



TEAL NEWS

ASSOCIATION OF BC TEACHERS OF ENGLISH AS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE

SPRING 2007

The Reading Circle:

Unlocking Text for the ESL Student



Margaret Franz (left) and Lesley Hemsworth (right) at the TESOL Arabia Conference.

by Lesley Hemsworth

In March 2006, my colleague Margaret Franz and I had the opportunity to attend and present at the 9th Annual TESOL Arabia Conference held in Dubai, United Arab Emirates.

During our session, we presented findings of a small-scale research project we conducted with a group of ESL students at Kwantlen University College in the fall 2005 semester. These students were enrolled in an intermediate level reading and writing course in the aca-

ademic stream. The research focused on students' experiences related to text analysis using a student-directed "Reading Circle" versus traditional teacher-led exercises.

The original idea of the "Reading Circle" has evolved from Harvey Daniels' (1994) work *Literature Circles; Voice and Choice in the Student-Centered Classroom*. Daniels and his colleagues use fundamental principles of "reader response criticism" to provide guidance for teachers of L1 elementary and secondary reading classes. Because of its inherent communicative approach to reading, ESL practitioners have begun to adapt this approach for their students.

To prepare students for a reading circle, the teacher assigns a specific role to each member of a group consisting of four or five students. These roles are as follows: the "Discussion Director," who leads the reading circle and ensures all group members participate equally; the "Connector", who relates the content of the story to his or her own experiences; the "Vocabulary Builder", who defines key words or phrases from the reading selection; the "Passage Picker", who selects his or her favourite section and provides rationale for that selection; and the

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"Summarizer", who paraphrases the passage and/or significant contributions to the discussion.

In the reading circle we filmed for the purposes of this research, it was evident that students were fully involved with the text and that they had utilized critical thinking skills to compare the content of the story to their pre-existing knowledge of the subject matter. Another benefit of using the Reading Circle was that it required that students use all language skills with minimal teacher intervention.

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Letter to the Editor

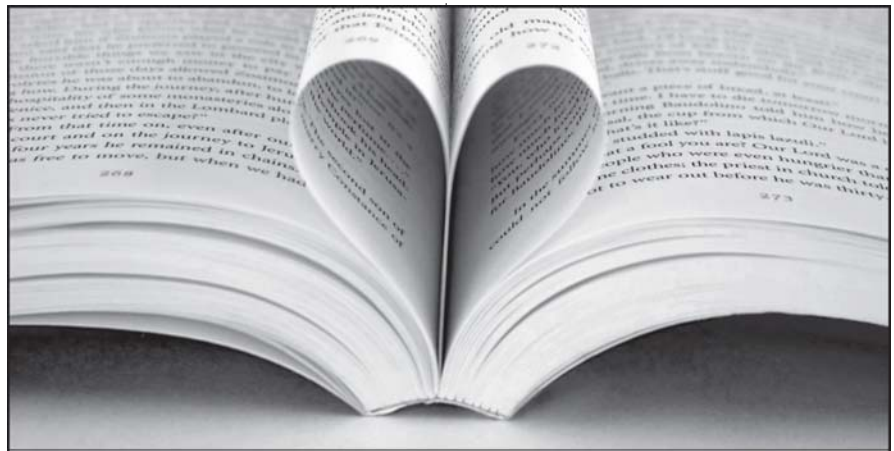
Not Social Responsibility but Language Learning

It seems to me that language teaching and teacher training has enough to preoccupy itself with without worrying about “cultural and racial tensions” that might crop up in language classrooms. Ms. Wendy Royal (*TEAL News* Fall 2006) is concerned that teachers will henceforth be “reluctant to teach social responsibility”. Since when has it been in the remit of language teachers to teach social responsibility?

The so-called “colonial project”, whether classical or neo, is often a distraction, not to mention inflammatory by nature. I believe that political and social issues should be used in the classroom for their motivational and contextual value but they are no different from other themes that could be used to give students reasons for producing language. Whatever one feels about proselytizing and moralizing in other contexts of education, teaching social and political issues is certainly not the brief of Adult ESL programmes.

Ms. Royal calls for more critical multicultural pedagogy to be included in teacher training programmes and quotes approvingly one teacher trainee who said that “education is about awareness and social change”. Yet most people, professional and lay, believe that education is about *knowledge and learning*. Our duty as ESL teachers and trainers is to attend to the language learning of students. What is of real concern to teacher training programmes is the lack of language awareness and pedagogical skills of teachers entering the profession as well as those already in it. We certainly have more than our hands full dealing with that.

John Attard
Coordinator
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A POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTION





May & June 2006

Submitted by Nicholas J. Collins

First please let me express my gratitude to the TEAL Charitable Foundation for bestowing upon me the honour of receiving this prestigious award, named for the first President of TEAL. It was an amazing journey in both the physical and educational sense. It was gruelling and arduous but immensely rewarding.

My interest in New Zealand was piqued when I read a research paper on Academic Reading submitted from New Zealand to the TESL Canada Journal. My goal in visiting this country was to see what process the seven public universities used for preparing and promoting their ESL students to Academic Study. Academic readiness is a huge question in Canada for both domestic and international students at post-secondary levels. For a long time, I have witnessed the disasters of using one raw score to admit or deny entry to Academic Studies. Denial is a frustration and a delay, often completely unmerited, but the more serious is admission to courses which are then failed purely for lack of language. After experiencing failure, students are very reluctant to go back to ESL. They have suffered, academic teachers have suffered and competent students have suffered. I had heard New Zealand had dealt with the situation. I wanted to see first-hand what they had done and how successful they had been.

Day One in New Zealand began in cold and rainy weather but the warm welcome by Janet von Randow of the University of Auckland more than compensated for the chilly climate. Although the weather and body clock were unfavourable, I was most impressed with the University—a series of lovely buildings high up in a city that contained one third of the country's population. The University has 33,000 students, which puts it ahead of McGill and on a par with UBC. (New Zealand has a similar population to B.C. at four million plus.)

