of volunteers from BCIT's International Student Entry Program, Immigrant Services Society of British Columbia, Simon Fraser University, Cambridge University Press, Douglas College, and Capilano University.

Albeit comments that we were tight for space, the feedback from our keynote speakers, the publishers, the 60 plus presenters, and 450 participants was tremendously positive:

- Relevant, inspirational, practical and interesting; thank you.
- This year's conference was amazing!
- So many good, interesting workshops, great organisation...thoroughly enjoyable and informative. Thank you to everyone who made it happen!
- Overall well organized; I really appreciate all of the effort that goes into making the conference happen.
- It has been a while since I did a conference, but I really enjoyed this one and learned a lot.
- Well-organized; very professionally done .
- This is to congratulate you on the success of your conference, and thank you for inviting me. It always energizes me to have such responsive audiences, and I also enjoyed meeting so many individual teachers. They each have different perspectives and different circumstances of teaching, so I can learn a lot from these small conversations.

Our relevant theme, **Taking Stock: Teaching and Assessing in a Global Context**, attracted numerous ESL professionals across the province who discussed a wide range of topics including: ESL errors; decision-making around the Grade 12 provincial exams; BC post-secondary assessment on accuracy ; and CLB, CEFR, FSI,

and IELTS assessment frameworks. In addition to the assessment focus, there were a number of interesting and inspiring workshops and presentations, which were divided into themes such as Teacher Training, Skills Development, Administration, Socio-cultural issues, EAP, ESLA, and PD. The quality of the workshops and the passion of the presenters were truly awe-inspiring and helped raise the bar once again. Between workshops and presentations it was good to visit the centrally located publishers' display where attendees could chat with people on the cutting edge of delivering learning knowledge.

Judy Gilbert, one of the plenary speakers, helped kick-start the conference. She equipped educators with a priority list of essential concepts in teaching pronunciation. Later in the afternoon, a plenary panel with a range of voices examined the challenges, choices, and consequences of assessment practices. The following day, Alister Cumming, our second keynote speaker, addressed two fundamental assessment issues: the concern around defining standards of language proficiency and language opportunities, and the possible outcomes of aligning language tests, curricula, and pedagogical practices.

The Friday night wine and cheese event -- sponsored by IELTS (Simon Fraser University and Global Village English Centre, Vancouver), and music by Rene Hugo Sanchez -- was a highlight of the conference. At this event, the Teal Charitable Foundation (TCF) held its first Silent Auction. The TCF was able to raise \$1100 for a new scholarship fund for refugee ESL learners. At the TCF awards ceremony on Saturday, we also heard two inspiring speeches from the 2010 David C Lam Award recipients, Arman Zamani and Josephine Schrott. Of course we cannot forget massage therapist Jean Luc Pilliard, who helped to improve our circulation, increase our body awareness, and get us ready to attend the next workshop. Mr. Pilliard donated his time, and all generous proceeds went to the Teal Charitable Foundation.

The rewards of this conference will be long lived! I wish to thank our sponsors, volunteers, participants, presenters, and, of course, our keynote speakers Alister Cumming and Judy Gilbert.

Please participate in the **ESL Week Writing Contest**. The deadline for submissions is now June 30, 2010. Winners will receive a \$100 gift card from Chapters and have their winning entries published in TEAL News.

Also, please join us at the 43rd BC TEAL Conference at Simon Fraser University, Harbour Centre in May 2011! Thank you and see you soon!

Teaching Tips

Ideas for Working with Multi-level Classes

by Alma Krilic, MEd.



Alma Krilic is a language instructor at the English Language and Culture Program at SFU Harbour Centre. Alma has a Master's degree in Second Language Education (SFU), a TESOL Diploma (VCC) and the Provincial Instructor Diploma (VCC). Alma studied German Language and Literature in Belgrade, Serbia and is a German language teacher at Westside German School.

I have yet to teach an ESL class where all of the students are at the exact same language proficiency levels. These are often not difficult to manage, but sometimes the discrepancies among students' proficiency levels are more obvious and such situations can prove to be challenging even for the more experienced language teacher. I would like to share some teaching ideas and strategies for how to deal with a multi-level class. I have developed these ideas over time (through experience and education) but they came particularly useful for me this semester at SFU's English Language and Culture Program. We were faced with a class which consisted of students who were at very different language proficiency levels. So my training, experience, and instincts kicked in. The following is what I did to take on the challenge.

Pair up higher level students with lower level students - Students who are more fluent in English can benefit from working with students who

are not as fluent. Higher level students will use language in a more natural way, further develop their own fluency and review the material themselves.

Split the class in half - One group consists of more fluent students and the other of less fluent students. The language teacher can work more intensively with either group, depending on the situation and, of course, check on both groups frequently. Additionally, higher levels could be working on more challenging tasks while lower levels work on easier tasks, but both work on the same topic.

Vary the degree of difficulty of materials and activities - For example, one class or one week will be easier and then the following class/week will be more challenging, then back to a bit easier materials and so on. Higher levels will develop more confidence while working with easier materials and the lower levels will not feel left out. Pairing up students of different levels while working on more challenging language points can also be useful. (See above.)

Give short and frequent quizzes - Frequent quizzes are useful to find out how lower levels are doing and to find out how "high" the higher levels actually are (a nice reality check!). Quizzes also provide information on how to proceed with curriculum topics and activities so the language teacher can make changes in a timely manner.

