

## *Identity*



|   |    |
|---|----|
| 2014-2015 BC TEAL Board of Directors.....                                     | 2  |
| BC TEAL Newsletter Committee.....   | 2  |
| Letter from the President.....  | 3  |
| Letter from the Editor .....  | 4  |
| A Classroom Study in Identity.....  | 5  |
| TESL Trainee Tales.....   | 8  |
| TESL Trainer Poem.....  | 9  |
| Understanding your Voice: TEAL Member Survey Results and Interpretation.....  | 10 |
| Reflections: Between Identities.....  | 15 |
| Explore, Sustain, Renew: ELT for the Net Generation: TESOL 2014.....          | 17 |
| The New Vancouverwrite—Supporting Passion .....                               | 19 |
| Adventures in Professional Development in the UK. . . IATEFL 2014 Report..... | 21 |
| The TEAL Charitable Foundation Report.....                                    | 24 |
| AGM Reports.....  | 24 |

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# Letter from the President



Dear Members,

I write this immediately following the first meeting of the latest iteration of the BC TEAL board. I am so pleased to report that our group of 16 directors are motivated and passionate about EAL education and are more than willing to do what it takes to move our profession forward.

Our volunteer board is made up of professionals from across the sector—there is great representation from the public, private, and not-for-profit areas— at various stages in their professional lives—students, recent retirees, instructors, and administrators. While there is diversity in our day-to-day lives, when we meet as a board I know we all identify with the mission of BC TEAL: to advance the profession.

We realize the mission via the various committees in which we participate. Our directors are able to shift their roles depending on what is required of them: for example, our PD and conference co-chairs—a teacher, an administrator, and a student—have become very skillful at event planning, budgeting, scheduling, and marketing. Our first vice-president, and chair of the Policy Advisory and Action Committee (PAAC), is working assiduously with the PAAC members to tackle advocacy in a serious way. Their work is taking them into researching EAL across the country, looking

at the economic impact of immigration in BC, and investigating how BC TEAL can be at the table with key decision makers. I could give examples for each and every one of our board directors: trained as EAL educators, yet donning different hats and developing other skills as a result of their work on the BC TEAL board.

The board is a small percentage of the membership as a whole. I am thrilled to see that our membership numbers have been increasing steadily. (966 members and counting.) As president, I want to ensure that the association is providing you, our members, with value and benefits. I would also like to see you as engaged as possible, and volunteering is one of the best ways to accomplish this. We welcome your participation, skill-set, and level of commitment as you can offer it. My first BC TEAL volunteer stint was an evening stuffing envelopes with pre-conference programs, back when such things were not distributed electronically.

Please contact us if you would like to become more engaged with your association as a committee volunteer. Send a message to [admin@bcteal.org](mailto:admin@bcteal.org) with a brief outline of the committee you'd be well suited to (e.g., PD, Teacher Inquiry, Advocacy, Social Media, etc.). Who knows, your own brief foray into volunteering may lead you to the president's chair one day...

I hope you have a wonderful summer!

Sincerely,

Shawna Williams  
President, BC TEAL



# Letter from the Editor

Welcome to the Spring/Summer Issue of the TEAL News.

A famous quote from Shakespeare's Hamlet occurs in Act 3 Scene 1. In his soliloquy Hamlet asks "To be, or not to be: That is the Question." While Hamlet is questioning his life and his existence, many of us now use his lines to question our acceptance of a role, or an identity, and the effect this role/identity has upon our life.

Identity is the theme of this issue. In life, we have many identities often at the same time: teacher and student, parent and child, sibling and friend... But, what or how do these identities influence us?

In this issue you will find different explorations of this theme. Dilia Hasanova shares her preliminary findings in her ongoing research of students' identity in the classroom. In 'Understanding Your Voice,' the results of the recent member survey are shared and interpreted—see who we as TEAL members are, and what we think. In a new column, a TESL trainee shares his trials and triumphs as he moves towards his new role as ESL instructor. In "Reflections," the writer shares her reflections on the various identities she has had and what has informed them.

As well, as these articles on identity, read about

## BC TEAL Conference 2014



a fantastic, new, volunteer-run, magazine that showcases the writing of LINC students and find out what is happening in our field through reports shared by members who were able to attend the TESOL in Portland and the IATEFL in England

Finally, in case you were unable to attend the recent conference, enjoy the pictures we've included in the newsletter. The link to the AGM reports has also been included.

I hope you enjoy the articles and, as always, remember, if you feel inspired, submit an article for the next TEAL news (theme: ESL Realities) and make your dream of sharing what you know with others, a reality.

Chris-Anne Stumpf

Editor, TEAL News

# A Classroom Study in Identity

by *Dilia Hasanova*

## Introduction

Over the last few decades, the field of English as a second language has been enriched with theories and hypotheses exploring the relationship between language, culture, identity, and English language teaching. Yet, there seems to be little research that looks into the relationship between language and identity from ESL students' perspectives. As an instructor this relationship intrigues me, thus I decided to conduct an ongoing study not to test any existing theories or hypotheses, but to refine my current understanding of the construction of ESL students' identity by conducting extensive observations and interviews.

For the study I have drawn on existing theories that examine the relationship between language and identity. This brief article will present the preliminary findings of my ongoing research that is designed to investigate 1) how ESL students define their identity, 2) what social factors contribute to the construction of ESL students' multiple identities, 3) how ESL students' sociocultural identities are refined in ESL classrooms, and finally, 4) what students do to accomplish their "desire for recognition" (LaPage & Tabouret-Keller, 2005).

To address the research questions qualitative methods are being used. The fieldwork for this part of the study was conducted in one of the largest public colleges in the lower mainland. The data for this study were drawn from primary sources such as surveys, semi-structured interviews, and observational notes. The survey sample consisted of 96 students, ranging from 17-35 years of age. Out of the 96 respondents, 75% were international students and 23% were immigrant students; 2% did not enter the data.

Over 80% of respondents were from Asia and 15% were from Europe. All participants studied English as a foreign language in their home countries before pursuing their studies in a Canadian college.

## Definition of Identity by ESL Students

The respondents were initially asked to define 'identity' in the interview. All students stated that they were familiar with the word, but found it hard to define, not due to their English proficiency, but since it was an abstract concept to explain even in their mother tongue. Nevertheless, after taking a couple of minutes to think, 65% of respondents mentioned that identity is a concept that incorporates in itself family, culture, language, value, behavior, and attitude. The rest (35%) came up with definitions such as "Identity is a thing where people can identify you of [sic] what kind of person you are and where you actually come from"; "It is a recognition of a person and it represents the person's social background, nation, etc."; "It is a special thing that shows other people who you are"; "It is the characteristics that differ you from others."

## Identify and Social Factors

The second research question solicited responses regarding the social factors that contribute to constructing or refining ESL students' multiple identities. The survey results were broken down into three main categories: education, immigration, and employment.

72% of the respondents marked education as one of the main social factors helping them construct or refine their identity. During the face-to-face interviews participants mentioned that having education along with the North American diploma makes them more employable in the job market; hence, they feel more comfortable and confident about their professional life in the future. Moreover, because of the communicative, student-centred focus of their North American education, the majority of the participants felt they were able to overcome their shyness and insecurity in using English.