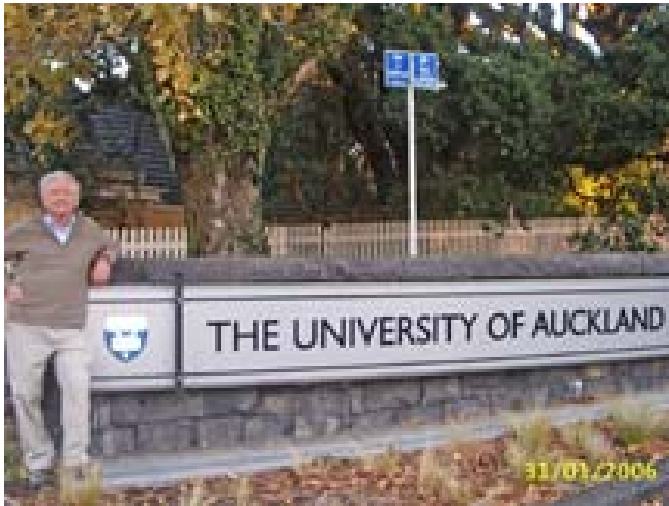
Janet instantly took me into her warm office, adorned with a Gastown postcard of the steam clock, and talked of the UBC ELI and the LPI. As the Administrator of the Diagnostic English Needs Assessment, she spends a lot of time working with ESL students already in programmes of subject study who need further practice in all aspects of academic study: note taking, in-class presentation, research essays, etc. This is a free and voluntary support service. We shared a common view—it recurred throughout my whole visit—in recognizing that standardised tests and their simple numerical scores do not make for useful entry requirements to academic studies. Good students at the University self-assess and see her Centre as an essential part of their

future success. The key features of DELNA assessment are:

- No cost
- No exclusion from other courses
- No appearance on academic record
- Identification of strengths and weaknesses in academic English
- Provision of feedback on English skills at the beginning of studies
- Guidance to most appropriate English language support

My next stop was the University of Vaitako in Hamilton, a couple of hours south of Auckland. It is set, like so many New Zealand universities, on a beautiful rural campus. Approaching the Language Institute one could see lovely green grass rugby and cricket pitches. The Institute had just been announced as the IELTS Testing Centre of the Year 2005. They have a very thorough series of preparatory studies. The Certificate of Attainment in English Language has three levels which move students into a Foundation Studies Programme, Undergraduate Degrees or Postgraduate Studies. Their range of courses was impressive. They have many entry days and run year round. Again, with the exception of IELTS, they have left standardised testing behind and created an internal system that serves their purposes far better.

A day's drive took me to Palmerston North and Massey University, another delightful, treed campus just on the edge of town. The faculty building was a lovely old mansion that served the most delicious flat whites (coffees, I had learned). Here my host was Averil Coxhead, who modestly never mentioned her own publications on critical reading and vocabulary, including the development of the Academic Word List. Massey is a huge University spread over several cities, with a total student population of between 40 and 45 thousand. They have a very sophisticated



Nicholas Collins in New Zealand

series of support networks. One of them is the Student Learning Centre, where John Wyatt, whom I was lucky enough to meet, is the resident English Language Writing Consultant. They have an Online Writing Centre (similar to Purdue's), as well as a Writing Colloquium. All the professors I met here stressed the importance of having students do critical reading of a content-area passage and produce academic level writing based on the passage. They need sources to evaluate a passage and need to read carefully for what is missing. Like their colleagues at the University of Vaitako, Massey University has developed its own internal assessment systems and also uses IELTS.

Another factor that really impressed me was the New Zealand Ministry of Education's Code of Practice for the Pastoral Care of International Students. I learned that many private schools had recently closed in New Zealand. Some of the reasons were simply financial, but others were inextricably linked to the quality control demanded by the Ministry. This was not a self-regulating system but an independent authority. Only signatories to the code are allowed to admit International Students. It is simple, and it works, and everybody is well served by it. I am

forwarding a copy of the Code to the B.C. Ministry of Education. New Zealand seems to have avoided most of the problems that we have encountered with schools closing or charging huge fees for worthless certificates, and is thus seen as a very desirable destination.

Because of the limited inter-island ferry winter schedule, I had to schedule an off-campus meeting (my only one) in Wellington with a colleague from the Victoria University of Wellington. Angela Joe is the Program Director for English Proficiency. Over a very tasty curry, she outlined her University's extensive and detailed programme. Like most Universities I visited, Victoria had a Foundations or Preparatory Program that linked with EAP to prepare students for University courses. With

Another factor that really impressed me was the New Zealand Ministry of Education's Code of Practice for the Pastoral Care of International Students.

an overall score from their battery of in-house reading, writing and speaking tests, students at the appropriate level may enter the University Programme. All the marking is done in-house in teams of 2 or 3 on a cost-recoverable basis. There is an item analysis project underway which is part of a research project looking at language requirements for University entrance. This is a unique

project in New Zealand. We talked well into the night and left after an extensive overview of our respective institutions.

Early the next day, I was heading out of town towards Canterbury to visit Lincoln University. It was a lovely rural drive out into agricultural areas. The University has about 4,500 students, 50% of whom are international students and many live in residences on campus. This is the largest percentage of any of New Zealand's Universities. The six listed major areas of instruction are Agricultural & Life Sciences; Bio-Protection and Ecology; Environment, Society and Design; Commerce; English Language; and Foundation Studies. Here not only was I royally hosted by a very busy Academic Coordinator of English Language, Scott Langdale-Hunt but I was invited to sit in on an Academic Reading Class.

This class had only 9 students in it. There were several Thai students, an Iranian and some students from China and Japan. All were moving on to University Programmes at Lincoln, post-ESL. The students were reading texts which they then had to either summarize or make notes on.

It was indeed a very vigorous and happy 90 minute workout.