Work more on vocabulary development - The more vocabulary students have at their disposal, the more they will be able to express themselves (or: the more ideas they will be able to express). While working with the class as a whole and on the same topic/language point, higher level students might be asked more challenging questions (such as asking for more specific information: to give the correct spelling of a word, to put a new word or

expression in a sentence, or provide a detailed definition of a concept, etc.), while the lower level students could give simpler and more straightforward answers. But the point is to engage all students in the same activity and vary the degree of difficulty of the questions.

Take students on field trips - Field trips are an excellent teaching "tool", both linguistically and culturally! During field trips, the language teacher can focus more of her attention on lower levels and not have higher levels feeling left out (and vice versa). Going outside and being in the community provide a lot of stimulation so higher level students have plenty to do while the teacher might be engaged with more focused language practice with the lower level students. Then all students can be asked to write about their experiences. Tasks can be graded according to difficulty level.

Get a tutor/mentor to assist lower level students with their assignments - The language school might make a deal with experienced and good language tutors. I am often approached by students who are looking for a tutor and it would be useful to have a pool of tutors who have checked out to be good. Of course, this all depends on how willing and able our students are to pay for their own tutor. At least, they will know they are in good hands.

Even though a lot of time and effort is put into selecting or developing an effective language proficiency placement test for our students, there is still a possibility of having to teach a multi-level class. Juggling everybody's needs (and staying sane along the way!) is never an easy thing to do but it is possible to keep everyone focused; I hope these teaching tips will assist instructors in providing quality education for all students.

A New Addiction: the TESOL Convention

by Karen Rauser



Karen Rauser with a couple of Boston Troopers in the middle of the Boston Commons.

SIDEBAR: Karen's Notes to Self

- Never make a connection through Chicago O'Hare.
- When flying standby, make sure you are signed up as some kind of "rewards club" member so you get bumped up on the list.
- If going to a conference, bring rollerblades or a scooter – or at least those wheelie running shoes – to get from session to session.
- Arrive as early as you can to a session, pick up handouts and then sit near the back in case it is a dud and you need to make a run for your second choice.
- Despite the best Google Maps, Boston is one of the easiest cities in America in which to get lost. For this reason, visitors are almost completely at the mercy of cabdrivers, who will certainly drive the 'cah' into 'Bahston Hahbuh' if they can get away with it. (They can.) Pay and tip by credit card, and ask for a receipt - the bad cab drivers hate that.
- Come early and stay late! Pre and Post convention activities are worth it!

This March, I had the incredible honour of attending the TESOL Convention in Boston as a BC TEAL Mary Ashworth Scholarship recipient. In the following article, I hope to give you a small glimpse of the rich experience of my TESOL adventure.

After a red-eye flight and an irritating connecting flight cancellation in Chicago's O'Hare Airport (I'm told this is a regular occurrence), my traveling companions and I found ourselves in a Boston cab heading for our downtown apartment. Once we

were settled in, a reconnaissance mission revealed that we were very close to some of Boston's most famous sights (including Cheers!), but more importantly, only a twenty-minute walk from the convention centre.

The TESOL Convention always has pre-convention activities and workshops during the days leading up to the conference and so I took advantage of my early arrival by attending an all-day IELTS workshop. You would not believe the amount of free books and manuals you get from going to these kinds of promotional presentations! The workshop was also incredibly informative in terms of background research, test components and class preparation ideas.

On Wednesday night, Harvard's own Howard Gardner opened the 2010 convention as the plenary speaker. He spoke on the importance of cultivating the five minds in education: the disciplined mind, the synthesizing mind, the creating mind, the respectful mind, and the ethical mind. I confess to some disappointment that his talk, though interesting, was not more focused on his work on multiple intelligences in different cultures as per his book *Multiple Intelligences Around the World* (Chen, Moran, and Gardner, 2009). Ah well, the next time I am at Harvard, I will have a talk with him.

On Thursday morning at 7:30am (that's 4:30am Pacific Standard Time!) the Convention's workshops, presentations and research forums started amidst an atmosphere of babbling excitement and wide-eyed anticipation (no, it wasn't just me!). The most vexing challenge I encountered was my inability to clone myself in order to experience all of the fascinating sessions that were occurring at the same time. It actually took an amazing amount of organizational skills to plan out the three days of the conference for maximum personal benefit, ranking schedule choices according to research interests, recognizable names, and by default, location (it takes twenty minutes to walk from one end of the Boston Convention Centre to the other). I did manage to attend a number of sessions on pronunciation, oral proficiency and a very interesting one on neuroscience and language teaching.

On Friday, it snowed and I laughed. So much for an invigorating walk—I took a cab to my "Breakfast with TESOL's Best" meeting. My co-presenter and I spent the rest of the morning preparing for our 10:00am presentation, "Teaching Conversational Rhythm in the Speaking Classroom." To our great delight, our session was well attended (over 150 attendees) and well received. Much of the rest of that day went by in a blur, but from my notes I see

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A New Addiction: the TESOL Convention

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that I attended a number of significant research presentations on multilingual teachers of English. In addition, I spent some time in the exhibition hall (what fun!) and volunteered at an Interest Section booth. In the late afternoon, Cambridge University Press hosted a promotional event for their Touchstone program, and I was so pleased to run into four fellow BC TEAL members at the other end of the continent! Come the end of that day, I was ready to collapse from exhaustion, but managed to drag myself out with friends to taste some of Boston's world famous seafood.