# Key Concepts

The second main social factor was immigration. The analyses of the survey results revealed that 80% of respondents intended to stay in Canada upon completing their studies and to look for a job, with the goal of eventually immigrating to Canada as skilled workers.

The third main category was employment; 80% of the subjects believed that having a Canadian diploma would enable them to obtain better job opportunities in the future.

## Refining ESL Students' Identities in ESL Classrooms

The ESL classroom is a place where we can clearly see how students' multiple identities are constructed and refined. Any ESL teacher can think of numerous examples of how his/her students establish and/or refine their identities during the course of their study in the ESL program. A common example is noting how students who at first appear shy and self-doubting become vocal and assertive during in-class debates or, conversely, those that appear outspoken and self-assured sometimes turn into nervous speakers during presentations.

All respondents who participated in the interview mentioned that whether or not they speak English on a daily basis outside of ESL classrooms, English has a significant effect on their identity. Students' responses to interview questions can be summarized as the following: 1) speaking English broadens their horizon vis-à-vis the world. One student noted that speaking English "open[s] your mind to new worlds." Others noted that because they speak English they can chat with their international friends on different topics and social issues; 2) speaking English correlates with polite verbal and physical etiquette (please and thank-you; opening the door for others.)

Of note, however, is that in spite of acknowledging how much speaking English can help them, students frequently code-switch in the classroom. This code-

switching occurs regardless of "English only" classroom policy. A number of empirical studies address code-switching in language learning classrooms; for example, Norton & Kamal (2003), who investigated language and identity in Pakistani context, found out that "the students in Model Elementary School, while being favorably disposed towards English, still had high regard for Urdu, and had no difficulty code-switching between Urdu and English" (Norton, 2006, p. 6).

The current study also documents that ESL students, regardless of their level of language proficiency, teachers' persistence, and the classroom policy can't avoid conversing in their first language with classmates who share the same linguistic and ethnic background. In response to my interview question "do you use your first language in ESL classrooms?" students unanimously responded "yes." Student-responses to the follow-up question "why" can be broken down into three main categories: 1) using first language makes it easier to have short conversations; 2) it takes less time and effort to get quick answers to trivial questions; 3) speaking a first language with people who share the same language makes interactions more natural.

## ESL Students and Their "Desire for Recognition"

While working on this study, I was curious to find out how applicable LePage & Tabouret-Keller's (1985) and West's (1992) notions on identity formation were for my respondents. LePage & Tabouret-Keller claim that formation of one's identity is correlated to the "desirable" group. One of the questions respondents were asked on the survey was "With what or whom do you [ESL students] want to be affiliated?" Approximately 67% of the respondents marked that they wanted to be part of the North American culture, and 88% marked that they want to be affiliated with mainstream Canadian students. Also, it is worth noting that 90% of the respondents wanted to sound like native speakers.



# Key Concepts

Nevertheless, the survey results reveal that even though almost 90% of the respondents want to sound like native speakers and want to make friends with mainstream Canadian students, only 10% stated that they have Canadian friends who are native speakers of English. Moreover, only 14% said that they try to use English outside of college. As for attending college-wide events that target mainstream as well as international students, only 34% of respondents mentioned that they try to attend campus-wide social activities. In order to get a better understanding as to why there was limited attendance at these event, I asked the research participants (during one-on-one interviews) if they were familiar with the campus-wide events and activities and tried to attend them. The majority of respondents acknowledged that they were familiar with the events, however, were not able to attend because they did not have time as a result of heavy class load.

In this short article, I have tried to present how ESL students understand the concept of identity. The results of my study revealed that although the participants had a common understanding of identity, they found 'identity' hard to define mainly because the concept appeared to be too elusive to explain. Among the social factors that contribute to the construction and refinement of the ESL students' multiple identities were education, immigration, and employment. Students unanimously agreed that being proficient in English and having a North American diploma and work experience would greatly enhance their employment opportunities. Moreover, they believe that speaking English has a very positive effect in refining their identity on the whole; i.e., speaking English enlarges their world view, improves their confidence, and increases their chances in the job market. The findings of the current study also reveal that despite the fact that almost all respondents had a strong desire to be part of the Canadian culture and to make friends with mainstream Canadian students, they take very little initiative to reach out to the mainstream community.

As this is a preliminary study to look into the construction and refinement of the ESL students multiple identities from their perspective, it is far from

comprehensive or complete. More in-depth analysis of social factors and their ramifications on ESL students' identities call for further empirical studies.

## Classroom Application

In order to better understand ESL students' dynamic, complex, and ever-changing identities and to help them while they are trying to refine or re-establish their identities, it is imperative that ESL teachers create a classroom atmosphere that effectively supports not only students' language needs but also helps them "find" themselves in a new socio-cultural context. Ullman (1997) lists a number of classroom activities that can be of help to both ESL teachers and their students during "the process of self re-creation." Among the activities mentioned are portfolio writing, dialogue journal writing, large-group discussions, small-group conversations, and improvisational dialogue.

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**Dilia Hasanova** has a PhD in ESL from Purdue University. Before joining Douglas College she was Head of Teacher Training and Curriculum Development at PLI and Director of the Center for ESL at Brescia University. Her research interests include sociolinguistics, world Englishes, language and identity, and language acquisition.

## Trainee Tales

by *Parvez (Par) Amlani*

The fourth week of the TESL program at Douglas College was difficult, to put it mildly. Along with the intense workload, being in the classroom with professionalism “policies” about everything was frustrating, to say the least. I was ready to vent in the weekly reflection assignment and harsh words were already forming in my mind. I was at a low point. I had lost all interest and was completely discouraged and disengaged. Thankfully, a classmate kept me laughing and amused during those moments when I intended to walk away from this new relationship with “Tess L.”

While I was organizing my rant that night, something incredible happened to me. As I was strolling along Broadway, the inviting aroma of white wine and single malt scotch engulfed my senses and I was hypnotically drawn into a fine restaurant with an enviable and mesmerizing liquor collection. I had arrived in heaven!

I ventured into the bar and sat next to a gentleman who appeared somewhat confused. We exchanged pleasantries and he introduced himself as Shinzo, an ESL student who had been in Vancouver for a month. He had come to the bar to practice his English communication skills. I am not making this up!!!!!!!

I introduced myself as an ESL instructor in training and we engaged in an informal learning session. We practiced pronunciation, discussed the upcoming soccer World Cup, and sparred jokingly about the eventual winner. Then it happened—the Hallelujah moment where everything I had learnt in the past four weeks all came rushing at me: CLT, learning principles, places and manner of articulation, especially with the “l’s” and “r’s” in his case, needs assessment, and even minor grammatical error correction (the blind leading the blind!) My initial 10-minute walk turned into a 40-minute session of rolling r’s and lulling l’s; all of this while laughing hysterically at ourselves. I am quite sure that the bartender thought we were crazy!

