



TEAL News

Fall 2021

www.bcteal.org

THE ASSOCIATION OF BRITISH COLUMBIA TEACHERS OF ENGLISH AS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE



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Publication:

The BC TEAL newsletter is available through membership in BC TEAL, open access on the website, and by special arrangement. It is published 3 times a year in winter, spring, and fall. Contact the editor for specific deadlines.

Contributors:

We welcome articles of general interest to associated members. All material is submitted to the editorial board before being approved for publication. Copy may be edited for length, style, and/or clarity without prior notice to authors. Please be aware that submissions may be reprinted. Copy should be submitted directly to the editor as an email attachment.

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Greetings Members

by Cindi Jones

DEAR BC TEAL MEMBERS, LEADERS, AND SUPPORTERS,

As we head into the fall and a new round of COVID-19 safety strategies, I hope you are all well and creating some space in your lives for peace and joy to fill.

At BC TEAL we are looking forward to new and interesting professional development offerings to meet your needs for the coming year. We have also welcomed a new board that is a good representation of the diversity of our membership not just in genders and ethnicities, but also in terms of ages and sectors that are represented. We had a very successful board retreat and came away with a greater understanding of each other and a tool, included here, we can use for evaluating decisions.

BC TEAL Decision Making Guide

The goal of the decision-making guide is to give BC TEAL board and committees a common reference point for making decisions about initiatives to undertake.

A good decision for BC TEAL is one that:

MAKES SENSE:

- Can we afford this?
- How will we measure and know we have been successful?
- Do we have the capacity to complete and sustain this?

IS ALIGNED WITH OUR MISSION AND VALUES:

- Is it transparent, inclusive, and researched?
- Does it positively impact our members and the profession?
- Does it contribute to the ongoing well-being of our members and organization?

MEETS A NEED:

- Has the need been stated?
- Does it have the support of board members?
- Does it have the support of the membership?

If an initiative meets these criteria, when does it need to be addressed?

- I. Pursue it sooner
- II. Investigate and Research
- III. Pursue later

July 2021

This tool will give us flexibility to adapt in our everchanging landscape. It will also empower committee and working group members to bring forward initiatives to be worked on by the organization.



Image by vectorjuice at freepik

I would encourage you to consider becoming a BC TEAL Leader by filling out the **Volunteer Questionnaire**. You will become part of a great group of committed professionals seeking to improve the profession for all of us.

As we resume classes and our lives move into this next stage, I encourage you to stay connected to organizations that support you professionally and personally. We at BC TEAL are committed to providing you meaningful and timely opportunities to connect with colleagues and support each other's professional growth.

Stay tuned. The best is yet to come!

Cindi

Cindi Jones
BC TEAL President



Cindi Jones has been in the EAL industry for over two decades. Her career has included teaching EAL students in the public post-secondary, LINC, and private for-profit sectors. She has taught public school teachers in China and Omani nationals in Muscat. Cindi has presented for BC TEAL, ATESL, and TESL Toronto. She has been active in BC TEAL, serving on several committees. Cindi is a yoga enthusiast, curious cook, a beginning golfer, and loves hanging out with her family.

Community of Practice

by Karin Wiebe

I SPENT THE SUMMER seeking out members of our community for candid conversations about the role *TEAL News* plays or could play in additional language teaching and learning.

Novice educators explained that BC TEAL mediates their connection to the larger field and the newsletter acts as a kind of training guide with pragmatic ideas, over-arching topics to consider and contacts that can be counted on for guidance. I also heard that the diverse kinds of additional language education delivery within the province are not all equally engaged with each other or with BC TEAL, and these (dis)connections can pose additional challenges for BC's newcomers.

Experienced educators I spoke with talked about the changes to *TEAL News* and conferences over the past decade, explaining that there seems to be fewer practical tools and advice and more academic discussion than before. It was suggested we need to find a balance of these things to remain relevant to educators.

I relate these things to you to illustrate that this is **YOUR** community of practice. These channels, including *TEAL News*, the *BC TEAL Journal*, *BC TEAL Blog*, conferences and professional development programs are your safe spaces to bring your thoughts, questions, and understandings forward to a like-minded community. These are the physical and virtual places where we negotiate our unique meanings and define our best practices through dialogue.

I will continue to seek out the voices in our field and encourage you to tell us what you are seeing, learning, and thinking about as you work and volunteer with language learners through the fall. These are the inroads we need to engage and discuss with each other.

The “Community of Practice” issue reflects the personal connections we have fostered and maintained throughout this challenging time. Our contributors have all demonstrated ways in which BC TEAL members gain insights, inspiration, personal and professional development that informs their work in the field. I would offer that these gains are the result of caring and thoughtful engagement within our own community of practice.

Thank you for the candid conversations with community members throughout the summer. I encourage everyone to submit your articles, questions, or ideas to editor@bctéal.org.