On the last day of the conference I resolved to finish with flying colours, so I took in sessions from 7:30am all the way through until 5:30pm. Among the most valuable was a workshop on conference planning which will certainly come in handy as we put together the Fall BC TEAL Interior Conference in Kelowna (plug: Saturday, October 16th, 2010, at Okanagan College). Though my shoes wore thin, it was certainly worth it, and I ended the day with a very nice conversation with David Nunan.

As I reflect on the key lessons from the conference, a number of trends stand out. First of all, it may come as no surprise to most of you that the pendulum is still swinging in the direction of an integrated focus on form (grammar, pronunciation, vocabulary, language structure and analysis). Second, brain research and its implications for language learning and teaching still hold a strong fascination – most of these sessions had standing room only. Third, practitioners and researchers are together reevaluating approaches to assessment. Standardized testing has gone through some major transitions to attempt a more authentic evaluation of target language use. Classroom-based assessment as well, has moved very quickly in the direction of benchmarks, rubrics and portfolios. Lastly, there is a burgeoning appreciation for the journey of the multilingual English teacher, as the focus in teaching turns away from the “native speaker” model and toward teacher language awareness and multilingual competence.

TESOL Boston 2010 will forever hold a special place in my heart as my very first TESOL convention, but it certainly won't be my last. I am totally hooked. I think I will become a professional convention junkie.



ESL Writing Week Contest

In honour of ESL Week (April 25th - May 1st, 2010), we are pleased to announce our 3rd Annual Writing Contest! The contest, sponsored by BC TEAL and Oxford University Press, is open to all teachers and learners of English as an additional language. Submit poems, articles and stories related to learning and teaching English.

Categories include:

- ESL Instructors (up to 1000 words)
- ESL Learners:
 - Benchmark Level 3-4 Students (up to 200 words)
 - Benchmark Level 5-6 Students (up to 500 words)
 - Benchmark Level 7-8 Students (up to 500 words)

Winning entries will be published in TEAL News, and winners will receive a \$100 gift certificate to Chapters!

Deadline for submissions is June 30, 2010. For more information and to email submissions, please contact

admin@bctéal.org

This event was made possible through the generous donation by Oxford University Press.

16TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE of the International Association for World Englishes



World Englishes

July 25th to 27th, 2010

Simon Fraser University

Morris J. Wosk Centre for Dialogue
Vancouver, Canada

WORLD ENGLISHES TODAY: A CRITICAL RE-EVALUATION OF THEORY,
METHODOLOGY, AND PEDAGOGY IN GLOBAL CONTEXTS



Photo contribution: Martin Cooper

PLENARY SPEAKERS:

Dr. Braj B. Kachru, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, USA
"World Englishes Today: Panditocracy vs. Pragmatic Reality"

Dr. Sue Wright, University of Portsmouth, UK
"English and Europe: The Legacies of Nationalism, the Requirements of Europeanisation and the Influence of Globalisation"

Dr. Nkonko Kamwangamalu, Howard University, Washington, D.C., USA
"English in Language Policy and Ideologies in Africa: Challenges and Prospects for Vernacularization"

REGISTRATION AND EVENT DETAILS:

<http://www.worldenglishesvancouver2010.com/index.html>

This conference is co-sponsored by the Department of Linguistics; Faculty of Education; Department of English, Simon Fraser University; the IELTS Testing Centre at Simon Fraser University; and supported in part by a grant from the Simon Fraser University Vice-President, Academic's 2010/2011 Conference Fund.

The 2010 Recipients for the David C. Lam Award

Arman Zomani

Arman came from Afghanistan as a refugee three years ago, after several years of displacement. A student at Sir Charles Tupper Secondary School, his biggest goal is to get a job in the United Nations or with the Red Cross. He was truly inspired by the Red Cross when it reconnected him with his family two years ago.

Arriving in Canada in 2007, Arman had had no schooling of any kind. He began in a special class and had learned to read and write by the end of the year. He joined the ESL class, reached the top of the class, and has now transferred into the mainstream English class.

He works with refugee and ESL students, tutoring and mentoring them. He is also involved in a youth leadership group, My Circle, to which he has contributed over 200 hours as a volunteer. He would like to attend UBC and study in the Arts One Program.

All of his referees speak of his leadership and determination as well as his kindness.

How a Post-Secondary Education Will Enable You to Make a Positive Contribution to Canadian Society

Education can open many doors in a person's life. Ever since education entered into my life, I started to see and think of the world differently. Through education I could explore myself and now that I will be able to graduate from high school within three years, and I would like to pursue my goals in a post-secondary education. A post-secondary education can enable me to make a positive contribution to Canadian society by acknowledging as well as learning to expand my understandings of Canada's culture and traditions, attain my desired job to serve the community, and advance Canadian workforce and contribute to its economy.

Canadians come from many different racial and religious backgrounds. Even though the majority of Canadians are Catholic or Protestant, many more belong to other religions therefore it is not easy to define a typical Canadian family. However, there are many likenesses among Canada's diverse society that bonds all the Canadians together to function as a big family. A post-secondary education will be the key factor for me to learn more and more about the culture and traditions of this diverse society. In a post-secondary education I can pursue my goals for life and also learn and get to know the Canadian society even better by joining and associating in one or some of the many different social clubs such as a reading club. I can meet people and socially interact with them which would be a

source of learning about the culture and traditions of Canada's diverse society. When I have greater understanding of different religions and traditions, then I can respect and effectively work and contribute to this multicultural society. Also a post-secondary education enables me to attain my goals to advance the Canadian society and work-force.