After class, the students told me why they selected

New Zealand: its good quality of education, natural beauty, affordability, safety, and the ability to take paid employment. This last factor came up time and again in conversations with teachers and students. They all seemed very aware that, till recently, Canada had a very restrictive view on such employment. The EAP Programme at Lincoln is recognised and

continued on page 6

continued from page 5

approved by New Zealand Vice Chancellors and the University as an alternative to the TOEFL and IELTS. It seemed that every University had designed its own in-house programme and testing for University Entrance.

The next day I set out for the University of Canterbury. It was a grey and wet day. Uniquely, I had been unable to make contact with a name

“Students deserve better.”

at this institution. I knew they had an English Language Centre and an International Office but had not received any responses to my requests for a visit. The rest of the day made me think how International students must feel at times in a strange land. Parking near the Student Union Building, I espied the magic ‘INFORMATION’ sign. When I explained my quest I was directed to a building which housed the English Department. This was not the right place, so I took new directions and landed up in the Education Faculty. Wrong again, but now I was given clear instructions to the Preparatory Studies Building-some 30 metres from my car. Drenched in spite of wearing a thick overcoat and carrying a large umbrella, I stopped for a life-saving hot chocolate and then tackled the building. Here I was warmly received with the words that I was in the wrong place but not the first person to have made this mistake. It seems I was in need of the English Language Centre which was, of course, on the third floor of the Chemistry Building!!! Say no more. The pleasant secretary there explained that there was nobody to talk to me but that further information could be had in the registrar’s office. There I went; it was still pouring and I escaped into the warmth and dry of my sixth building of the day. On explaining what I was look-

ing for, I got a reaction that I had never expected, “Why do you want that information? Your English seems quite good to me”. I gathered a handful of pamphlets and ate a late lunch in the student cafeteria. I failed to meet any international students in spite of chatting and talking to all those in my immediate vicinity. It would seem that ESL is not a huge, nor well-known programme in this University of 12,500 students.

The program has three main levels of ESL: General EAP, Preparatory Academic English and EAP. There then flows either an IELTS Preparation Course or a Certificate of English for Tertiary Studies. This latter satisfies language requirements for degree entry. I had little trouble recognizing the antipodean usage of ‘Tertiary’ for our Post-Secondary. My next stop would challenge my interpretation of ‘paper’.

My next stop was Dunedin, home of the University of Otago, and my host was Jane Hislop, the coordinator of LING121: English for Academic Purposes. This course prepares ESL students for using English in an academic environment. A mixture of classes and tutorials, the course focuses on oral presentations, note taking, academic text reading, and essay writing. When I first met Jane, I found out that we had been born about 8 kilometres apart in the UK and had both worked in Aichi Prefecture in Japan. She then put me at ease by asking, ‘Have you noticed that in New Zealand a paper is a University course?’ ‘Ah, that explains a lot’, I thought. Too bad I am leaving soon as I feel I am just getting the hang of the language. With 70% of the ESL students coming from Asia, group work and oral presentations were stressed. Summarizing Academic Papers was also a key feature of the course. It lasts a typical semester length of 13 weeks and concludes with a 1,500 word essay.

As I left Dunedin, I realized I had a suitcase full of brochures, papers,

calendars and other information from the trip. It was an amazing collection of information. (I have donated it to the TEAL Office). Everything had been very positive and welcoming and trouble free. Several people had mentioned some recent problems for International Students and the June 2 edition of *The Press* had an article entitled, ‘Students deserve better’. In essence it said International students deserve good quality support services for their special needs. It documented two recent tragic events in the lives of International Students studying English in New Zealand. International student fees should cover such support services as special counsellors, academic mentors and advisors, says the author John Pickering (himself a former manager of International Student Support Services at the University of Canterbury), but are often diverted into other areas of the University. This was just about the only negative commentary I found in two weeks of visits.

I will conclude by repeating my thanks to Pat Wakefield, the TEAL Charitable Foundation and to all the wonderful people I met along the way in New Zealand. It was the professional development visit of a lifetime.

I encourage all TEAL members to consider applying for one of the TEAL Charitable Foundation Awards. They cover broad and widely differing topics and are an amazing resource for the whole membership.

Nicholas J. Collins, Capilano College

Nick Collins began teaching English in Las Palmas, Canary Islands in 1964. Since 1979 he has taught ESL at Capilano College in North Vancouver; He has served as President of TEAL and TESL Canada and Second Vice-President of TESOL, chairing TESOL 1996 in Chicago. He played a role in the creation of the Westcoast Reader, The TESL Canada Journal and the TEAL Charitable Foundation-the world’s first ESL Foundation.



TESL Canada Learners' Conference 2006 in Winnipeg

Morena Alfaro & Ivy Cheng

When we knew we were invited to join TESL Canada's Learners Conference 2006 in Winnipeg, we started to feel excited. We were not only interested in another English study experience, but we also cherished this opportunity because we might meet new people and learn more information while living in Canada as new Canadians.

Since we arrived to Winnipeg airport, we found people were very friendly and enthusiastic, the hotel had a great hospitality service and the volunteers provided help during the whole conference.

During the two-day Conference, we engaged in all activities and contributed our ideas in the workshops about workplace safety and rights, language benchmarks, public education and the justice systems in Canada. As mothers of the teenagers, the information of gangs, and Canadian public school systems was very useful to us. In the education workshop, Hetty Roessingh from the University of Calgary gave us a very good presentation about how to set realistic expectations on our children after landing in this country, and how to help them merge in this new environment with their existing abilities. The knowledge enlighten parents to participate in their children's identity development and recognition of their experiences that they have already had. This information and some case studies made

parents realize that the new language and culture is difficult to our children. It increased our awareness and understanding within family members. In the justice workshop, Cecil Sveinson from the Winnipeg Police Department gave us the information about the current situation of gangs and the culture and potential intimidation towards our children. Even though it has become a big concern in some Vancouver areas, we barely knew anything about gangs. Everybody was so interested in those sessions that we continued to ask more questions even when the sessions were finished. On Saturday, all the learners from different parts of Canada happily exchanged email addresses in order to keep in touch with each other in the future.