Karin

Karin Wiebe
Editor, *TEAL News*



Karin Wiebe is pursuing her Master of Arts at UBC's Okanagan School of Education. She is interested in how English as an additional language is learned in the workplace, and how that can be supported in the classroom. She is the BC TEAL Publications chair and the editor of *TEAL News*.

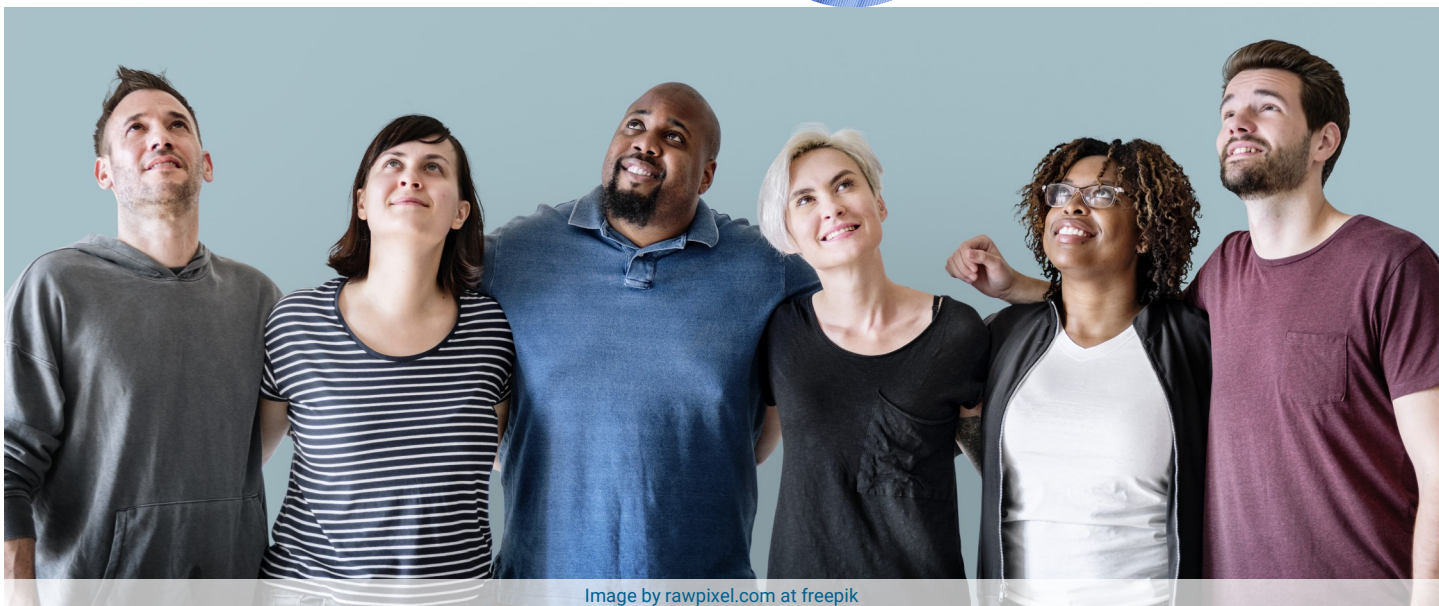


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Mental Health in the LINC Classroom

by Alison Heath & Natalie Anderson

WHEN PEOPLE THINK about personal health and well-being, they often place attention on aspects of physical health. Mental health is not considered fully, or completely avoided. There are various reasons for this, including the complexity and invisibility of the issue, lack of reliable information and public services, and fear of stigmas and stereotypes. Now, more than ever, it is crucial to make space for learning that supports good mental health and personal resiliency.

The World Health Organization (WHO, 2018) recognizes that mental health is not the absence of a mental health condition; it is something bigger, and an essential part of human health:

Mental health is a state of well-being in which an individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community.

Mental health is fundamental to our collective and individual ability as humans to think, emote, interact with each other, earn a living and enjoy life. On this basis, the promotion, protection, and restoration of mental health can be regarded as a vital concern of individuals, communities, and societies throughout the world. (para.2-3)

In *Together Against Stigma: Changing How We See Mental Illness* (MHCC et al., 2012) the authors found that mental health impacts the lives of everyone—individuals, families, communities, classrooms, and workplaces. Research finds that “in any given year, 1 in 5 people in Canada will personally experience a mental health problem or illness” (p.7). When it comes to the lives of newcomers, refugees, and immigrants, there are greater risks associated with mental health challenges. In *Changing Directions, Changing Lives: The Mental Health Strategy for Canada*, the MHCC indicates that “immigrants, refugees, members of ethno-cultural groups or people who are likely to be racialized” face additional mental health risks (2012, p.82). In fact, a recent study on the mental health and wellbeing of recent immigrants to Canada reported that “29% of immigrants reported having some kind of emotional problem” (Robert & Gilkinson, 2012, p.iii). Emotional problems in this study were described as “persistent feelings of sadness, depression, loneliness” (p.5).