In this technologically advanced world, it is proved that with a post-secondary education an individual can get a better job in the society. a better job for me means to serve and contribute a better quality of work and appreciation not only for myself but also for the Canadian society. My biggest goal is to get a job in the United Nations programs or with the Red Cross. I believe these organizations benefit all the people in a society. I was truly inspired with the Red Cross when it reconnected me and my family less than two years ago. To work for that organization, I will need a post-secondary education to learn the skills and trainings required for that particular job of serving and presenting the society with great support and contribution for those in need. Thus, a post-secondary education enables me to positively contribute as an educated Canadian and achieve my goals which are primarily based to contribute to society.

Canada is confronting the challenges of a global economy as it struggles to achieve prosperity on the domestic market and competitiveness at the international level. It is well known and widely accepted that Canada can not rely upon its natural resources forever. Therefore Canada should take advantage of a better educated population and highly qualified workforce. I can positively contribute to Canadian society by attending a post post-secondary education, to get a job to earn a living and be employed to support the democratic Canadian government. As a democratic country it its essential and beneficial to have more educational programs to have educated people to be employed and contribute to the economy by paying taxes. When I can attain a better job with higher education, I can not only contribute to the government's economy but also I can serve the society in a professional way. As a result of a better job, I can bond myself with the economy of Canadian society.

Hence, it is not only crucial but it is necessary for me to have a post-secondary education because I never had the privilege of studying in my life before. In addition as a citizen of Canada, I can make positive contribution to Canadian society through a post-secondary education by acknowledging a swell as learning more of Canada's diverse culture and traditions, attaining a job that will not only benefit me bu the society, and to the Canadian workforce and its economy

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The 2010 Recipients for the David C. Lam Award continued

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Josephine Schrott

Moving to Canada from Germany two and a half years ago, Josephine has since overcome second language challenges to become one of the top students at the school she attends, Kelowna Secondary School. She hopes to become a foreign services officer or to work in some other capacity in international relations.

She is the founder of the school's Human Rights Club, which has raised funds for the Congo. She is also the Chair of the YMCA Youth Advisory Council and has been involved in an environmental group.

Josephine would like to study international relations at UBC Kelowna. Her referees speak of her leadership qualities and of her ability to write.

Personal Essay

Education is the key to a nation's success. The more citizens with a post-secondary education Canada has, the richer it is. Every person, including myself, plays a part in shaping Canadian society according to their circumstances and talents. Equipped with a post-secondary education, one has many more possibilities of making an impact. I feel that by furthering my education, I can open doors to many exciting opportunities for making a difference and positively impacting Canadian society.

As I am now, I have dreams and ideals. I dream of a better Canada and a more peaceful world. I follow the work of the Canadian government, anxiously waiting for the prorogation of parliament to end. I sign petitions and write letters to the local MP, I hope for laws to be passed or not to be passed, but I have little influence on what decisions are made. My passion and energy are within me and I have the will to act, but I can only do so on a very small scale. I use as much of my energy as I can to make a difference, for example by joining a number of different school clubs and volunteering at a number of different events. I even founded my own club to take my regular signing of online petitions to a level further and involve other people in the process of fighting for human rights. I have helped to raise many thousands of dollars for a number of different great causes, but I want to do more. I have the capacity to make a much greater difference, but for now, I just don't have the tools.

I plan to work as a Foreign Service Office, a Public Policy Leader, for a humanitarian organization, or as a Psychologist. A post-secondary education is

required for many jobs in the above fields. These are the jobs that will allow me to make a positive contribution to society. As a Foreign Service Officer, I could represent Canada's interest abroad and maintain good relations with other countries. As a Public Policy Leader, I could work behind the scenes of the Canadian government, influencing public policy by researching issues and possible solutions and advising politicians on how to act on these issues. As a Psychologist could help people realize their full potential and cope with problems in their lives.

A post-secondary education is exactly what I need to grow as a person. It will give me the knowledge and the tools to get a challenging job where I can use my full potential. John Tillotson, a 17th century English prelate, was right to say that "Ignorance and inconsideration are the two great causes of the ruin of mankind." Continuing my education will help me rid myself of some of my ignorance; it will provide me with a much deeper understanding of Canadian society and the political system. It will give me access to facts and research about issues Canada is facing, and ways these problems might be solved. I will also get a deeper look into history, which is always good to refer back to and to learn from. A post-secondary education will make the impact that I can have as an individual much greater and much more effective. I am convinced that wherever I end up and whatever way of positively impacting Canadian society I find, having a post-secondary education will be of great value not only to me but also to Canada as a country.

Key Concepts and Theories in TEAL

by Dr. Li-Shih Huang



Dr. Li-Shih Huang, Assistant Professor of Applied Linguistics and Learning and Teaching Scholar at the University of Victoria, has a decade of EAP and EAL instructional and curriculum design experience at the undergraduate and graduate levels. She was also the recipient of TESOL's Award for Excellence in the Development of Pedagogical Materials.