On the last day we had a great time walking on The Forks Market, which is a tourist historical place near to the hotel. On Sunday morning, we came back to Vancouver



with great memories of this wonderful learning experience, and being thankful to TESL Canada and BC TEAL for this opportunity that they gave us.

Morena Alfaro and Ivy Cheng, students at VCC, went to TESL Canada's Learners Conference 2006 in Winnipeg sponsored by TESL Canada and BC TEAL.

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Ebtisam, one of Monica's students and her host for the day

LIVING AND TEACHING IN NIZWA, A SMALL TOWN IN OMAN

ONE WOMAN'S POINT OF VIEW

The first thing you notice is the heat - up to 50 Celsius in the summer, and a comfortable 25 in the winter. You NEVER need to wear winter clothes - as I write this it's December 9, and I'm wearing a sweater. A rainy day is a nice day, and the students get excited and all want to go out to play!

For six months of the year it's really comfortable, and the other six months it's unbearably hot. There are a couple of nice pools at the hotels, and we have AC in our apartments and vehicles, but we have to go outside sometimes and it's not pleasant. Since Oman is a Muslim country, women (and men) are required to cover their arms and legs, but it would be so nice to wear a sleeveless top on a hot day!

People dress differently here. I first noticed this at the airport, where the men were all wearing long white robes (dishdashas) and the women wear black abayas, which are worn over their dresses. Hair is covered with headscarves, and I have never seen my female students' hair!

Women are supposed to wear shorts and tee shirts to the beach, and one day I was wearing my one-piece bathing suit and some stones landed at my feet! Some schoolboys threw stones at me another time when I was walking in the wadi. I'm not sure why they do this, and I was modestly dressed that time.

Weekends are on Thursdays and Fridays, though they are talking about changing it to Fridays and Saturdays, so we will share one weekend day with the rest of the world. There are no long weekends, Christmas or Easter holidays, but there are a lot of other holidays, the biggest one being Eid, the big religious festival when families get together and slaughter a goat or a cow and barbecue it. We do get Christmas day off, but we are not allowed to say ANYTHING about Christmas in the classroom. Sometimes the students say, "Why aren't you a Muslim, teacher?"

The hardest time is Ramadan, when expats are asked not to smoke, eat or drink in front of the students, and it's a long walk from the classroom to the teacher's room. Coffee shops and restaurants are not open during the day, not even Starbucks in Muscat, the capital.

This is a very gender-split, patriarchal society, and the two sexes don't mix, even at weddings. I attended one, and the only man present was the groom, who arrived about 11 p.m. There are separate men's and women's entrances to restaurants, separate waiting rooms in hospitals and clinics, and a separate male and female cafeteria at our university. There are even male and female entrances to the library on our campus.

In high schools there are separate classes for boys and girls, and the first time they have been integrated is at college or university. This makes it hard to do pair work, especially when the girls won't even sit in the same ROW as a boy.

All the men and boys wear the white dishdashas, and girls wear headscarves and black abayas. Most of our students are female, and it was a bit of a shock at first to see the faces staring at me out of a sea of black robes. This makes it hard to identify the students, and a lot of them have the same first names. My

last class had 14 Fatmas, and I had to memorize the first two names. The most common boy's name is Mohammed, of course.

Students complain at the drop of a hat, and motivation is not very strong, so if they don't do well on exams it is the teacher's fault. Once I asked a class what a good teacher does, and they all said, "Gives good marks!"

Some of the students behave like small children, knocking on doors and running away. They like to have fun, and don't know when it's time to settle down and to get serious. Cheating here is not perceived as a negative. It's just "helping your friends," so invigilating exams is a challenge. Students are always begging for more marks and more time on exams.

However, Omani students are genuinely happy to see you when they run into one of their teachers. They don't hold grudges and want to be liked. I had some problems with a class, and some of the other students went to the administration to support me. Would that happen in a Canadian university?

Omanis are kind and generous, and hospitable. One of my students invited me to her home and her father took us sightseeing all around the area, and then cooked us a delicious meal. We had a great time!

Nizwa University, where I teach, is the biggest private university in Oman, and I am in my second year there. ELS hired a lot of us last year, but this year we're working directly for the university. Our classes are usually about twenty-five students, but they are trying to get it down to twenty. The students have to pass the TOEFL exam to get into their major programs, like nursing and pharmacy. We have texts, but not enough, and for grammar we are using the Headway series, British edition. There is a CALL lab, and

students have to take classes there once a week. This year there is more of an emphasis on speaking activities. Most of the students don't speak English outside of class, and don't seem to be interested in English corners or other activities. I spoke to my director about this a few days ago, and he said they just want to pass.

Yes, it is a challenge teaching here, but I'm getting used to it now. It is very cheap to live here, and there are no taxes on our salary, which is about \$2700 Canadian a month. I'm sixty this year, and I can save money for my old age!

Also, for people who like the outdoors, there's a lot of camping and diving available.

I asked our academic director, Marcia, how she would advise teachers thinking of coming to Oman. Here are some of her suggestions. "Keep an open mind. This is NOT a terrorist country. Embrace the culture and don't prejudge, but make the most of your journey."

Monica Murphy became interested in becoming an ESL teacher when she was a host mother for some Japanese girls, who invited her to a barbecue with their teachers. She started out with one week of training and ended up in China for eight months. On returning to



Ebtisam's father and brothers

Canada, she took TESL training at the Canadian International College in North Vancouver. Since the TESL diploma required a degree, Monica completed the necessary courses through Open Learning while teaching in Korea and China, earning her degree at the age of fifty-nine. "Teaching ESL has really enriched my life and kept me young!"