As I left, I felt the most amazing sense of confidence and absolute calm. A load had been lifted off of my shoulders and I was at absolute ease with myself knowing that I had just finished my first informal



ESL lesson. The pressure was gone and I felt as light as a feather. I was actually elated and no—it wasn’t the wine!!! Just as importantly, the anger was gone, completely erased from my memory and I had a new found appreciation for these courses. If I had met Shinzo four weeks ago, we might have just had a pleasant conversation, and I would have had no clue as to how I could have helped him. Here, we helped each other and had a blast in the process.

It is said that things happen in life for a reason. I think this was one of those miraculous events.

I now know that I can do this and I will be good at it. Will I have challenges? Of course I will. It would be unrealistic if I didn’t. However, I have a new found motivation to learn all that I can from this program to work with the Shinzos of the world—as long as there is a well-stocked bar close-by!

“You must take personal responsibility. You cannot change the circumstances, the seasons, or the wind, but you can change yourself. That is something you have charge of.” — Jim Rohn

**Parvez (Par) Amlani:** *I Immigrated to Canada from Tanzania at the age of 12. I received a BA in Political Science from SFU and an MBA in Marketing from the Thunderbird School of International Management in Arizona. After holding several executive positions with two Fortune 500 companies I decided to change my life when I turned 50. I looked up TESL and here I am! I am especially looking forward to working in the LINC program simply because I can relate to their needs and anxieties.*





## TESL Trainer Poem

There once was a TESL insurrection  
About misread professional direction  
But then, though they knew it  
One trainee still blew it  
By venting in his weekly reflection

By Ann Onymous



### TEAL Charitable Foundation **Climb for the Cause**

2014 Grouse Grind

**Sunday September 21 2014**  
Register at [bcteal.org/tcf](http://bcteal.org/tcf)



# Understanding Your Voice: TEAL Member Survey Results and Interpretation

*by Shawna Williams, President;*

*Joe Dobson, First Vice-President; Fiona Shaw, Second Vice-President; and Jennifer Walsh Marr, Secretary*

*As presented at the annual conference, May 2014*

## Survey Background

In the fall of 2013, the BC TEAL board worked on creating a member engagement survey that had 25 questions that would result in both quantitative and qualitative responses. We wanted to gain an understanding of who our members are, determine if we were meeting their needs, and find out how we could improve. In December, and again in January, a request to complete the survey was emailed to the entire membership. In an effort to also reach out to past members and even EAL professionals who have never been members, we also published the link to the survey via Social Media platforms of Facebook and Twitter. We received 227 responses: 214 members and 13 non-members. Our total membership in early 2014 was approximately 800 members, which means we had about 25-30% of our membership participate in the survey, which is a strong response rate for this kind of tool.

## Demographics

Most respondents (59%) indicated that they have been in the EAL field for over 10 years and yet only 15% had also been TEAL members for more than 10 years—the most frequent response for “How long have you been a member of BC TEAL?” was in the range of 2-4 years (23%).

## Future Questions

While many in the EAL profession started out teaching abroad, we are now curious if there is a disconnection between years in the profession and years as a member. Also, are we doing a good job of retaining our members for long periods of time?

We were not surprised to find that the vast majority of respondents (59%) live and/or work in the Metro

### 1. b) How long have you been a member of BC TEAL?

| Response           | Chart | Percentage | Count |
|--------------------|-------|------------|-------|
| 1 year or less     |       | 24%        | 53    |
| 2-4 years          |       | 38%        | 84    |
| 5-10 years         |       | 23%        | 51    |
| More than 10 years |       | 15%        | 34    |
|                    |       | 0%         | 1     |
| Total Responses    |       |            | 223   |

### 2. How many years have you been a TESOL professional?

| Response           | Chart | Percentage | Count |
|--------------------|-------|------------|-------|
| Less than 1 year   |       | 8%         | 17    |
| 1-5 years          |       | 16%        | 37    |
| 6-10 years         |       | 18%        | 40    |
| 10-20 years        |       | 32%        | 71    |
| More than 20 years |       | 27%        | 60    |
| Total Responses    |       |            | 225   |

Vancouver area. That said, all other regions of BC were represented. Nine percent indicated that they live and/or work out of province/country.

In terms of language level, the overwhelming majority (87%) consider themselves native English speakers.

## Future Questions










We will be curious to see if the percentage of non-native English speakers grows when we conduct a future survey.

### 10. What is your highest level of education?

| Response  | Chart | Percentage | Count |
|---|-------|------------|-------|
| Bachelor of Education or equivalent   |       | 4%         | 8     |
| Bachelor's degree and a TESL certificate  |       | 28%        | 64    |
| TESOL diploma (e.g., DELTA)   |       | 3%         | 7     |
| Master's degree in a related field (e.g., Education, Applied Linguistics, TESL) |       | 45%        | 103   |
| Master's degree in an unrelated field   |       | 7%         | 15    |
| Doctoral degree (PhD, EdD, or equivalent in a related field)                    |       | 5%         | 11    |
| Doctoral degree (PhD, EdD, or equivalent in an unrelated field)                 |       | 2%         | 4     |
| Other   |       | 7%         | 15    |
| Total Responses   |       |            | 227   |

Interestingly, 45% of the respondents indicated their highest level of education to be a Master's degree in a related field. When we combine all graduate degrees together we see that the number rises to 59%, indicating that the professionalization of the field has come a long way in terms of the number of individuals with graduate level qualifications.

### 3. At what kind of institution do you spend most of your teaching/working time?

| Response                                | Chart   | Percentage | Count |
|---|---|------------|-------|
| International language school (private) |  | 18%        | 40    |
| Private tutoring service                |  | 2%         | 5     |
| College or university (private)         |  | 11%        | 25    |
| Community college (public)              |  | 12%        | 28    |
| University (public)                     |  | 22%        | 50    |
| K-12 public school                      |  | 2%         | 5     |
| K-12 private school                     |  | 0%         | 0     |
| ELSA / ELSAP / LINC                     |  | 23%        | 52    |
| Other                                   |  | 9%         | 20    |
| Total Responses                         |   |            | 225   |











Not surprisingly, the three biggest teaching sectors for our organization are private schools, public universities, and LINC. Although the above chart divides the sector most accurately, in general terms we can see that our memberships falls into those three major categories in fairly even numbers.

According to the BC Government's International Education Strategy released in 2013, 45% of the estimated 94,000 international students in BC (2010) studied in private language schools. These figures indicate that there may be more instructors in this sector than are currently represented in our membership.

## Future Action



The board is looking at how we might be able to do more outreach to connect with instructors teaching in private language schools.

### 5. Which of the following BEST describes your current employment status?

| Response   | Chart   | Percentage | Count |
|--|---|------------|-------|
| Full-time teaching position  |  | 31%        | 71    |
| Primarily non-teaching position (program manager, administrator, etc.) |  | 12%        | 28    |
| Mixture of admin and teaching work (full-time)                         |  | 13%        | 29    |
| One or more part-time teaching position(s)                             |  | 18%        | 42    |
| Teacher-on-Call or substitute  |  | 5%         | 12    |
| Retired  |  | 2%         | 5     |
| Student  |  | 3%         | 7     |
| Unemployed   |  | 4%         | 10    |
| Volunteer  |  | 1%         | 3     |
| Other  |  | 9%         | 21    |
| Total Responses  |   |            | 228   |

Turning to employment status, we found that only about a third of our membership (31%) are teaching full time, while others are working in a combination of roles, including administrative and non-teaching roles, or combining 2 or more part-time positions.