These challenges are compounded by stigmas involving misunderstanding, mischaracterization, ridicule, and even demonization of those with mental illnesses. Indeed, the MHCC (2012) went so far as to state that those suffering from

mental illness feel that “the stigma they face is often worse than the illness itself” (p.4). Equally concerning is that, according to the MHCC, “the stigma associated with mental illness prevents two-thirds of those affected from seeking help” (p.4).

With this in mind, educators working with newcomers, refugees, and immigrants have an important role to play in supporting mental health in the community and creating positive change. Language barriers and cultural stigmas can prevent newcomers from effectively communicating about their personal mental health and reaching out to essential mental health services. Educators working with these groups can engage in the process of equipping learners with the language to communicate their mental health needs in a safe and supportive environment and navigate the mental healthcare system.

In response to this urgent need to create space for learning about mental health in the EAL classroom, *Mental Health for Everyone—Thriving Through Transitions* (Anderson & Heath, 2021) has been created and is now available through Tutela. This resource was designed to address the unique learning needs of newcomers, refugees, and immigrants. It provides the scaffolding for the development of pragmatic language related to feelings, moods, mental health promotion, and mental health conditions at progressive degrees of complexity across levels CLB 3-8. The intention of the curriculum is to address issues related to language, empathy, cultural stigmas and personal safety so that ELL can build the necessary language, knowledge and skills to express and satisfy their personal needs related to positive mental health within the community.

Our hope is to support learners in building the awareness and language that will enable them to thrive through the transitions in their lives. This curriculum presents a graduated scope and sequence of language needed at different stages of development so that as learners progress, they can communicate with greater detail and nuance. The curriculum contains CLB-aligned modules complete with classroom-ready skill-building, skill-using, and assessment tasks. It also features original illustrations to help introduce concepts related to feelings, common newcomer challenges, and self-care. Moreover, it integrates authentic audio-visual content, including infographics, YouTube videos, pamphlets, interviews, and podcasts.

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Mental Health for Everyone—Thriving Through Transitions

has recently been piloted in LINC classes, and results indicate that it is an effective resource that is adaptable to different levels and abilities. Pilot instructors indicated that there were practical vocabulary and grammar activities for learners that were “engaging” and facilitated easy preparation for the skill-using and assessment tasks. Materials were described as “integrated, interactive and relevant.” Pilot instructors also reported that learning tasks were effective for opening up communication and normalizing the topic of mental health and illness and were impressed with the open communication that was created in the classroom” on a topic that is often difficult to navigate (Anderson & Heath, 2021).

Feedback from learners was captured in the pilot study through an optional online survey, in which responses from sixty-seven learners across CLB 3 to 7 were collected. Learners were asked to consider the importance of learning about mental health when learning English and all indicated that it was important. When asked why, learners responded that it was useful

information and important to talk about feelings because everyone has mental health. Participants also agreed that the topic

had relevance to their experience as newcomers with different challenges, such as isolation, employment, making friends, talking to the doctor, and getting help. Learners also stated that the topic of mental health was particularly important within the current pandemic context.

It is evident that both educators and learners recognized the value of integrating the topic of mental health into settlement language learning through this curriculum. We encourage instructors, administrators, and organizations to explore this new resource on Tutela. We hope it will be part of fostering positive change in the lives

of newcomers by raising awareness of mental health, destigmatizing mental illness, and promoting constructive conversations on this topic.

The development of *Mental Health for Everyone—Thriving Through Transitions* was supported through the BC TEAL Health Education Award.



Alison Heath is an adult educator, LINC instructor and curriculum developer with over 20 years of experience creating learning programs locally, provincially and nationally. She has developed curriculum on a variety of topics including heart health, women's mid-life health, gender equality, and leadership development for both the EAL and general population. Most recently, Alison authored the project titled “Gender Equality – From Gender Blindness to Transformative Action.”



Natalie Anderson is a LINC and EAP instructor, curriculum developer, and online instructional designer with 10+ years' experience in the post-secondary and EAL fields. She has taught LINC 1 to 8, and designed a range of online materials that support delivery of self-directed learning across all CLB levels with various LINC providers, including Achève, MOSAIC BC, and the North Shore Multicultural Society. Additionally, Natalie has presented on computer literacy and task-based learning.

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How Hard Can It Be?

Engaging EAL Seniors in Lifelong Learning

by Dr. Sylvia Helmer

Report for the TEAL Charitable Foundation Health Education Award Project

THE CHALLENGE

You are preparing to facilitate the topic of medication awareness – outline at right – to a group of seniors ranging in age from early sixties to late eighties. While there are some native English speakers in the group, the majority are Cantonese speakers with a low intermediate level of English. This 45-minute presentation and discussion has been allotted an extra 30 minutes to allow more time for clarification and questions.

OUTLINE

- Definitions
- Facts
- Medication Misuse
- Medication Abuse
- Managing Your Medications
- Doctor-Patient Relationship
- Pharmacist-Patient Relationship
- The Case of Ms. Handell



HOW WOULD YOU approach this task? What kinds of comprehension supports would you wish to have available for this group? How much prep time would you need to ensure the participants will be reasonably able to comprehend?