Welcome to the first installment of the "Key Concepts and Theories in TEAL" column. In each issue of *BC TEAL News*, I'll be sharing key concepts and theories in the field of teaching English as an additional language (EAL). The goal of this column is to help EAL teaching professionals stay informed about the latest developments in the field, and to further link those concepts or theories to current research and practice. In each issue, the column will introduce a key term (i.e., what does it mean?), followed by an account of what relevant research tells us (i.e., what does the research say?), and an explanation of how EAL teaching professionals can use the concept or theory introduced (i.e., what can we do?).

Language Learner Strategies

While teaching EAL learners, chances are that you have come across various terms, such as "learner strategies," "learning strategies," "language-learning strategies," "strategies for language learning and language use," "self-regulated learning," "strategic behaviours," and "language learner strategies." What are they referring to exactly? Is it useful to teach EAL learner strategies? What does the research say? How should strategies be incorporated into your own teaching contexts in a way that is learner centered, cost effective, theoretically informed, and empirically substantiated?

What does it mean?

As with many terms and theories in the field of second-language acquisition, there are a variety of different opinions on how best to define "language learner strategies." There is a growing consensus, however, that language learner strategies are the conscious, goal-oriented thoughts and actions that language learners use to regulate cognitive processes, with the goal of improving language learning or language use. By the same token, in the language-testing context, these strategies are defined as conscious thoughts and actions that second-language test-takers use to acquire or manipulate information, such as predicting, translating, planning, monitoring, and linking; these thoughts and actions are directly related to the test-taking process with the goal of successful test performance.

Since the 1970s, researchers have proposed different ways of classifying language learner strategies. Oxford (1990), for example, provided one of the most widely used classification systems for "language-learning strategies," which entails the following six categories: (1) *memory strategies*, which

involve relating new material to existing knowledge in the process of storing and retrieving new information; (2) *cognitive strategies*, which involve manipulating the target language to understand and produce language; (3) *compensation strategies*, which involve using the target language despite missing knowledge; (4) *metacognitive strategies*, which involve consciously examining the learning process in order to organize, plan, and evaluate efficient ways of learning; (5) *affective strategies*, which involve self-talk or mental control over affect; and (6) *social strategies*, which entail interacting with others to improve language learning. Other ways of classifying language learner strategies include those based on their functions (i.e., language learning vs. language use/testing strategies), their purposes (i.e., metacognitive, cognitive, memory, compensation, social, and affective), or the skills involved (i.e., listening, speaking, writing, reading, and vocabulary).

Regardless of how strategies are classified, they often overlap because the learner's behavior may serve a variety of different purposes. Let's use an EAL learner's act of interrupting a conversation to seek clarification about an unknown expression as an example. The learner may initiate the act to become a participant in the conversation by interrupting or eliciting the help of another speaker (a social strategy). At the same time, the learner may be trying to buy some time (a compensation strategy) to plan what to say next (a metacognitive strategy). Asking the interlocutor to explain an unfamiliar expression may also help the learner memorize the new expression (a memory strategy). The act of seeking clarification by politely

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Key Concepts and Theories in TEAL continued

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interrupting may also generate a positive feeling, because the learner feels more involved in the conversation (an affective strategy). As you can see, any action might involve multiple individual strategies.

What does the research say?

During the past three decades, research in second-language acquisition has demonstrated that learners' reported strategy use is associated with second-language learning and performance. Studies also have shown a positive association between proficiency levels and using certain types of strategies, especially metacognitive (e.g., Purpura, 1999), cognitive (e.g., Oxford & Ehrman, 1995), and compensation strategies (e.g., Dreyer & Oxford, 1996). Although researchers at one end of the pedagogical spectrum have advocated "strategy-based instruction" (e.g., Cohen, 1998), which requires many hours of strategy training that must be integrated into the existing curriculum, in recent years, more and more researchers have established the importance and efficacy of strategy awareness raising (e.g., Feyten, Flaitz, & LaRocca, 1999; Nakatani, 2005) over explicit strategy instruction. Strategy awareness raising emerged from research showing that strategy-based instruction produces only qualified or mixed success; it is also not clear that the time required to involve both instructors and students in full-blown strategy training justifies the gains made.

In the very early days, much research was grounded in the assumption that language learners should emulate the strategies used by "good language learners," but later research evidence has shown that no single method has proved to be effective for all learners and that being at an advanced learning stage also is not a necessary condition for more effective strategy use

(Huang, 2004). In addition, the earlier assertion that metacognitive strategies have a direct, positive impact on performance, as an extensive body of research on learner metacognitive strategy training (e.g., Holunga, 1994; Goh & Taib, 2006) attests, may not necessarily be supported across all learners and learning contexts. For example, using such metacognitive strategies as *attending*, *setting goals*, and *self-evaluating* may help learners in one context (e.g., non-testing, normal learning situations), but have adverse consequences in others (e.g., testing or performance in high-pressure situations). The most recent research has also supported the argument against the belief that the more strategies a learner can employ, the better, or that learners with higher proficiency use a great variety and number of strategies (e.g., Anderson, 2005). These current findings hint that each strategy constitutes a complex set of behaviours that work with or against one another to affect language performance in positive, negative, or neutral ways (e.g., Swain et al., 2009; Huang, 2010). As such, it would be misleading to claim that the use of any type of strategy (e.g., metacognitive strategies) is always beneficial to learners of different language proficiencies in various contexts, or that any strategy by itself works for learners executing a communicative task.

What can we do?