### 6. Are you employed as a regular, permanent employee, or are you on a limited term contract?

| Response                   | Chart   | Percentage | Count |
|----------------------------|---|------------|-------|
| Regular permanent employee |  | 47%        | 97    |
| Limited term contract      |  | 53%        | 109   |
| Total Responses            |   |            | 206   |





Lastly, we found that more than half of our membership (53%) are employed on a 'limited term' basis, rather than as 'regularized' employees.

## Future Action

Although this ratio is perhaps not surprising, it is another metric that will be important for us to re-visit over time, to help us better understand if conditional employment is indeed a growing trend in EAL in BC.

Question #24: How likely are you to renew your BC TEAL membership?

### 24. How likely are you to renew your BC TEAL Membership?

| Response                      | Chart   | Percentage | Count |
|-------------------------------|---|------------|-------|
| Very likely                   |  | 72%        | 161   |
| Somewhat likely               |  | 22%        | 50    |
| Less likely                   |  | 4%         | 8     |
| Not at all (if not, why not?) |  | 2%         | 5     |
| Total Responses               |   |            | 224   |

The response to this question was pleasant; in fact we were reassured that 72% of the respondents said they are "very likely" to renew their memberships and another 22% indicated "somewhat likely".

## Future Actions

Some of the initiatives we're looking at in the Membership committee include getting in communication with renewing and non-renewing members. We should be able to reform our forms and data collection, eliciting assets and requests from members on an ongoing basis. A blanket call for volunteers doesn't suffice; we should be able to get a better sense of who can volunteer, what they want to do, and then tap into that resource.

We can also post a calendar of events for our smaller events and initiatives through our website.

There may also be the opportunity to encourage a stronger Community of Practice; many of us get a





taste of this during our practica, but there's certainly room for growth, mentorship, and renewal at other stages of our careers. We're not quite sure what form this initiative might take, but it's an initiative we hope to pursue this coming year in support of our membership's ongoing professional development and connection to the profession as a whole.

## Members' Voices

The questions in the survey were designed to encourage written feedback. While qualitative analysis is more challenging, the data can be rich. We found that most of the written comments were quite positive, and yet we were surprised by the tone of a small number of critical comments. .

We have chosen to highlight and address these critical comments to demonstrate that we heard them. It is incumbent upon us to represent our entire membership fairly and professionally.

### Comments

Question # 13: Are there any specific issues that you feel are important?

*"The leadership of BC TEAL is overwhelmingly dominated by white NESTs and I think this is a problem given the diversity of our profession."*

*"The insular and regressive nature of a purported open, supposedly international, and welcoming community to professionals from other countries."*

## Response and Future Action

BC TEAL is run by volunteers and membership on the board and committees is open to all. It is only because of members who volunteer on the various committees and who run for board positions that we exist—there is only one paid part-time staff-member, our administrative manager. Thus, we welcome participation from all TEAL members. We will explore more effective ways to communicate this information to the membership

Question # 13: Are there any specific issues that you feel are important?

*"The conditions and treatment of EAL professionals are never discussed at BC TEAL events. These conditions disallow many teachers from using the expert knowledge gained at BC TEAL events, yet seem to be off the radar of the BC TEAL staff. Could it be because BC TEAL Board*

*are all owners with no representations from teachers. The second point is the insulting fact that presenters at conferences and even their fellow non-teacher guests have to PAY full fees to make a conference successful."*

## Response

A) The comment that BC TEAL Board may be owners surprised us on the board and we are not sure where this impression comes from. Currently, and in the recent past, none of the board members have been owners; however, an owner's perspective on the board could very well be a valid one.

In fact, like our membership most board members are practicing teachers some of whom do not have secure employment. The board, like the committees is made up entirely of volunteers.

B) BC TEAL receives no external funding. As a non-profit association, we rely on the income generated at our conferences in order to pay for the operating costs of the organization. As a result, we have to be cautious with how many complimentary registrations we allow. All board members are required to pay conference fees, too, even with hours of discussion and planning for the conference invested. For the 2014 annual conference, we decided to offer a discount for presenters. It should be noted that it is common practice for presenters to pay full registration fees (i.e., both the TESOL International Convention and the BCCIE Conference are far more expensive than BC TEAL and require presenters to pay full conference fees).

Finally, in Question #25 we asked respondents to: "Please add any other comments or suggestions":

*"I appreciate that this group is primarily supported by volunteer time, and there is a limit to what we are able to focus attention on. I would like to know that we are having a positive impact on ESL in our province. How can we continue to be relevant as the world of ESL evolves."*

## Advocacy

Member demographics are diverse – both in terms of sector (public, private, etc.) as well as employment status (contract, ongoing, etc.). This diversity likely influences the range of areas of concern of the membership. In early 2013 we knew that we wanted to ramp up the work of the Policy Action and Advisory Committee (PAAC), and would use the member survey to help prioritize the areas of focus for the PAAC to



work on. Work began in earnest in early 2014. In question 12, we listed six areas that the PAAC could explore and asked respondents to rank them on scale from Very Important to Not Important. Members ranked the following as the four most important areas of focus:

1. BC TEAL's focus should be on improving the status of the ESL/EFL profession.

\* **74%** said this was very important.

2. BC TEAL should advocate that instructors, regardless of employment context, have access to adequate professional development time and funds.

\* **70%** said this was very important.

3. BC TEAL should provide more practical guidance on BC and Canadian laws and regulations as they relate to EAL.

\* **35%** said this was very important.

4. BC TEAL should be a voice for the needs and concerns of non-native English speaking TESL professionals

\* **32%** said this was very important.

**12) One of the important aspects of BC TEAL is that it is a voice for the profession and can advocate and represent the profession. The Policy and Action Advisory Committee seeks your input and guidance on the following:**

|  | 1 - Very important | 2 - Somewhat important | 3 - Less important | 4 - Not important | Total Responses |
|--|--------------------|------------------------|--------------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| BC TEAL should provide more practical guidance on BC and Canadian laws and regulations as they relate to EAL.                                | 77 (35%)           | 102 (46%)              | 34 (15%)           | 9 (4%)            | 220             |
| BC TEAL's focus should be on improving the status of the ESL/EFL profession.   | 165 (74%)          | 52 (23%)               | 7 (3%)             | 2 (1%)            | 223             |
| BC TEAL should do more to support multilingualism.   | 42 (19%)           | 82 (37%)               | 73 (33%)           | 27 (12%)          | 222             |
| BC TEAL should be a voice for the needs and concerns of non-native English speaking TESL professionals                                       | 72 (32%)           | 83 (37%)               | 55 (25%)           | 14 (6%)           | 222             |
| BC TEAL should advocate on behalf of student rights.   | 53 (24%)           | 95 (43%)               | 57 (26%)           | 19 (9%)           | 222             |
| BC TEAL should advocate that instructors, regardless of employment context, have access to adequate professional development time and funds. | 155 (70%)          | 58 (26%)               | 9 (4%)             | 0 (0%)            | 221             |

We asked what members expected from joining BC TEAL and wanted to know how well those expectations were met. The PAAC found the responses to "Advocacy on behalf of the profession" notable: Exceeded expectations-4%; Met expectations-48%; Did not meet expectations-33%; and Not applicable-16%. We were pleased to see that even with the PAAC playing a smaller role in recent years, we were still meeting the perceived needs of the members.