Alternatively, consider this topic, *Keeping Seniors Safe*. The description for this session is as follows: Abuse and neglect of seniors takes many forms. Participants learn how to identify suspicious signs and symptoms of abuse and neglect. We review potential causes, intervention techniques and where to find help.

This deeply personal topic implies a very different kind of preparation. Rather than the issue of clear definitions and their comprehension, this topic is rife with constructs that may be embedded in very different cultural ways of being, which in turn can lead to miscues and misunderstandings. The potential for ‘things we do not talk about with strangers’ will potentially further distance you from your learners.

These are examples of the challenge being faced by some 60 volunteer facilitators for Seniors’ Health and Wellness Institute

(SHWI), a non-profit group whose aim is to support the health and wellness of seniors across the province – and with the advent of Zoom sessions, the reach is now across the country.

Their goal is to offer free, well researched and clear information sessions on topics ranging from safety, such as Falls Prevention, and Safety in the Home, financial literacy, legal personal planning, and healthy living topics such as Diabetes, Healthy Eating, Medication Awareness, Memory, and Aging.

SHWI has already begun to respond. Translated handouts – rather like executive summaries of the sessions – are being created in several of the most common languages. The organization has started with those sessions most frequently requested, however, multi-page translations for potentially 45 sessions are a time-consuming and costly solution.

While a laudable achievement, translated handouts do little to address that learners’ look of confusion during a session, as you

talk about mental health issues or how to access the health care system effectively. In-class interpretation, aside from the costs



Photo by Sarah Ruhullah on Unsplash

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How Hard Can It Be? Engaging EAL Seniors in Lifelong Learning *continued*

this would incur, sounds like the ideal on paper but is not the stuff of real life as noted in the sample group above. Not only is the composition of the group as diverse as EAL classrooms, currently the task is further complicated trying to do all this on Zoom or an equivalent online platform. This arm's length contact prevents the practice of most interactive strategies that aid comprehension.

SHWI is immensely grateful to the TEAL Charitable Foundation Health Education Award which has provided a monetary stimulus to assist with this work in progress. My mandate was to work with facilitators to identify what they do and/or wish they could do to augment their actual presentations, with the aim of sharing ideas, collecting strategies and tips and otherwise inventing/finding ways to help ALL seniors gain access to the information they were seeking.

POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS

What have we learned that is new and noteworthy, that you not have experienced and tried yourself? Probably not much. However, what follows is a brief overview of what we have gleaned in terms of distinctions to consider when working with seniors in general, and those who are EAL learners in particular.

BEFORE A SESSION

- Request host organizations to consider a timeslot in their programs that allows for extra time when adapting a slower pace and/or working with an interpreter.
- Review presentation and adapt appropriately in terms of linguistic and cultural factors.
- Review length of presentation and condense or adapt to allow more time for clarity and comprehension.
- For English only delivery, have key concepts and terminology translated and distributed to EAL seniors in advance so they can make links to their background knowledge to better access core content and ideas.
- Adapt delivery when working with an interpreter.

DURING A SESSION

Supportive Strategies for ALL Seniors

- Enunciate
- Reduce speaking speed
- Ensure your face/mouth is visible when speaking
- Increase speaking volume
- Increase font size of text on slides/visuals
- Use dark/black text colours and light backgrounds
- Take regular breaks for questions, comments and discussion
- Take at least one stretch break
- Converse/story vs lecture

- Allow processing and thinking time
- Avoid distractions

Additional Suggestions for work with EAL Seniors

- Assume nothing
- Build context and background knowledge as needed
- Decrease language density in your speech and on the slides
- Use visual and verbal cues
- Support complex language/terminology with graphic organizers
- Be specific and explicit
- Repeat, paraphrase, use synonyms and circumlocution
- Check for understanding frequently
- Review/build on new ideas at regular intervals
- Avoid jargon and culture-based jokes and cartoons
- Avoid idioms, jokes, sarcasm, hyperbole, etc.

NEXT STEPS

Volunteer facilitators cannot be blamed for not being universally eager for additional in-house training, struggling with adapting sessions and/or dealing with the challenges that are inherent in having an interpreter present. Our annual sessions for new facilitators can start the process, but until you experience the challenges yourself ... well, it all seems a bit 'overdone'.

The positive results are worth it all. As fellow teachers, you will not find it difficult to imagine the smiles and nods of understanding as that proverbial penny drops and recognition and understanding light up eyes and faces. It certainly made my face light up, making the hours of additional preparation worth every moment.

In conclusion, a much-heightened awareness of the challenges of those quiet and polite seniors who gather to listen and learn has been achieved. Attention is not comprehension, and neither is a lack of questions at the end. As Steve Jobs noted:

Simple can be harder than complex.

You have to work hard to get your
thinking clear to make it simple.

But it's worth it in the end because once
you get there, you can move mountains

—Steve Jobs



Dr. Sylvia Helmer has worked with all levels and ages of EAL learners, both domestically and abroad. Aside from volunteering her skills for adult language conversation classes, she has been working with the Seniors' Health and Wellness Institute seniorshelpingseniors.ca to help EAL seniors across the province access health and wellness information.