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Essential Academic Vocabulary

by Helen Huntley

Houghton Mifflin Company 2006

Reviewed by Marti Sevier

Colleges and universities are teeming with vocabulary books these days, as is this newsletter with their reviews. Like Schmitt and Schmitt's *Focus on Vocabulary*, Helen Huntley's *Essential Academic Vocabulary* utilizes Averil Coxhead's Academic Word List as a basis for a wide range of vocabulary activities. Geared both for native speakers and ESLs (though the weblinks, perhaps tellingly, contain "esl" in their urls), *Essential Academic Vocabulary* uses research on vocabulary cited in Schmitt and Schmitt's "Vocabulary Notebooks: Theoretical Underpinnings and Practical Suggestions" (1995). This research comes from a variety of sources and perhaps because of this, seems at times to be going in opposite directions, e.g. a recommendation that students use word pairs to increase learning efficiency seems to go against the advice that "the best way to remember new words is to incorporate them into language that is already known" (Schmitt & Schmitt, cited in Huntley, 2006, p. vii). Also somewhat controversial is the information that "The deeper the mental processing used when learning a word, the more likely that a student will remember it." (Schmitt & Schmitt, as cited in Huntley, 2006, p. vii). Concerns related to this point are summarized in Hulstijn and Laufer (2001) who propose the involvement load hypothesis as an alternative; in researching this point they found that exercises which require learners to retrieve vocabulary

in writing compositions resulted in greater retention of words learned than either simply reading or doing a gapfill exercise. This, they say, is because writing requires greater involvement—a combination of need, search, and evaluation of suitable vocabulary. More recently, Folse (2006) has gone a step further, having determined that repeated exposure is a stronger factor than involvement load in promoting retention of words learned.

However, the teacher will soon find that Huntley has taken great care to cover her theoretical bases with a wide range of practical and appealing tasks: the variety of activities in *Essential Academic Vocabulary* and the methodical recycling of material ensures that both involvement and repetition will assist the learning and retention of new words. The book is organized into 20 chapters (every fifth chapter is a review chapter), with Appendices on topics related to vocabulary learning, including suggestions on the use of dictionaries, vocabulary notebooks and vocabulary cards, paraphrasing, and summarizing. Web support in the form of an online instructor guide, review tests and keys, answer keys to the exercises and a sample syllabus can, according to the author, be accessed at www.college.hmco.com/esl/instructors, but in fact this is an index page from which further clicking (to <http://college.hmco.com/CollegeCatalog/CatalogController?cmd=Portal&subcmd=display&ProductID=11364>) and a password is necessary. (The password can easily be obtained by contacting HMCO through their webpage. The students' site is more easily accessed at http://college.hmco.com/esl/huntley/essential_academic_vocabulary/1e/students/index.html) However, the

effort required to find the Instructor's Guide alone is worthwhile because of its detail: suggestions for methodology, ideas for oral work, and even vocabulary games are abundant, ensuring multiple exposures to the items covered.

Chapter readings are sequenced in order of the complexity and length (from approximately 300 words on "Learning Styles" in Chapter 1 to over a thousand in Chapter 19, "Information Science and Technology") of the academic texts on which they are based. Conveniently trawled from textbooks published by the

"The deeper the mental processing used when learning a word, the more likely that a student will remember it."

Mother Ship, Houghton Mifflin, for the most part, other topics range from Business to Economics and Linguistics, among others, to the "harder" science areas of Environmental Science and Chemistry.

Each chapter, which Huntley says is designed to take a week (an hourly estimate might be more practical), begins with a list of 40 words from the AWL and preview questions on the reading. After reading, learners move through a range of exercises, looking at vocabulary in context, comprehension, inference, dictionary skills, word forms, collocations, word parts, and ending with writing and speaking activities. Although these aspects of vocabulary are consistently worked on in this order, the actual exercise types used vary from chapter to chapter.

The instructor will be glad to see Huntley's exercises in writing and speaking because they offer learners the opportunity to retrieve vocabulary learned and use it in their own voices. The writing activities

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range from the structured, giving practice in a variety of genres including summaries, lab reports, formal speeches, and letters, all well-salted with vocabulary items from the chapter, and to the less so: paragraphs, in which learners are simply asked to use 6-8 vocabulary words in writing them. Similarly, speaking activities move from formal presentations of different types to less formal role plays.

The review chapters, including the final cumulative review, are shorter, without the preliminary texts, and aim mainly to give repeated exposures of previously learned items through quick exercises such as matching, gap-fill, and “odd word out”.

Learners will find this book useful and relevant. They will appreciate the use of “real” textbooks, and the wide variety of topics means that all interests have a good chance of being accommodated. *Essential Academic Vocabulary* would of course work well as a vocabulary course but given the breadth of topic

areas, a class set would give useful supplementary material for an EAP course in reading or writing, or speaking. Instructors will appreciate its ease of use and the scope of teaching possibilities it provides.

Marti Sevier teaches Academic Skills in the English Bridge Program at Simon Fraser University. She is a member of TESOL and BC TEAL.

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guage Teaching Journal, 49 (2), p. 133-143.

Appendix 1: a partial list of source HMCO textbooks used in *Essential Academic Vocabulary* based on the order in which they are mentioned in this review.

Learning styles

Garcia, E. (2002). *Student cultural diversity: Understanding and meeting the challenge*, (3rd ed.), p. 344-345.

Information science and technology

Turov, J. (2003). Privacy in the digital age. In *Media today: An introduction to mass communication*, (2nd ed.), p. 529-532.

Business

Pride, W. M., Hughes, R. J., & Kapoor, J.R. (2002). Proctor & Gamble: An optimistic scheme. In *Business* (7th ed.), p. 130.