**21. What did you expect from joining BC TEAL, and how well has BC TEAL met those expectations? In other words, where you had expectations, how has BC TEAL performed?**

|  | Exceeded expectations | Met expectations | Didn't meet expectations | Not applicable | Total Responses |
|--|-----------------------|------------------|--------------------------|----------------|-----------------|
| Networking opportunities/job announcements             | 26 (12%)              | 151 (69%)        | 25 (11%)                 | 17 (8%)        | 219             |
| Professional development opportunities                 | 29 (13%)              | 153 (70%)        | 25 (11%)                 | 13 (6%)        | 220             |
| Discounts on conference registration fees              | 13 (6%)               | 130 (60%)        | 37 (17%)                 | 35 (16%)       | 215             |
| Advocacy on behalf of the profession                   | 8 (4%)                | 101 (48%)        | 69 (33%)                 | 34 (16%)       | 212             |
| Staying current on issues in English language teaching | 18 (8%)               | 147 (68%)        | 45 (21%)                 | 6 (3%)         | 216             |
| Leadership opportunities                               | 12 (6%)               | 102 (49%)        | 39 (19%)                 | 56 (27%)       | 209             |
| Professional recognition                               | 11 (5%)               | 124 (58%)        | 42 (20%)                 | 38 (18%)       | 215             |

The PAAC also sought out advocacy-related responses in the question asking if there were any ways BC TEAL could improve or any specific initiatives that members would like to see. Several respondents indicated that advocacy was something they would like BC TEAL to be more involved in; however, only a couple offered more concrete suggestions: "advocating to raise the wages, security and recognition of ESL across the province;" "Seek a voice in government as representative of EAL professionals;" and, "more advocacy re political issues (funding, lack thereof)."

## Future Action

The survey results as well as feedback and comments from membership via other channels is critical in helping shape and direct future PAAC initiatives. To that end, the committee is looking at this feedback in helping shape future initiatives and focus.

## Member Engagement and Benefits

In the survey, professional development came up repeatedly both in the success BC TEAL has had in increasing PD events and opportunities, but also in considerations to help improve opportunities in future. Comments included the following: "Provide quality professional development;" "Advocate for professional development;" "I find that employers expect professional development yet offer little or no support in regard to pursuing it;" "I think professional development is the most important single contribution that TEAL provides and does it really, really well;" and "Continued professional development in changing times re: funding, assessment, etc."

## Future Action

The survey responses showed us that we need to investigate engagement and outreach with other organizations. We have re-established affiliate status

with TESOL International. We are active on the TESL Canada board. We are working with our American neighbours, WAESOL and ORTESOL, to organize a Tri-TESOL conference. We will explore how we might work with Languages Canada.

Likely one of the most used benefits of the membership is the information sharing and online networking. For these purposes, the BC TEAL website is integral. In question 18, we asked how the website could be further improved. Most people indicated general satisfaction, though we know that to have fuller engagement in the community pages we need to implement positive, user-friendly changes.

**9. If BC TEAL offered competitively priced Extended Medical coverage for its members, would you apply?**

| Response  | Chart | Percentage | Count |
|---|-------|------------|-------|
| Yes. Medical and Dental coverage.   |       | 36%        | 79    |
| Yes. Medical coverage only.   |       | 1%         | 3     |
| Yes. Dental coverage only.  |       | 3%         | 7     |
| No. I have extended medical coverage through another source (employer, partner/spouse). |       | 60%        | 132   |
| Total Responses   |       |            | 221   |

Last, it's notable that a number of members do not have medical coverage through their employer and were interested in BC TEAL pursuing ways to provide extended medical coverage opportunities for members. To this end, BC TEAL will form a committee to investigate extended medical coverage opportunities.

## Summary

The membership survey was the first time in many years that we were able to engage with members in a direct way to find out what we are doing well and what we could do to improve. We were very pleased with the level of participation and the quality of the feedback. That said, we do not want to rely only on the feedback from periodic membership surveys. If you have questions, comments, or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact us directly. As a member-driven organization, we want all of our members to be engaged in our professional community.

## Teach In Japan

University graduates interested in experiencing a totally different culture providing a lifetime of unique memories and with experience teaching adults and children needed to teach at Japanese corporations, government ministries and public schools. University degree required. Initial annual contract with option for renewal includes paid vacations, medical insurance, work visa sponsorship and teacher training. Salaries (yen equivalent of between \$30,000 and \$45,000) vary based on applicant's work experience, academic background, type of courses assigned, job performance etc. An assessment of any candidate's English Language proficiency may be required as part of the hiring process. For more information, please email your CV and cover letter to: [jmalian@iesnet.co.jp](mailto:jmalian@iesnet.co.jp) at International Education Services.



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# Between Identities

*by Nisrin Al-Rubaiee*

In an online class discussion for my MA in TESOL, I mentioned that I am an example of the constructionist theory; of course, due to the time difference, my busy life with three very little kids, the oldest not yet three, a full-time job and four hours a day spent on commuting I was too sleepy to say anything sensible. Upon reflection, this is what I wish I had been able to say.

Like all of us, I have multiple identities. However, for many their identities are constructed within the same culture, all that is different is the role. However, for those that move outside of their culture, the identities are not so clear as the identity is informed by the different environment. I have/have had multiple identities. These identities were constructed in order for me to make sense of the different worlds I occupied—some willingly and other not.

My first identity is that equated with nationality: my country of birth and the heritage of my parents. I was born in Iraq and am the daughter of a political dissident.

My second identity is that of exile/outsider. At the age of two my mother (18 years old with 3 little kids) fled the country to Syria because my father was wanted by the authorities for being a member of the, at the time, forbidden communist party. From Syria we moved around mostly because of my father's work as a journalist until we were asked to leave the country because of my father's political actions (he was put in jail for them).

My third identity is that of reluctant refugee. The Dutch delegation for the UNHCR was there when my father was asked to leave Syria. They interviewed us and we were transported to The Netherlands in a very short time.

I came to the Netherlands as a refugee. I was there against my will. I mean we didn't have a choice and I resented my father's role in us being forced that way

(he is a 'controversial', provocative politician). When we arrived I was 20 years old, and was determined to leave the country ASAP, that is the minute I got my degree in English Literature.

My fourth identity is that of marginalized 'foreigner.' I needed to learn Dutch to reach my goal. I was told that people in 'my category' are discouraged from pursuing a university career, as it will be beyond their abilities. That was the first marking line between 'us' and 'them' (I had other experiences before, but they had been limited to insults, disdained looks, and avoidance), but this time it was clear that I belonged to the inferior lot. In The Netherlands, I used to write poetry in Dutch. At one point I won a modest prize for foreign poets in Dutch. Now, I don't write any more. Looking back at it, I realized I used it as a statement and not for a real interest.