OVERVIEW

Established by BC TEAL in 1986, TCF is a charitable organization that raises funds to support its mandate of promoting the teaching and learning of English as an additional language. We provide **eleven** annual awards and scholarships to EAL learners and educators at a combined value of **\$27,500 annually**. Our awards and scholarships are funded through the interest accrued from the TCF endowment with the Vancouver Foundation.



2020 Student Award Recipients

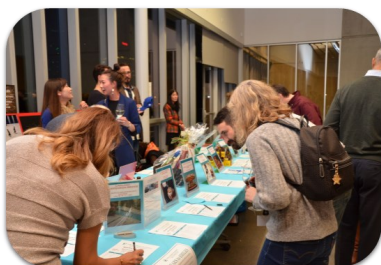
OUR AWARDS

Educator Awards	BC TEAL/TESOL Award	▪ Up to \$1,000
	Health Education Award	• Up to \$4,000
	Mary Ashworth Scholarship	• Up to \$1,000
	Nan Poliakoff Memorial Award	• Up to \$1,000
	Pat Wakefield Scholarship	• Up to \$3,000
	Project Funding Award	• Up to \$2,500
	Settlement Language Resource Award	• Up to \$3,000

Student Awards	Each up to \$3,000
	David Lam/BC TEAL English Language Learner Scholarship
	Taiga Galli Memorial Refugee Award
	TCF Refugee Award
	Nicholas Collins Founders Refugee Award

OUR FUNDRAISERS

Although our fundraising is currently on hold during the Covid-19 pandemic, keep your eyes peeled for these and other fundraisers in future years:



Silent Auctions, 50/50s, Raffles at Conferences



Climb for the Cause – Grouse Grind



Tears to Smiles – Gala Wine & Cheese Fundraiser

GET INVOLVED

Interested in joining the TCF board, donating, or otherwise supporting our cause? Visit us at www.bcteat.org/teal-charitable-foundation or email us at admin@bcteat.org

BC TEAL's 2021 Event: Image & Inspiration

by Cindi Jones



IMAGE & INSPIRATION was BC TEAL's first annual conference to be held online. However, it was not our first online event. Throughout 2020 BC TEAL offered several online programs to meet our members professional development needs. The most informative of these, for conference planning, were Back-to-School Boot Camp and LINC Reboot which were offered in September 2020. These two events, which were held using Zoom and a lot of emails and spreadsheets in the background, informed our decisions going into Image & Inspiration.

Lessons learned included:

- the need for more streamlined communications with speakers, sponsors, exhibitors, and attendees;
- a space for attendees to share their learning, network, and connect;
- shorter days to keep our attendees engaged;
- a cheaper way to collect registrations and keep them organized; and
- the ability for all participants to get help during the event when needed.

These lessons have led us to investigate online event platforms. Thank you to Ange Quapp who attended ATESL and TESL Ontario's conferences, and Janice Penner who attended ATESL, and reported back on their experiences with the event platforms. ATESL used Whova and TESL Ontario used Pheedloop. The two systems offered similar features, similar pricing, and each had pros and cons. The deciding factor was that Pheedloop is a Canadian company run out of Ontario, whereas Whova's headquarters are in California.

Thanks to a project grant from the TEAL Charitable foundation, we were able to partially offset the expense of the platform and offer an exciting online experience for our attendees. The TEAL Charitable foundation, in addition to offering scholarships to young immigrants and refugees, offers several grants to EAL professionals. Application deadlines for the awards vary depending on the award. Please check them out and see if one might be helpful in your work (see [TCF Awards & How to Apply](#)). There is also a resource bank of projects that have been completed using TCF awards which is available for you to download and use (see [Resources](#)).

The Image & Inspiration conference was a great success. There were 375 attendees over four days. The sessions included three plenaries from a variety of different speakers including Ness Murby, who recorded the session ***TOUGHERthan Expectations***, on the way to the hospital where he and his partner welcomed their first child. Emily Francis told her story of migrating to the US as a teenager in ***Shifting Statistics to Stories***. We finished the conference with a panel hosted by Scott Douglas, ***The Future is so Bright We Need Shades?*** in which Katie Crocker (AMSSA), Gilmour Jope (UFV) and Rachel Lindsay (Languages Canada) discussed the future of the EAL industry in BC.

There were 81 sessions covering a wide array of topics. Some of the communities of practice were well attended with lots of valuable conversations. The gamification was a hit and brought out the competitive nature of some of us. The sessions have been recorded and are available for attendees to view. Conference attendees can log in to access the recordings.

Thank you to the organizing committee, Cathy Ebert, Tanya Tervit, Karen Densky, Jennifer Peachey, Jennifer Cummins, Vera Wu, and Moses Lam. Also, to the many Session Facilitators and Community of Practice Leaders who ensured that speakers and attendees had a great experience. Thank you also to the sponsors and exhibitors who stepped up to support this event.