Researchers have made significant contributions to understanding the role that strategies play in language learning. Instructors also can contribute greatly by engaging in research-like activities in their own classrooms. Such activities will help you make research-informed decisions about your own instructional practices. What strategies do your students already employ

in their learning or use of EAL? Are you or your students aware of the strategies already in their repertoires? A first step to raising learners' awareness of their strategy use can be accomplished by choosing instruments that students can easily complete in class or at home (e.g., Strategy Inventory for Language Learning, which takes approximately 20 minutes to complete, is intended to assess an individual's overall strategy use in language learning). It's important to point out to learners that the Frequency of Strategy Use scores derived from the inventory indicate only general personal preferences in strategy use, and thus learners should not attach a value judgment to having a high or low score overall or for any of the six strategy categories mentioned earlier.

We now know that what matters for individual learners is not accumulating or using a wide variety of strategies, but managing a repertoire of strategies that work in various contexts to complete specific tasks. It's important for learners to be aware of how they usually process language-learning tasks and how certain strategic preferences may work for or against them when performing different communicative tasks. The teacher's role is to provide the necessary, suitable meditational tools and opportunities so that learners can internalize the strategic process and take full control of using EAL. Raising learners' awareness of their strategy use can be more effectively facilitated by having learners engage in task-specific reflection individually, in pairs, or in small groups by having them asking themselves questions about, for example, what challenges they have faced while completing a language-learning task; what strategies they have used before, during, and after executing the

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Key Concepts and Theories in TEAL

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task; and what they would do differently the next time they encounter similar challenges.

Try using various activities that will give learners opportunities to experiment with and evaluate strategies based on different tasks on an ongoing basis. Such strategy-based reflective activities, which take only 10 minutes, can help learners self-evaluate their strategy use while completing communicative tasks. The pedagogical emphasis is on creating learner-centered activities that may facilitate meaningful strategies that learners form through socially interactive and self-reflective activities, rather than on direct, explicit teaching or transmitting of strategies to students. It's important to keep in mind that individual learners' abilities to use strategies and then to reflect on their strategy use may be affected by their learning styles, cultural backgrounds, fields of specialization, and so on. As such, awareness-raising activities are most effective when they are facilitated in a community of practice that encourages a mediated cycle of self-assessment, goal setting, strategy exploration, and re-evaluation, and that eventually leads learners to the stage of self-regulation. At that stage, they can evaluate and transfer strategies to other relevant situations and tasks, and effectively manage their own repertoires of strategies to optimize their language learning and performance.

The author welcomes readers' comments or further questions about the content of the column, as well as suggestions about theories that they would like to have discussed. She can be contacted at lshuang@uvic.ca.

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BC TEAL Board Annual Reports for 2009-2010

President's Report

submitted by Michael Galli

This year required a large amount of management of the BC TEAL Conference.

- The first institution that had committed to host the Conference was unable to follow through.
- This required a search for a new host institution, which was quickly located, but which was also unable to host the 2010 conference.
- The late notification required quick action. I was able to engage BCIT, the institution I am employed with, but unable to acquire the facilities without cost, as in previous years. This has been offset by successful increasing efforts to raise sponsorship, which has doubled that of the previous year.
- Continued dialogue with Languages Canada to promote more cooperation between our organizations. On-going efforts are being made in this area.
- Represented BC TEAL at the Oregon TESOL Association's November Conference.
- Met with representatives to discuss increased cooperation between our Associations.
- Initiated discussion on a joint conference, with the possibility of including WATESOL.
- Attended and assisted at BC TEAL Interior Sessions at Thompson Rivers University and BC TEAL Vancouver Sessions at Vanwest College
- Established Guidelines for Professional Conduct at BC TEAL PD Events (posted on TEAL Website).
- Managed hiring process of BC TEAL Office Manager and Bookkeeper.
- Ongoing efforts to engage more institutions and individuals in the Association.
- Ongoing efforts to strengthen unity of profession throughout the province; e.g. Interior and Island.
- Ensured the stability of the Association's finances by increasing revenues through increased efforts to market BC TEAL PD events and raise sponsorship of events.
- Revitalized the BC TEAL Office by installing a new work centre and rearranging furniture to maximize efficiency of the office.
- Maintained correspondence with BC TEAL

Membership to communicate and encourage participation in upcoming events and Board activities; e.g. committees and chair positions.

Special Interest Group Report

submitted by Joel Rhein

The following report outlines SIG activity for 2009/2010.

Administration SIG

An Administration SIG was founded in the fall of 2009. It had its first meeting in January 2010. The group agreed to meet three or four times a year. The next meeting will be held in the spring of 2010. The group agreed that the SIG should focus on the following general themes:

- How can administrators bring a culture of professionalism into the workplace? How can administrators motivate teachers to see the value of professionalism? How can administrators and teachers transform the workplace into a learning organization?
- How do you persuade funders and owners of institutions to provide funding for professional development and training?
- What are effective and efficient ideas for professional development? What are innovative and useful ideas for institutions that lack the funding for professional development?

The group implemented a networking session at the annual conference for the Administration SIG. The purpose of this session was to provide administrators and teachers a forum to discuss issues pertaining to Administration.

Assessment SIG

An Assessment SIG was established in the winter of 2010. It had its first meeting in February 2010, which was followed by another meeting in April. Both meetings drew a large group of teachers from all over the lower mainland. The following issues were dealt with at the meetings. First, the group agreed to meet three or four times a year. The next meeting has not been scheduled yet. Second, the group decided to focus on the following themes:

- How are assessments culturally bound? What explicit or implicit assumptions of culture are in test-based assessments? How does language and culture

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interfere with assessments?