My fifth identity is that of rebel language learner. Assigned a role on the sidelines, I was negatively motivated to learn Dutch; I wanted to understand what was said to me (most of the time it is assumed that you won't understand as you are a foreigner) and to be able to respond. I decided to learn the language, get to the university, get my degree and go to the country of my choice (I did not have a clear idea where that would be).

At the university, I faced similar incidents of discrimination. Here I made a conscious decision and refused to speak Dutch and resorted to English (so, I did have a somewhat chosen long silent period, as many people understand and can speak English). After graduating, with an MA in my pocket and no idea where to go, I needed to find a job.

My sixth identity is teacher. Reality hit hard and I assumed another identity, this time as a teacher. I found a job at an underprivileged high school. They were desperate to have a teacher and there I was, right time, right place. After that, I worked at several schools and at last at a university.

*Continuing on page 16*

My seventh identity is that of unrecognized but 'other' by choice. Looking at my achievements, people would not believe that I was not born in The Netherlands. They would talk abusively of foreigners in front of me; but the second they realized that they were talking to a foreigner they would say something like 'but you are different, you are assimilated' as if this were praise. To me it was not praise as I had chosen not to become assimilated and I took offense. I did learn to read, speak and listen in Dutch (a little classroom instruction at the very beginning, and then from my students and the environment around me), but didn't bother about writing, as I didn't see how I would need it.

I guess my point here is, I was in a somewhat hostile environment towards 'the others', and was negatively motivated, but succeeded because I made a conscious decision to take my place in society and be heard and respected. But assimilated, I was not.

What have I learned as I have accepted, resisted or constructed these identities? Identity is bestowed upon us by birth, or by the role we take upon ourselves in society. Sometimes we don't have a choice, but sometimes it is forced. It is up to us to decide what to do with the identity: take it or leave it!

*Nisrin Al-Rubaiee is currently completing her MA in TESOL. She works in Turkey at a newly established state university in the prep-program. A teacher, poet, student, daughter, mother, wife, she is also Iraqi by birth, and has been a Syrian immigrant and a Dutch immigrant by necessity. Married to a Dutch-Turk she and her husband moved to Turkey where she is hoping her children, unlike herself, will have a clearer sense of identity.*

# Interior Designs

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## October 4, 2014

### BC TEAL INTERIOR CONFERENCE

Selkirk College, Mary Hall, Tenth Street campus, Nelson, BC

#### PLENARY SPEAKER

Dr. Scott Roy Douglas, Assistant Professor, University of British Columbia

Author of Oxford University Press "Academic Inquiry: Writing for Post-Secondary Success"

For more information, please visit [www.bctea.org/conferences/2014-interior-regional-conference](http://www.bctea.org/conferences/2014-interior-regional-conference)

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## Conference Report

# Explore, Sustain, Renew: ELT for the Next Generation: TESOL 2014

*by Beth Maschmann*

This year, I had the privilege of attending my first TESOL Conference, held in Portland, Oregon. Attended by over 6,500 participants from more than 120 countries, I was initially overwhelmed by the sheer size of the convention space, choice of sessions, and opportunities to engage with a variety of interests, issues, and advocacy. What became clear, however, is that regardless of what I chose to attend, a shared dedication to our field prevailed. Thus, the conference theme of 'Explore, Sustain, Renew: ELT for the Next Generation' resonated on a number of levels, both personal and professional.

As both an 'experienced' (read 'older') instructor, and one located in public post-secondary in Vancouver, BC, this conference provided sustenance. As in the larger field of education, we as EAL instructors are often negotiating change in our student demographics, program goals and provincial policy. Fortunately, support and consistency can be found in our professional development communities. It was a need to reflect on my own practice and mediate the challenges of a changing EAL context that led me to not only attend the TESOL conference, but also to present.

In 2008, I joined an SSHRC funded research project, initiated by Dr. Ena Lee. The teacher-researcher professional development community which emerged out of this research continues to this day. Our group has since presented at BC TEAL and TESL Canada, and it was in Portland that I presented, with Ena, at my first TESOL conference. I shared how the research and reflection our group has engaged with has made a difference to not only a more conscious, critical teaching practice, but has also surfaced where personal agency exists, the ability to advocate for students and my profession from numerous perspectives.

Professional development, in its many forms allows us, as the TESOL Conference reminds us, to explore both our established practice and alternative forms. It also opens unexpected space to explore who we are as researchers and practitioners, situated in place, time, and fluid identities. Deena Boraie delivered this year's presidential keynote and shared the results of her survey of TESOL members located in different contexts and in different parts of the world. While her keynote in its entirety is available on the TESOL website, what struck me were two recurrent themes, which quite coincidentally align with BC TEAL's most recently passed position statements: one on the importance of continued professional development and the other against discrimination on the grounds of nationality, ethnicity, or linguistic heritage.

Professional development and lifelong learning were identified by members globally as essential to meeting current challenges and the future of English language teaching, particularly in reference to survey identified issues, including methodologies in practice, technology, and in response to nationally imposed curriculums and directives. Dr. Boraie deftly intertwined the ongoing challenges faced by 'non-native speaking' TESOL educators throughout her keynote, speaking from both personal experience and as a voice for survey respondents from numerous contexts who experience continued discrimination. While acknowledging that the native speaker as role-model is losing its power, there is still much need for awareness and advocacy in this regard. Perhaps one way of addressing this issue, and those often facing our students in a local context, is to bring awareness to our extended communities of valuing the diversity of 'English' and advancing the trend towards multilingual and multiliteracy practices in our classrooms. For anyone interested in this, a

*Continuing on page 18*





colloquium which included the work of B.C. academics Diane Dagenais (SFU) and Margaret Early (UBC) was particularly inspiring.

The gifts of TESOL 2014, for me, were meeting and learning from the colleagues who Dr. Boraie spoke for in her survey and being energized by thousands of inquisitive professionals. TESOL 2015 will be held in Toronto, Canada. The theme, 'Crossing Borders, Building Bridges' appears to be an evolution of this year's theme. ELT for the next generation will depend on our ability to 'travel' pedagogically, reflectively, and perhaps most importantly, collectively.

**Beth Maschmann** teaches in the English Language and Culture Program at Simon Fraser University and is currently completing an M.A. in Educational Studies at UBC.

## BC TEAL Conference 2014





# The New Vancouverwrite—Supporting Passion

*by Cairn McArthur*

For many years I have contemplated ways to provide a cross-cultural venue for English learners to practice the language. Most people like to communicate their interests and while learning a new language, motivation to enable that in the target language is usually high.

A realization, in part, of these contemplations is The New VancouverWrite. It is a magazine showcasing the mostly unedited writing of new immigrants studying English through the ELSA (now LINC) program at SUCCESS.

The inspiration for the magazine arose three years ago, when I was teaching in Coquitlam. The writing of an ELSA 3 student, Lilian Soledad Perez, a young woman from Chile, caught my eye through double-entry journaling.

Periodically, I introduce double-entry journaling to my students. If they are motivated to write to me, I read their journals and make a few comments, hence the double-entry. Among other things, my comments allow the students to see that I understand what they are trying to communicate. In order to stimulate fluency, I purposefully do not correct their entries. The fact that I comprehend their writing but don't point out their errors is, I think, quite freeing to them.