2020 has taught us many things, the foremost being to plan for the unexpected.

We are currently beginning planning for our 2022 event and hoping to include at least one day that is face-to-face. If you are at a facility that may be able to host an event, please reach out to a board member or contact conference@bctéal.org. If you have event planning experience and, would like to be part of the organizing committee, please let us know by completing the [BC TEAL Volunteer Application](#).

Online events have allowed us to rethink what is possible and will remain an important part of BC TEAL's professional development offerings. Thank you to all our members who continue to support the efforts of BC TEAL and the many leaders who work behind the scenes to make these events possible. We look forward to seeing you at BC TEAL's 2022 Annual Conference.

Volunteering: What's in it for you?

by Jenn Peachey

As I close my computer and look at the clock, I realize I've worked longer than I had intended. I often do. The hours of collaboration and creativity fly by. But there is never a question of whether I will do it or not. I enjoy this community; I have purpose.

Volunteer noun

a person who does something, especially helping other people, willingly and without being forced or paid to do it
(Cambridge Dictionary)

YOU ARE LIKELY familiar with the dictionary definition, but do you know why a person would take on a volunteer position? In a world where a career job title and pay cheque hold great importance, why would someone choose to take on a position that has neither? For good reason! You might already know that volunteering has a positive physical effect, can help you develop new skills, and has the potential to build your resume.

If you don't know about the positive physical effects, you can check out the myriad of research that supports it. For example, according to the Mayo Clinic (2017), volunteering can boost self-confidence, decrease depression, and decrease pain intensity. Another article titled, "The Neuroscience of Giving," explains that when you do something for someone else your body produces oxytocin, which makes you feel good. This effect is nicknamed the Helpers' High! (COA Sydney, 2020) However, when I asked why they volunteer with BC TEAL,

none of the current volunteers mentioned oxytocin, but they certainly knew their work had benefits.

One volunteer, Karen, put it this way, "I've developed some amazing friendships with colleagues throughout the province." Beth said, "I volunteer with BC TEAL because it connects me to other EAL professionals in BC and beyond" and Julie said that she volunteers with BC TEAL because she has fun and socializes with others who share an interest in teaching. Diana said, "I wanted to give back to the sector and meet more of the dedicated educators who work in diverse settings in the field." These volunteers continue to reap the benefits.

Besides making you feel good, whether that's purely through giving back or finding a network, volunteering also offers a special place for skill development. These skills can be both hard and soft. One might learn new databases, new computer

[Continued on next page](#)



Nikki Zalewski Getty Images Pro canva.com

Volunteering: What's in it for you? [continued](#)

technologies or programs, or new platforms (like we had to learn for the 2021 BC TEAL conference).

When it comes to soft skills, volunteer tasks might help a person develop their verbal or written communication skills, time management, team work, goal setting, strategic planning, budgeting skills, or mentorship (Nemeth, 2019). In the World Vision Canada article, “The Mental Health Benefits of Volunteering”, they explain how volunteers can learn new skills and try new things in a relatively risk-free environment. It is also possible to discover skills and interests you were previously unaware of (World Vision, 2020).



Image by rawpixel.com at freepik

It's these skills that can enhance a resume. According to GVI, a volunteer program, you should add the details of your volunteering under the professional experience section of your resume, including a title and dates. The most important part is describing your role and your main contributions or achievements. Both those hard and soft skills are important. GVI (n.d.) goes on to say that even though you can talk about the specific skills you have gained, volunteer experience in general says a lot about your personality and core values.

Luckily, organizations like GVI exist to help provide volunteer experiences. There are also a number of websites that help connect potential volunteers with those in need. Go Volunteering, govolunteer.ca, has an extensive list of opportunities in the Lower Mainland. For positions around BC there is volunteerbc.bc.ca. From the main website for Volunteer BC, you can find the volunteer centre closest to you. Of course, you can always volunteer with BC TEAL from anywhere. Because the membership is provincial, people join from all corners of the province.

Many members start volunteering with BC TEAL by joining a committee, giving as much or as little as they have time for. Depending on your interests, you can find a committee that's right for you: Advocacy, Membership, Social Media, Journal, Newsletter, Website, Private Sector, LINC, and Post-Secondary. There is also an opportunity to be a Regional Representative. You can join a committee by completing the short required [questionnaire](#).

The committee leaders, or Chairs, are often the second step when volunteering with BC TEAL, but anyone with the appropriate experience and abilities could do the job. These chair positions, like Executive Board positions, are filled by a nomination process. You

can find out more about BC TEAL positions and nominations by contacting the office at admin@bctéal.org. You can also see a [video on this same topic](#) on the BC TEAL YouTube channel.

With so many reasons to volunteer, from being good for the 'soul' to being good for the resume, you may understand why I choose to volunteer. I happen to be retired now, but I volunteered when I was fully employed as well. Sometimes, people want to be part of something outside or bigger than their employment. If you think there's something in volunteering for you, the first step is yours to take.