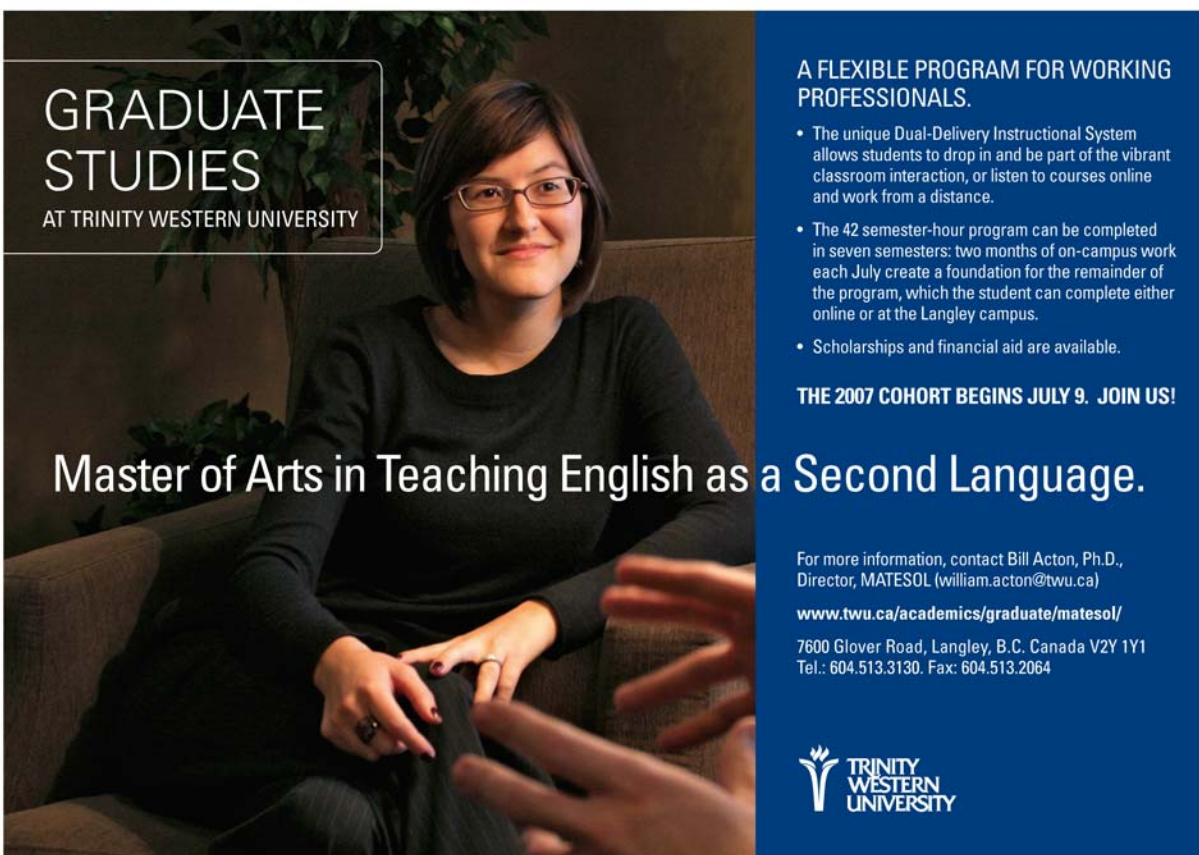
Economics

Boyes, W. & Melvin, M. (2003). The economics of diamonds and water. Adapted from *Fundamentals of economics* (2nd ed.), pp. 3-4.

Linguistics

Bernstein, D.A., Penner, L.A., Clarke-Stewart, A., & Roy, E.J. (2003). Can non-humans use language? In *Psychology*, (6th ed.), pp. 301-303.

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GRADUATE STUDIES
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 TRINITY WESTERN UNIVERSITY

By Catherine Evashuk

When Reena Taviss moved to Vancouver in 1974, she saw an ad in the newspaper for a volunteer position that looked interesting. When she went to the interview, she was asked if she had ever considered teaching English to immigrants. She hadn't but her career as an ESL teacher, teacher trainer, program coordinator, TEAL board member, TEAL Charitable Foundation Member, Vancouver School Board coordinator and teacher mentor was about to begin.

Before Reena set foot in a classroom as an ESL teacher, she went to UBC and took Linguistics and Mary Ashworth's 478 class. She

Teacher Profile

Reena Taviss

set up a school to teach English to social scientists. This involved developing the curriculum, testing tools, choosing the materials, buying the equipment, and hiring the teachers. She was in the Ukraine in 1996 to train English teachers using a curriculum she developed. She mentioned that the group of student teachers she had that summer were

incredible because when she met them in June, the teachers hadn't received their psych checks since the previous February, yet they were

so committed that they continued teaching their students. She also worked as a coordinator at The ELI at U.B.C., hiring teachers and developing programs and curriculum. From 1993-94, Reena served as the Provincial Coordinator for Adult ESL. She has sat on the TEAL Board and on the Board of the TEAL Charitable Foundation. She has also worked as an education consultant, mostly focused on ESL, multi-cultural, and cross-cultural communication.

Reena enjoys mentoring teachers and helping them become more successful by "turning their teaching around". One thing she asks them to focus on is their lesson planning. How one plans a lesson is "absolutely essential". We need to think of what we want the students to be able to do at the end of the lesson and then figure out the steps that need to be taken to achieve that. Then,

"unpack it, transform it, into learning objectives". The objectives should be focused on what the learners will do, and not on the teacher. For example, 'read an article of 4 paragraphs and be able to summarize it', or 'simulate a 911 call and report an accident'.

When asked what advice she'd give a novice teacher, she separates her advice into two categories: in the classroom and in the profession. "Teachers need to speak as little as possible in the classroom. Allow space for students to talk and be open to students' signals and of course, let people have fun while learning because learning is hard work." In the profession, she recommends that teachers belong to their professional associations, attend conferences, present workshops and exchange ideas with colleagues. Reena presented at every conference from 1974-1997."The more you do for your profession, the more you learn what is effective." She adds that it's easy to become self-satisfied as a teacher when you're doing your job. Therefore, it's important to talk to others about what you are doing and what they are doing.

TEAL appreciates Reena's contributions to the field of ESL and encouragement to exchange knowledge and ideas with other ESL professionals. TEAL is grateful for her generous donation of books from her long career in education.

Catherine Evashuk is a regular TEAL Newsletter contributor.

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Environmental Science

Chernicoff, S., Fox, H.A., & Tanner, L.H. (2002). Renewable alternative energy resources. Adapted from *Earth: Geologic principles and history*, p. 360-363.

Chemistry

Shipman, J. T., Wilson, J.D. & Todd, A.W. (2003). Chemistry facts: The good, the bad and the odd. Adapted from *An introduction to physical science*, (10th ed.), p. 360-363.