After seeing the high quality of Lilian's writing after her first and several subsequent entries, I casually suggested that if she would write a critique of an upcoming fieldtrip to the Bill Reid Gallery, I would get her published. I worried that I might not be able to keep my promise, but she ultimately had the feature article spot in the ELSA Net Newsletter.

Later, again without knowing how, I told her we should start a newspaper. A week or so later she said, "Let's do it." Thus, The New VancouverWrite was born.

Three years on, the magazine has become a rare and vibrant venue for new (Metro) Vancouverites who love to write. They are highly motivated and wish to communicate with others about areas of mutual interest.



It is usually a proud moment when students see their article in a new issue of the magazine. I would guess that to them it represents some significant step in their ability to communicate in English and it gives them an invaluable boost of confidence.

For the reader, the magazine is a medium to connect newcomers and it serves as encouragement of what is possible. For example, Yvette, a former Senior Engineer and Manager for a research institute in China, knew that she could not easily secure a similar position in Canada without near perfect English. Her story in the magazine takes us through her journey to realization of what she wanted to do for work. She had a habit, after completing most of her housework, of sitting on a playground swing watching the children in the primary school across from her home. After relating a few lovely scenarios she tells us how this was a strong reminder of her love for children and her decision to become a pre-school teacher. Yvette now works as a Montessori pre-school teacher.

Another student, Lori, has written several articles for different issues of the magazine. She once described how she was met with confusion and surprise when, as is customary for Chinese people, she saw a neighbour and asked him, "Did you have lunch?" His reaction made her immediately know her mistake. He had felt the question too forward and perhaps thought she was asking him over for lunch. This could be useful information for others.

Jane's article describes in comical detail how she tried to discover why two office chairs on sale at JYSK had very different prices: \$10 and \$40. After sitting on one



and then the other repeatedly, she was finally able to read a label on the \$10 chair- “It doesn’t work.” She didn’t buy it.

It has not always been an easy project. Initially it was not hard to corral many students from the classes I was teaching, but it was difficult to get people involved beyond writing articles. The first edition was pulled together with much effort by Lilian, and I was amazed at the professional quality; it turns out Lilian had been a journalist and communications professional in Chile.

We have had some challenges. At one point we found that a student had, rather innocently I believe, plagiarized an article. We do after all often encourage our lower level students to copy phrases in order to practice the correct form. This became a problem that we had to address immediately. For a later issue, I was astonished to find the work of another student had no errors. Consultation with that student’s teacher made us realize that some outside help was being delivered. All of these concerns needed to be dealt with. We had to make it clear that we wanted the authentic voice of an immigrant. Too much “polish” was suspect and unnecessary.

As has been the case for many publications, we also faced financial barriers. We got initial support from SUCCESS in printing the first three editions, but they could not justify further help because beyond the contributions of writers, the only front line workers were Lilian and me. Both Lilian and I have spent countless hours on this project and it has never occurred to us to try to tabulate those hours. Lilian, in addition to spending many hours communicating with our collaborators and developing the layout of the publication, promotes it through social media: a blog, Facebook, and Twitter. She also spent many hours developing a wonderful video outlining the history behind the magazine that I used at a presentation for BC TEAL in April of last year. We also promoted the magazine at the publishers’ tables at the last ELSA Net Conference and gathered a list of interested teachers from other agencies.

We love seeing how happy and motivated and often proud students feel to see in print their own words, concrete evidence that proves they can communicate in their new language. However, without financial assistance we did not think we would be able to

continue.

I have been very lucky to get support from an altruistic manager at a Staples store in Surrey. I told her that we would be seeking funding, and asked if Staples could support us with about 25 copies to distribute to each of SUCCESS’s level 3 to 5 teachers. She agreed that if we made the request each time we needed copies, she would let us know at that time if she could help.

In November of last year I received a letter from BC TEAL. With a tight stomach and nervous fingers I opened it and read, “I am very pleased to inform you that you have been selected to receive the 2014 Project Funding Award with a value of \$2000.” The letter is now framed and on my office wall.

Now that we have the grant, we want to open up the magazine to include articles from other LINC providers and include level 6 to 8 participants. In addition, we now hope to get more student involvement in the behind the scenes work. Anyone looking for authentic Canadian work experience with an interest in helping to put together the magazine is welcome.

Getting the grant will enable us to send more copies to interested participants. Every class with a participant will get a copy of the magazine and every article writer will get one as well.

It is wonderful to know that the magazine represents the immigrant experience and not someone’s interpretation of it. Only those living it can know what details are relevant. An interviewer doesn’t always know the “right” questions to ask. Of course student’s work is edited. I make a promise to any contributors that we will not embarrass them by including bad grammar or spelling mistakes. I make painstaking efforts to ensure that I correct their words, while keeping their phrasing as grammar allows. The temptation to translate into more recognizable language is avoided.

Thank you BC TEAL for helping to support a passion that makes English language learning easier for many new immigrants.

**Cairn McArthur** is a LINC 7/8 instructor with SUCCESS. She’s been teaching over 10 years.





# Adventures in Professional Development in the UK...

*by Cynthia Caswell, Beneficiary of the 2014 Pat Wakefield Commonwealth Travel Scholarship*



What an honor to represent BC TEAL at the 2014 IATEFL Annual Conference in Harrogate, England!

The International Association of Teachers of English as a Foreign Language organized a vibrant four-day conference, including approximately 2,000 attendees, five plenary

speakers, more than 500 sessions (signature events, talks, workshops, forums, symposiums, and poster presentations), the IATEFL Jobs Market, and the Exhibition.

During pre-conference travel and at the venue, I met TEFL professionals from diverse areas such as China and other nations of the Asia-Pacific region, the Ukraine, Africa, India, the Middle East, and Western European countries, such as France, Germany, Belgium and, of course, the UK.

A key feature of the IATEFL conference organization is the Special Interests Groups (SIGs). The organization includes 15 well-established SIGS:

- Business English
- English for Specific Purposes
- ES(O)L
- Global Issues
- Leadership & Management
- Learner Autonomy
- Learning Technologies
- Literature, Media & Cultural Studies
- Materials Writing

- Pronunciation
- Research
- Teacher Development
- Teacher Training & Education
- Testing, Evaluation, & Assessment
- Young Learners & Teenagers

Each SIG held a Pre-Conference Event (PCE) and had a SIG Day of organized presentations on topics and issues of relevance to the group, including an open forum event to allow new and potential members to check out the networking opportunity. On April 1st, I attended the full day Research PCE, which featured twenty-two poster-presentations, peer feedback and questions, as well as expert feedback from distinguished guests, Professors

Dick Allwright, Anne Burns, and Donald Freeman.

While some attention was given to the distinctions between

Participatory

Research, Action Research, and Teacher Research, the major emphasis was on the similarities that make these a useful family of research methods for teachers wanting to investigate classroom practice.