Jenn Peachey retired from her position as Head Instructor, EAP Pathway Advisor, and Global Competence Certificate Facilitator at Global Village Victoria in 2019. After a year of travel and adventure, she is back on Vancouver Island and happily involved with BC TEAL again.

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CLASSROOM

Course Syllabi and I: The Importance of Accessing Course Syllabi Before School Begins

by Adrian Valentine



Photo by Van Tay Media on Unsplash

NOT KNOWING the full extent of topics covered in a course can lead to confusion, loss of motivation, and frustration. Prospective post-secondary students unaware of the material a course delivers may realize they're in a program that isn't teaching them what they wanted to learn. It's also possible that they become overwhelmed with the content covered in classes because they didn't have time to adjust beforehand. Reviewing the course syllabi of courses they plan to attend helps them prepare effectively and avoid these issues.

I teach University Preparation Advanced at VGC International College, a pathways program designed to help international students enter Canadian or American universities and colleges. At the end of each month, I ask students to research their prospective program and answer the following questions for their first five classes:

- What are the course descriptions?
- What will you learn in those classes?

- What assignments will you have to complete?
- What resources will you have to read?
- Who will your instructors be?

Students are unable to answer these questions without a course syllabus. Finding course syllabi online before classes begin helps students enter a class with the right mindset. Instructors in preparation courses, or tutors and advisors helping potential post-secondary students, can help them navigate university and college websites to find course syllabi.

Below are two navigation examples, and most university and college websites follow a similar navigation path. Here's how one can find a course syllabus on Douglas College's website:

1. Hover over **Program & Courses**.
2. Click **Programs**.
3. Select a program.
4. Click **Program Requirements**.
5. Select a course.

6. Click **Course Guidelines**.
7. Select the most recent date.

Here's how one can find a course syllabus on BCIT's website:

1. Click **View Programs & Courses**.
2. Find a program.
3. Click **Programs**.
4. Select a program.
5. Click **Courses** on the left navigation menu.
6. Click **course outline**.
7. Select the most recent term.
8. Click the **CRN** number.

This activity reveals surprising truths that students often don't consider when deciding to attend a Canadian university or college. Students learn they'll have to take courses in subjects unrelated to their focus and that courses often deal with ways of thinking rather than information retention. In extreme cases, students are unaware that they have to create their own schedule or choose electives outside their faculty. In every case: the content, the workload, and the language level of the resources shock my students.

Instructors can help by clarifying students' responsibilities when it comes to course selection. Students find it helpful to learn what *course credits* are and what it means when a course is worth *3.00 credits*. Also, instructors can show students where to find out how many credits a program requires to graduate; and advise them to speak with their academic advisor when they get to university or college.

A common issue among international students I teach is dismissing course learning objectives. Often, students select courses because the course name sounds

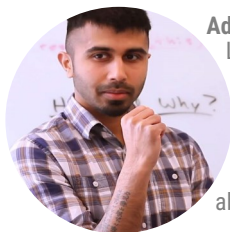
Continued on next page

Course Syllabi and I continued

interesting, the course is mandatory, or someone told them to take it. As a result, after reading the course descriptions for their program, some students realize that their prospective program is irrelevant to their life goals. However, with the ability to research programs in-depth, they can find programs more in line with their ambitions.

On the first day of class, instructors do their best to make the learning objectives and scope of their course clear. However, students should be aware of what they've enrolled in before the first day begins. With information accessible online, students can better prepare themselves for their college term. They can read resources, preview lectures, and organize assignment deadlines, months before the school term begins. They need someone to show them where to find this information and help them understand its value.

This activity has helped my students create schedules, lighten their workload, and mentally prepare for the challenges they're about to face. They enter college with the right attitude. They understand their goals and how their prospective program helps them achieve those goals. Reading through course descriptions, assignments, and resources helps students prepare for the challenging years to come. This preparation motivates them during difficult times because they enter post-secondary institutions with a deeper understanding of why they are there and what awaits them at the end of their path.



Adrian Valentine is a University Pathways and Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada instructor who is passionate about communication and technology. He is pursuing a Technical Writing Certificate at Simon Fraser University. He enjoys creating documents and writing articles that make people's lives easier. Find out more about Adrian here: www.avvalentine.com

The countdown is on...

NOVEMBER 21 - 27

EAL WEEK
2021

CONNECTING WITH THE EAL COMMUNITY

The graphic features a teal background with a large, stylized blue diamond shape in the center. Inside the diamond is a photograph of several potted plants, including some in white pots and others in woven baskets. The text is overlaid on the diamond and background.

What BC TEAL Membership Means

by Karen Aughtry, Yuhui Chen & Jennifer Cummins

AS THE MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE, we are dedicated to listening to and supporting the membership so that we can continue to grow our organization and offer support for EAL professionals across British Columbia. Here is what BC TEAL Membership means to each of us.