- What makes a good quality assessment? What makes an assessment valid and reliable? How does length and time of an assessment impact validity and reliability? How can we make an assessment that can be applied across a range of cultures and languages without losing validity and reliability? How do we ensure assessments represent the student's skill?
- What are issues with pathways / articulation between ESL programs and schools? How can these issues be overcome?

Furthermore, the group submitted a proposal for an Open Forum at the TEAL Conference in April. Details of the forum are outlined below.

Title: The CLB, CEFR, and Academic English Language Assessment

Summary: This open forum explored participants' experiences of how the Canadian Language Benchmarks (CLB) and the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) serve or may potentially serve the need of academic English language assessment.

Topics Explored

- What assessment tool(s) does your college use, for what purposes, and what are the pros and cons of each one?
- Do you feel the need for a more universal assessment, and if so, why? If not, why not? What system might assist in universalizing assessment between colleges?
- What are the different categories of goals your students have (academic, workplace, professional, etc.)? How do these categories affect assessment in your college?
- How can we change our assessment systems in order to help our students to achieve those goals, including articulation? How do you think having a more universal assessment will affect the EAL "industry" in Canada?
- What other questions/comments do you have about assessment?
- Other Proposals

Some members of the group suggested opening a dialogue between the SIG and the Federal Government regarding CLB implementation. A

time frame and approach has yet to be discussed, and will be discussed at future meetings.

Newsletter Report

submitted by Shawna Williams

TEAL News was sent to the membership twice in 2009 – in spring and fall, and the winter 2010 was ready in February. These issues were full of interesting articles – both solicited and unsolicited. These issues also saw the revival of TEAL News columns from the past: Teaching Tips and the Wired Teacher. Additionally, these issues hosted the new column, 1 Topic, 3 Takes. From spring 2010 yet another new column will grace the pages of the newsletter: Dr. Li-Shih Huang of the University of Victoria has proposed a regular column to build on the professional knowledge and practice of teachers in the classroom.

The newsletter committee managed to secure a steady layout manager, former TEAL president, Sarah ter Keurs. While Sarah is not intending to hold this role indefinitely, it has been a relief having a competent and steady presence in a role that was challenging the previous year. Sarah has been working to establish a template that will be relatively easy to pass along to future layout managers.

The connection between the TEAL News committee and the TEAL Charitable Foundation had somehow been disrupted, with no TCF announcements or award winners' essays being published since the summer issue of 2008. That link has since been reestablished, and TCF's presence is making itself known again within the pages of the newsletter.

Novi Hamdali has continued in her role as advertising manager. She was able to entice new clients, and even some from the past, to advertise within the pages of the newsletter.

In addition to Sarah and Novi, the newsletter committee's official and unofficial members for 2009 – 2010 comprised of: Tracey Bell, Susan Dobie, Sandra McGoldrick, Eilidh Singh, Marina Crawford, Marti Sevier, and Jane Wangersky. Their assistance in various ways has been very much appreciated.

The conversation still continues about the best way to deliver TEAL News. Should it be a document that is accessible freely on the BC TEAL Website? Should it be limited to members only? Would it be better in a web format than a print-version? These are the kinds of questions that the newsletter committee and the TEAL board will continue to contemplate.

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As for me, my two-year term as editor is soon coming to an end, and we're in the process of finding a new editor. It's also likely other talented members will join the committee. It will be interesting to see TEAL take on a new flavour under the helm of a new editor. I have really enjoyed my tenure as editor of TEAL News. In this position, I have met so many people in this profession from across the province. I have also really built up my organizational, networking, copyediting, arm wrangling, and time management skills. It's been a fantastic experience.

Conference Report

submitted by Lois Armerding and Nila Gopaul

Venue

The British Columbia Institute of Technology is the site of the 2010 BC TEAL Conference. We are thankful for the space and resources in this facility as well as the very convenient location.

Presenters

Many thanks go out to our keynote speakers – Alister Cumming and Judy Gilbert speaking on Teaching Spoken English: Seven Essential Concepts and Curriculum Frameworks and Language Assessment Practices respectively. As well, we are pleased to have a special plenary panel – Eddy White, Alister Cumming, Mike Burri, Craig Huish, Jennifer Martin, and Christina Stechishin – discuss Classroom-based Assessment: Challenges, Choices and Consequences. And, a big thank you goes to all the fantastic workshop presenters who volunteered their time to share their expertise and knowledge at our conference!

Volunteers

No large-scale event could ever be successful without the hard work of our volunteers. We had amazing committee members who put this entire conference together: Brian Wilson, Carolyn Chubb, Eilidh Singh, Elmira Mafi, Eva Tschizmarova, Ian Sutherland, Jacqueline Hebert, Janice Penner, Katie Land, Kimberly Thompson, Lisa Herrera, Marilyn Pierlet, Michael Galli, Novi Hamdali, Rebecca Kullman, Sandra Carignan, Sarah Fleming, Seonaigh Macpherson, Tony Souza and Winnie Pang. Thank you as well to all the many other volunteers who helped out on the actual days of the conference.

ESL Week

BC TEAL is hosting its 3rd annual writing contest during the week of April 25th to May 1st for ESL Week! Deadline for submission is May 30th.