When the conference opened, I spent time networking with professional acquaintances I had met at the PCE, attending sessions, then checking out the Job Market and the Exhibition hall (photos on page 22). The latter featured over 50 exhibitors who brought with them the best of ELT books, products, resources, and services. The IATEFL Exhibition is also renowned for a



strong presence of testing experts, who offer the latest options and packages for determining the language proficiency of teachers and students. Since “testing and classroom assessment” are components of my teaching specialization, I selected some resources to bring home.



Another highlight for me was attending the Teacher Training & Education open forum. It was exciting to see that the SIG leadership involved teacher trainers and educators from a variety of international locations. I was also impressed by a forum presentation on research into design and delivery of self-access teacher training courses with assessments. This global trial included 4,000 English language teachers in 10 countries with low access to professional development



*Plenary session - Kathleen Graves*

courses. Professors Donald Freeman, Anne Burns (photo to the right), and Anne Katz entitled the forum, “Investigating New Constructs in Teacher Education.” The concept of professional confidence was related to development of both knowledge-for-teaching (Freeman) and English-for-teaching (Katz). Building upon what is “familiar” to teachers in order

to stimulate professional development was another foundational concept that underlies the project design (Burns). Results from a pilot survey were used to support the design effectiveness.

In terms of the plenary sessions, I was delighted to hear Kathleen Graves, from the University of Michigan, present on “The Efficiency of Inefficiency: an Ecological Perspective on Curriculum.” She addressed a significant paradox of (English) language teaching: focus on the speed of language acquisition, rather than focus on the learners, does not produce the intended ‘efficient’ outcomes. In contrast to an efficiency driven curriculum, which seeks to save time, resources and energy, she defined an ecological curriculum as one which focuses on growth and development, attending to the interplay between learners, the teacher, the subject matter and the learning environment. She suggested that an approach which seems at odds with efficiency may in reality be highly efficient in “meeting educational goals in lasting ways.” In my mind, this plenary talk resonated with BC TEAL’s own recent emphasis on sustainability and ecology in ELT. We are in touch with global themes and issues.

In another plenary session, Sugata Mitra, from Newcastle University, UK, emphasized how use of single computers with the Internet and with learning coaches (i.e. The Granny Cloud of Teachers) can bring access to collaborative English language learning and content learning for children and youth in slums and remote, rural areas around the globe, as well as some of the richest international schools. He is known as the inventor of Self-Organized Learning Environments. Thus self-access learning appears to be a bright future for many students and teachers world-wide.



My own workshop session, “Problem-based Learning (PBL) in MA TESOL Teacher Education” was offered on the last morning of the conference. It was another step forward in my professional

development trajectory to provide a workshop for an international, teacher educator audience and facilitate their group work on designing the problem guidelines for a PBL cycle at the MA level. Earlier experiences in presenting for BC TEAL were valuable preparation for this international opportunity.



The IATEFL 2014 Annual Conference was just the start of my PD and networking opportunities on this trip.



*Dr. Fiona Copeland, preparing to introduce the next conference speaker.*

When that conference ended, I travelled to Birmingham and settled at the Aston University campus in temporary residence. I spent several days meeting with my supervisor and other faculty regarding quantitative and qualitative data in my own Ph.D. project. I also attended two more events related to the study of corpus linguistics. I travelled to the 35th Conference of the International

Association of Corpus Analysis of Modern & Medieval English (ICAME) held at Nottingham University. On



*Dr. Nur Kurtoglu-Hooton presenting*

April 30th, I invested a full afternoon in a pre-conference workshop on "Corpus-based Approaches to Discourse Relations." This event was a strong indicator of the continuing value of my MA thesis work in discourse relations. I also took in the opening ceremonies of the conference in Trent Hall (photo to the left). Michaela Mahlberg, the conference organizer (photo below), introduced Professor Ronald Carter, of CRAL, Nottingham's Centre for Research in Applied Linguistics, who spoke on the theme of "Corpus, Context, Culture: Histories and Futures." During the dinner reception, I had the pleasure to meet Professor Wolfgang Teubert and Dr. Susan Hunston of the University of Birmingham.

I was invited to the 9th Open Sinclair Lecture at their institution on May 8th. The guest speaker was Professor Sylviane Granger from Belgium, the leader in "learner corpus" analysis. At this event, it was exciting to hear about an emphasis on corpus research results impacting ELT materials. At both events, I had the opportunity to share about the "teacher learning corpus" which the TWU MA TESOL program has archived over the years. Who knows what collaborative opportunities may unfold in the future!

The final event I attended was a one-day conference, hosted by the Center for Language Education Research



*Dr. Sue Garton, Programme Director, Aston Ph.D. in Applied Linguistics; Keynote Speaker, Prof. Thomas Farrell from Brock University, Canada; Prof. Anne Burns, Director of CLERA; and Cynthia Caswell, Ph.D. Candidate and author of this report.*

at Aston (CLERA), on May 14th.

The theme was "New Directions in Reflective Practice." The keynote speaker was Thomas Farrell from Brock University, Canada. Several UK researchers also presented on a variety of projects involving issues in



*Conference attendees responding to the presentations.*

reflective practice. The emphasis was on the importance of data-based reporting about reflective activities, in order to gain a more informed understanding of the emergence and improvement of reflective practice.



Early morning, May 15th, found me at the Birmingham airport boarding my flight back to Canada. It was an eventful and satisfying trip.

A heart felt thank-you to the TEAL Foundation for support of these PD experiences!



# The TEAL Charitable Foundation Report

*by Elmira Mafi, Robin Steen*

The TEAL Charitable Foundation had a very successful year of fund-raising in 2013. Most of our efforts were towards building the TCF Refugee Award Endowment Fund. The *Climb for the Cause* (a sponsored ascent of The “Grind” foot trail at Grouse Mountain) was by far the most profitable single event, raising a total of \$16,141.00.

We also had two other successful fund-raising events:

The *Step Up and Step Out* dance performance held in early March at Club 560 raised \$5,078. The attendance that night of the previous Refugee Award winners also boosted awareness of the TCF and our fund-raising initiatives.

The *Silent Auction and 50/50* draw at last May’s TEAL conference at Douglas College raised \$1,703.

The great success of the last two years’ *Climb for the Cause* will ensure its continuation as an annual TCF fund-raising tradition. This year, *Climb for the Cause* 2014 will take place on September 21, 2014. It seems almost certain that funds raised at this year’s climb will bring us to our goal of \$100,000 and a permanent Refugee Award Endowment Fund. At present the total amount raised for the TCF Refugee Award is \$86,427.79.

In the summer of 2014 the TEAL Charitable Foundation will set up the TCF Refugee Award with the Vancouver Foundation. We are looking forward to raising more funds towards other scholarships in the future.



## AGM 2014

The AGM was held on Friday, May 23, 2014. For the past several years, new board members have been acclaimed, while this year we had an election for the newest board position of Outreach Chair. Michael Wicks was the successful candidate. As well, the PAAC presented two position statements for voting by the membership:

TEAL Member Resolution against Discrimination on the Grounds of Nationality, Ethnicity or Linguistic Heritage; and  
BC TEAL Position on the Importance and Need for Professional Development.

To see the complete AGM package, including all committee reports and financial statements, please visit the website at <http://www.bcteal.org/about/bylaws/>.