Karen Aughtry

During my time as an EAP instructor, I had the benefit of my school providing BC TEAL memberships for all of its teachers! I appreciated that advantage as a novice because I learned the privilege of being part of a professional organization

and having access to information about events and offerings. Now, I am retired (or perhaps semi-retired, because I am not sure that a teacher ever really retires). I let my membership lapse because there was no longer anyone automatically renewing it for me. Anyway, I was no longer part of the profession. One day, it dawned on me that I am still a trained instructor; I am still a professional; I still have my degree. Why not be a part of the organization? This time, I paid for my own membership—and since I had time, I joined the BC TEAL membership committee. I look forward to attending BC TEAL events, as I did the spring conference, and keeping abreast of all that unfolds in this arena, still having something to learn and something to give.



Yuhui (Gail) Chen

I just graduated from Douglas College's TESL program in February 2021. As a beginner EAL instructor, I don't have any professional network in Canada since I am an immigrant and didn't have any teaching experience in

the past. In class, we had few opportunities to practice our teaching skills, especially how to teach on-line. I felt so lost and helpless after my graduation. I don't know whom I should talk with when I encounter problems in teaching. I don't know where I should send my resume and look for a job. I don't know if I can be a qualified EAL instructor. ... One day I

received an email from one of my college teachers. She mentioned that BC TEAL needed some volunteer facilitators for their conference. I sent my application to BC TEAL and by chance I stepped into this wonderful family. During the conference, I heard many experienced professionals from all over the world share their stories, teaching experience/skills and ideas, etc. I learned a lot from their seminars and was encouraged by their passion/enthusiasm in teaching. If you are a beginner English instructor like me, you are welcome to join BC TEAL! You will be able to connect with these experienced professionals, develop your skills and make some nice friends, etc. The most important thing is you won't feel alone anymore in this big family!



Jennifer Cummins

As a long time EAL professional, last year I was looking for ways to continue to expand my professional network and hone my leadership skills. I decided to attend a networking event through BC TEAL to connect with other EAL

instructors and leaders, especially during the pandemic. After attending the event, a board member approached me and asked if I wanted to join the Membership Committee. I enthusiastically agreed. Throughout the next year, I enjoyed many opportunities to grow and change as an EAL professional and community member. I helped support the membership base, participated in organizing the annual conference, and eventually joined the board of BC TEAL. If you are looking for ways to connect with other professionals, expand your skills, or take on new leadership challenges, I highly recommend becoming a BC TEAL member and benefiting from some of these great opportunities.

These are just some of the voices of our diverse group of volunteers that work to keep BC TEAL going behind the scenes. Membership in BC TEAL is for anyone involved English as an additional language field; students, instructors, administrators, volunteers, retirees and more. To continue to thrive, we depend on memberships and volunteers to keep our organization going. If you are interested in joining, renewing, or learning more about membership in BC TEAL, or would like to volunteer with us, please visit our membership page in the BC TEAL website: www.bcteal.org/membership/

CALLforSUBMISSIONS

TEAL News

TEAL News is the platform for BC TEAL members to share their work, ideas, and innovations with a wide readership. The main goal of this publication is to shine a spotlight on work done by and for EAL teachers in British Columbia. New issues are distributed electronically to institutions across the province and online through [BC TEAL's website](https://www.bcteat.org), with selected articles shared through [BC TEAL's blog](https://www.bcteat.org) and [social media](#) outlets. *TEAL News* invites submissions for the Winter 2022 issue. Newsletter articles are usually 500–1000 words in length. The deadline for submissions to the next issue of *TEAL News* is December 31, 2021. Please contact the editor, Karin Wiebe, with your submission ideas at editor@bcteat.org.

We're looking for the following:

- articles about your research projects;
- descriptions of classroom activities;
- anecdotes and stories about your experiences;
- book or article reviews;
- reports about talks, seminars, or conferences that you've attended;
- reflections on English language learning; and,
- any other creative work BC TEAL members should know about.



BC TEAL Journal

The *BC TEAL Journal* is your peer-reviewed scholarly publication. The journal exists to promote scholarship related to the teaching and learning of English as an Additional Language (EAL) in British Columbia, with articles reflecting and making connections to the varying contexts and settings of BC TEAL's members.

The journal invites the submission of original previously unpublished contributions, such as research articles or theoretical analysis, classroom practice, opinion essays, and book reviews. Manuscripts are accepted on an ongoing basis throughout the year. For more information about writing an article for the journal, as well as details about the submission process, please visit the journal's website at <https://ojs-o.library.ubc.ca/index.php/BCTJ>.

Recently published articles in 2021 include:

- "Gender-Oriented Topics in Teaching English as an Additional Language" by Sina Derichsweiler
- "I Need My Instructor to Like Sit with M": Addressing Culture in L2 Writing Instruction" by Subrata Bhowmik & Anita Chaudhuri
- "Universal Design for Learning: Its Application to English for Academic Purposes Classrooms in Canada" by Raj Khatri
- "Creating an Interactive Online Orientation to Academic Practices for International Students" by Victoria Surtees & Masaru Yamamoto