"The more you do for your profession, the more you learn what is effective."

then got a job at Vancouver Community College teaching Neighbourhood English classes (outreach program) and at the Vancouver School Board teaching Adult ESL evening classes. She became the coordinator of the VSB program in 1979. In 1984, Reena took a leave of absence to study for her Masters Degree because she wanted to teach the 478 class. She became a Sessional Lecturer for UBC, teaching the 478 class in 1986. When asked if she recalls teaching her first class, she replies "Yes! It was pretty scary. Teaching techniques and methodology to adults was challenging, but being in class with my ESL students and my student teachers are some of my finest moments."

Work has taken her to different corners of the world. In 1986, she was part of a team in Indonesia teaching civil servants English so they could take advanced education in Canada. In the 90's, she went to Vietnam to

Teaching Tips:

Guided Writing in English

One of the many benefits I took away with me after completing my DELTA certification was an increased appreciation of the cultural and linguistic challenges that my students face when writing. Prior to that, I had always thought myself a fairly thorough and culturally sensitive teacher. However, whenever I collected pieces of writing from my students, results seemed to indicate otherwise. The range of problems included a lack of vocabulary to express ideas coherently, being off topic, poor organization of information, inappropriate register and tone, sentence structure errors, and the standard verb tense problems, in short, a marking nightmare. Thus for many years, I had resigned myself to the fact that teaching writing would always be somewhat painful.

Recently, however, this has changed. My First Certificate in English (FCE) students are now producing better quality writing, and I feel this has everything to do with my increased awareness of their difficulties. Since my pre-DELTA days, I have made a few key changes in my approach to teaching writing. Most importantly, I never take short cuts. In addition to following the well laid out guided writing exercises in the FCE course textbook, I provide students with an opportunity to discuss how they would linguistically and culturally deal with the text type in their own language and to make comparisons. This also enables me to understand patterns of errors that emerge from a given linguistic group of learners. I also provide extra samples of the set writing to be analysed for a variety of features, such as target audience, overall register and tone, organization, the

type of information included in each paragraph, vocabulary and genre-specific features.

Here is a sample of some of the questions that I have used with my students at the beginning of a course.

1. In writing in your language, do you divide your writing into paragraphs?
2. If you do, how do you know when to begin a new paragraph?
3. If you do not, how do you indicate to the reader that you are beginning a new thought?
4. Where do you write a topic sentence, at the beginning, in the middle or near the end of your composition?
5. What kind of information do you put in an introduction, the main body, and the conclusion?

I have created different sets of questions to address different genres. Once students have discussed the differences, they can then proceed to analyse samples of the text type in English in detail. After these two steps, I elicit the information gathered by the students in addition to adding other aspects of writing such as grammar, form and set phrases.

Although the set up process takes a considerably longer period of time than in the past, the results have proven to be worthwhile. Students have told me that they appreciate the slow and thorough pace leaving them less to guess about. In the end, it's a win-win situation; I spend less time marking and my students "see less red".

Marina Crawford
Instructor at Global Village
English Centre, Vancouver, BC

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As a follow-up, we videotaped interviews with individual students in which we asked the interviewees to reflect on their experiences with the Reading Circle. The students were positive about the experience and appreciated the different approach to reading lessons. One student also said that he felt it was safe to share his opinions about the readings in the Circle because he was no longer in an environment where he was competing with classmates for coveted spaces in post-secondary institutions (as was the case in his home country).

At the conference, our presentation followed plenary speakers who emphasized the need for ESL/EFL teachers to empower students rather than spoon-feed information. Since Reading Circles are definitely a vehicle for student empowerment, we encourage you to try them in your classes as well.

We thank the TEAL Charitable Foundation for the TEAL / TESOL Bursary. This support allowed us to showcase some of the active research and reflections that take place within our own classrooms.

For further information about Reading Circles, please visit Kwantlen University College's Centre for Academic Growth web site at <http://www.kwantlen.ca/academicgrowth/SoTL/SoTLatKwantlen.html>. A complete PowerPoint file from our presentation will be available.

Lesley has been teaching ESL in and around the Vancouver area since 1995. She currently instructs English language skills to Internationally Educated Nurses (IENs) at Kwantlen University College.

Nominations for the New TEAL Board (2007 - 2009)

Michael Galli: Michael moved to BC from Toronto, via Montreal. He worked in a number of capacities for various educational institutions, including five years with the University of Toronto, International Pharmacy Graduate Program, and fifteen years with the Toronto Catholic District School Board. He is presently Managing Director of Newton College Vancouver and is looking forward to continuing his career in second language education in BC and making some positive contributions to TEAL. Michael is nominated for the position of President.

Marc Blunden: Marc has had the pleasure of working as an ESL instructor now for the past few years, both abroad in Japan and locally. He thoroughly enjoys his role in teaching, and it is that passion for excellence that he would hope to bring to the TEAL executive. As teachers we receive our validation when students achieve mastery of new skills, but outside the purview of topic sentences or progressive tenses we too recognize that ours is a very real economic enterprise. Proper stewardship of an industry that recognizes that the tension between teacher and owner will always involve collaboration between equally vested parties remains a foremost concern. Marc is nominated for the position of First Vice-President and Head of the Policy and Action Advisory Committee.

Robin Russell: For the past twenty years, primarily at Kwantlen University College, Robin has been an ESL instructor and curriculum developer in programs for internationally trained nurses and in general academic programs. Her most recent work has been in curriculum development projects for internationally educated professionals with Camosun College and

VCC and for internationally educated nurses with Vancouver Coastal Health. In addition to her work in ESL, she served for two years as divisional representative and two years as Chair on Education Council at Kwantlen. She has an M.A. in Linguistics from SFU. Robin is nominated for the position of Second Vice-President of Administration.