TEAL Secretary Report

submitted by Nicholas Collins

The main efforts this year have focused on building up the numbers of members of TEAL, at the same time increasing the retention rate of our current members.

There has been some success in both areas, but much work remains to be done. Many of our well-intentioned (former) members simply drop off the list because they do not realize their membership has expired. We must and we can do a much better job of keeping our members in the fold.

To this end we printed new letterhead and the President wrote a letter of invitation and welcome to prospective members. A new brochure was printed and the membership poster was revamped and reprinted.

An email was sent to every post-secondary institution in B.C. outlining the benefits of joining TEAL. An offer was made to provide posters as well as a brochure and President's letter to every ESL teacher in that institution.

We are exploring new ways of advising members that their annual fees are due, as well the possibility of an automatic renewal system. In addition, we have offered every non-member delegate to TEAL 2010 a complimentary membership for one year.

As a non-profit organization run by volunteers, TEAL depends on a healthy membership for its funds, work, and creativity such as this 2-day event.

We hope in the next year to see a continued trend of more members and a high percentage of renewals.

PD Committee Report

submitted by Mike Burri

Two PD Sessions were held in the fall of 2009, both very successful.

- The Interior Sessions, hosted by Thompson Rivers University (TRU) in Kamloops in October 2009
- The Lower Mainland Sessions, hosted by VanWest College in Vancouver in November 2009

Both TEAL Sessions generated positive revenues for BCTEAL

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TRU Session

- 78 registered attendees, 3 publishers, and several volunteers took part in the TRU Sessions.
- The plenary speaker was Jennifer Terrel.
- Poster sessions were displayed and added a nice touch.

VanWest Sessions

- 59 registered attendees and 5 publishers were present at the VanWest Sessions.
- The plenary speaker was Sarah Fleming.

Global Village Victoria will be hosting the 2010 Spring Sessions on June 12, 2010.

- An announcement is posted on the TEAL website and one was sent out to the general TEAL membership.
- Eilidh Singh has created a poster for the Sessions (posted on the TEAL website).
- A call for presenters was sent out at the end of March 2010.
- Online registration is opening at the end of April 2010.
- Martin Breuhan has agreed to be the keynote speaker.

Okanagan College is hosting the 2010 Interior Sessions on October 16, 2010.

PD Chair Succession: 2010 – 2012

- Rebecca Kullman (BCIT) and Susan Peake (CapU) will co-chair the PD Committee.
- Mike Burri will assist in the organization of the 2010 Spring Sessions and the 2010 Fall Sessions (held in Victoria, and Vancouver respectively).

2011 Census - Teachers' Kit



Canada's next census will be held in May 2011. Educators play an important role in its success by ensuring that students understand what a census is and what they and their families need to do to complete the census form.

Statistics Canada's 2011 Census Teacher's Kit is designed for grades K-12. Each kit contains eight cross-curricular activities that are classroom-ready and have been tested to meet provincial curriculum standards. Subject areas covered include language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, geography, history, visual arts, and English as a second language (ESL), allowing students to understand how the information collected in a census can be used. A fun census colouring book and challenging game activity sheet are also included in the kit.

An Adult Education Kit is also available under separate cover. Designed for adult learners, particularly those learning ESL, the kit has several activities that provide opportunities for listening, speaking, reading and writing. Activities explain what a census is, how the 2011 Census will work, the questions that are asked and why the census is important. Students will learn how their private information is protected, and how to seek help if they have difficulty answering the questions. Workbooks can be taken home so students can refer to them when answering the census questions.

Both the 2011 Census Teacher's Kit and the Adult Education Kit are available free to educators. Quantities are limited. Reserve your kit online at <http://kit.census2011.gc.ca> or by e-mail at censuskit@statcan.gc.ca. Delivery of the kits will begin in September 2010.

For more information about the census, please visit our website at www.census2011.gc.ca.

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TEAL Charitable Foundation Call For Applicants



The TEAL Charitable Foundation (TCF) offers awards, scholarships and bursaries to support ESL teachers, students and programs. You are eligible if you meet one or more of the following criteria:

- ✓ Membership in BC TEAL
- ✓ ESL / EFL teaching experience
- ✓ TEAL community volunteer experience

Funding is available for:

- teacher education and professional development in ESL
- conferences travel expenses
- travel expenses to a commonwealth country for further studies or research in the field of ESL
- promotion of AIDS and/or health education through ESOL instruction
- research projects, special projects, conferences, seminars, matching funds, seed money and teacher/learner projects

Awards range from \$200 to \$4000

NB The David C Lam Scholarship is awarded to graduating high school students of ESL who have shown great improvement and who intend to pursue post-secondary training in BC.

Please apply for the following awards by the deadlines so we can support you and your ESL community.

Award	Next Deadlines
Projects Funding	October 15 th 2010 and April 15 th 2011
TEAL/TESOL Bursary	October 15 th 2010
Mary Ashworth Scholarships	October 15 th 2010
David C. Lam	January 31 st 2011
AIDS/Health Education Fund	October 15 th 2010 and Feb 15 th 2011
Pat Wakefield/British Council	February 28 th 2011
Nan Poliakoff Memorial Fund Award	October 15 th 2010

Visit our website for additional information and application forms at:

www.bctéal.ca

You can also contact the TCF office at:

Phone: (604) 736-6330

Fax: (604) 736-6306