Jolanta Garus: Jola has been teaching in the area of ESL since 2001. She has taught in Ukraine as well as in Toronto and Vancouver. She has worked as a teacher trainer and has taught a variety of levels of ESL and EAP. In addition, she has developed curriculums for 'Survival English' courses and is a co-author of a handbook aimed to provide help for immigrant parents and their children's teachers. Jola recently completed her MA in Second Language Education from OISE/UT where she focused on areas of biliteracy and identity. She is currently teaching English for Academic Purposes at Langara College. Jola is nominated for the position of Second Vice-President of Finance.

Susan Dobic: Susan has been teaching and assessing learners of English since 1987. She has worked with children, teens, business people and those preparing for citizenship, proficiency exams and academic studies. One area that she'd like to explore more is that of e-learning. While living in Japan she gained experience as a Board Member of the Japan Association of Language Teaching and has also sat on the Board of the Campbell River and area Multicultural and Immigrant Services Association. Susan is nominated for the position of Secretary.

Beth Fawcett: Beth has been involved in ESL in a variety of positions, in a variety of different locations for the last ten years. From being a volunteer tutor in the LINC program in Yellowknife to being the Director of Studies at Global

Village Vancouver's Gastown Campus, with kids classes in Korea, ESL and test prep in Vancouver, business English, curriculum planning, seminar design, and materials writing in Germany in between, she has been able to challenge herself in many different ways. She knows that she still has tons to learn—she is sure it will never end! Beth is nominated for the position of Member-at-Large.

Jennifer Walsh-Marr: Jennifer has been teaching ESL/EFL in the lower mainland since graduating from UVic's Applied Linguistics programme in 1996. She has taught LINC/ELSA, EFL, and Academic Preparation. She has written several teachers' resources, including the BC Newcomers' Guide teacher resource package, materials for the Dominion Institute's Passages to Canada initiative, the CCLB and a health study curriculum for the BC Cancer Agency. She currently teaches part time and works for TESL Canada Certification. Jennifer is nominated for the position of Member-at-Large.

Shawna Delgaty: Shawna is currently completing her MA in English Literature at York University. Her thesis explores the operation of social and political power (via Foucault) in Virginia Woolf's novels. She completed her BA in English Literature and Classical Studies at UBC. She is also teaching ESL part-time at Panda Learning Centre in Richmond, and is looking to find full-time work in this area once her thesis is completed. She is a writer and has had her poetry published in various Canadian literary magazines. Shawna is nominated for the position of Member-at-Large.

News from the TEAL Charitable Foundation

By Cheryl McNicol

I would like to extend winter greetings from the TEAL Charitable Foundation Board of Directors. It is hard to believe that we are already getting applications for the February 28, 2007 deadlines for our awards and bursaries. For those of you that don't know what TCF is all about, the TEAL Charitable Foundation provides awards, scholarships and bursaries to support ESL teachers, students and programs. Awards range from \$1,400 to \$4,000.

Attention ESL Professionals:

Don't forget to apply for one of our awards before the February 28, 2007 deadline.

The application process is a relatively simple one. There are application forms available online for each of our awards. Simply print one and answer the questions on the form. We ask for basic information about the project/conference/travel etc. as well as two letters of reference and a resume.

The Board reviews each application and selects the applicant that most closely matches the criteria for the award. The winners of these awards are regular teachers, students and program staff just like you. Please take the time to review the details and criteria for each award on our website at www.bctéal.org/. Look for the TEAL Charitable Foundation tab on the left hand side of the home page.

Please consider applying for:

THE AIDS AND HEALTH EDUCATION FUND

Deadline: February 28th, 2007

Value: up to \$3,000 (CDN)

The AIDS and Health Education Fund (AHEF) was established in 1992 to promote health and/or AIDS education through content-based ESOL instruction.

The following are invited to apply for the AHEF scholarship:

- Teachers promoting health education and AIDS prevention aimed at ESL/EFL students, family members and their communities.
- Materials writers developing culturally sensitive health and AIDS education materials available to a wide range of people.
- Organizations willing to sponsor or co-sponsor activities dedicated to health education or AIDS awareness.

PAT WAKEFIELD/BRITISH COUNCIL SCHOLARSHIP

Deadline: February 28th, 2007

Value: up to \$4,000 (CDN)

The Pat Wakefield/British Council Scholarship is a travel scholarship to any Commonwealth Country, established in 1985 by BC TEAL in cooperation with the British Council to honour Pat Wakefield on her retirement.

All applicants must be educators who have distinguished themselves in the field of English as a Second Language in BC and must be members in good standing of BC TEAL at the time the application is made. The recipient is expected to deliver a presentation (talk or written article) for the benefit of TEAL members on his/her research experience in the Commonwealth Country they chose to visit and submit a written report to the TEAL Charitable Foundation.

THE PROJECTS & AWARDS FUND

Deadline: February 28th, 2007

Value: up to \$3,000

Grants are made for research projects, special projects, conferences and seminars, matching funds, seed money and ESL teacher and learner projects. Preference will be given to those applicants who are members of or have a connection to BC TEAL.



39th Annual BC TEAL Conference

The 39th Annual BC TEAL Conference is just a few months away! The conference is going to be held at Vancouver Community College (Downtown Campus) from May 3-5, 2007 and the theme is “ESL in a Global and Changing World”.

Dr. MaryAnn Christison will be speaking on Friday, May 4th on the topic of creating brain-friendly classrooms for English language learners. Dr. Bonny Norton will be speaking on Saturday, May 5th, and her topic is on identity and language learning. There will be institutional visits available, a publishers’ display, a job fair, many excellent presentations and workshops, and a chance to network and get to know others in the ESL industry.

Take a look at the pre-conference book for more details and information on the upcoming conference, and register online at www.bcteal.org!

**Rozsika den Haan
Conference Chair**

NOTICE OF THE BC TEAL ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The BC TEAL Annual General Meeting will be held at the “ESL in a Global and Changing World” Conference at 2 p.m. on Friday May 4, 2007 at Vancouver Community College’s down-town campus.

The TEAL Charitable Foundation Annual General Meeting will be held at 12 noon on Saturday May 5, 2007, also at the VCC downtown campus, room to be announced.