



# TEAL News

Summer 2019

[www.bcteal.org](http://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 three times a year in winter, spring, and fall. Contact the editor for specific deadlines.

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# Welcome to the Summer Issue of *TEAL News*!

**HELLO** BC TEAL Members! Welcome to another issue of the BC TEAL Newsletter.

It has been a busy winter and spring for the BC TEAL board with successful conferences in Nanaimo and Vancouver, which you can read about in this issue. Our conference teams deserve our admiration for the countless hours they volunteer to bring such high calibre events to our profession. I received so many positive comments from keynote speakers, members, and attendees from beyond BC about the quality of the conference and the “vibe” that seems to be a trademark of BC TEAL.

In addition, BC TEAL has submitted proposals for Immigration, Refugee & Citizenship Canada (IRCC) project funding that will create more support for those working in the Settlement Language Sector. Hopefully, our proposals will be successful. We’ll keep you posted.

As we move into summer, I hope you will find some time to unwind and enjoy the articles in this issue. As you reflect on your own practice, perhaps you’ll consider adding your voice to the newsletter in the future.

**EVERY** issue of *TEAL News* is a testament to the creative power, professional drive, and innovation potential of BC TEAL membership. This one is no different. As we enter spectacular summer months, this issue serves as a retrospect and a testimony to our achievements over the past months. I am truly excited about you reading it.

We open this issue with tales from abroad. Two complementary articles, one by Myrissa Krenzler and another by Dr. Karen Densky talk about the power of international collaboration and learning from colleagues overseas. Myrissa went to Nepal to serve as an effective writing advisor and Dr. Densky spent three weeks in Vietnam working to improve English language training programs at Saigon Hospitality and Tourism College. Both of them share how this experience enriched their own practice and invite the reader to consider short-term international development opportunities similar to the one that sponsored their trips.

From overseas, we move closer to home with three local conference diaries. Reading about BC TEAL Interior Regional Conference held in Kelowna, BC TEAL Island Regional Conference in Nanaimo, and BC TEAL 2019 Annual Conference in Vancouver, we can see our association from the insider vantage point. Also, don’t miss the interviews with Dr. Shelly Johnson and Tyson Seburn, who talked to us during the BC TEAL 2019 Annual Conference. If you are still debating whether it is worth attending local or regional conferences, I hope these articles will dispel any of your doubts.

Thank you to all the contributors to this issue, Natalia Balyasnikova, our amazing editor, and Shawna Williams for her expertise in creating a layout that makes the BC TEAL newsletter such an enjoyable read.

Cheers to a few months of warm weather and good reads!



Karen Densky, PhD  
BC TEAL President



**Dr. Karen Densky** has taught EAL for over 20 years at the post-secondary level. She has taught in Greenland, Chile, Vietnam, and Mexico. She is a teacher educator in and coordinator of the TESOL program at Thompson Rivers University, where she also teaches in the EAP and MEd programs. She has been an active member of BC TEAL for over 20 years.

We are honoured to showcase two innovative projects carried out by our members. First, Taslim Damji shares her work on *Promoting Civic Engagement through Intercultural Education and Skilled Volunteering*. Following this article, you can learn about a resource that can help language instructors address refugee men health and well-being authored by Andrea Solnes and Diana Jeffries.

We close this issue with a wholehearted congratulations to Dr. Scott Roy Douglas on receiving his BC TEAL Lifetime Contributor Award!

As we head into the spectacular B.C. summer, I hope that you find time to spend with your families and loved ones. We will be back very soon with new events, publication and *TEAL News* issues in the fall.

Cheers!

*Natalia*



**Natalia Balyasnikova** is a PhD Candidate at the University of British Columbia, Language and Literacy Education. She is also the editor of *TEAL News*.

# A Lifetime of Memories: Three Weeks in Nepal

by Myrissa Krenzler

**HAVING** lived and worked overseas during my career, I thought I knew what to expect from my Leave for Change experience with [Uniterra](#). What I did not expect was to come out of the experience with more questions about my profession and myself than when I started.

My mandate was as an effective writing advisor at the [Himalayan College of Agricultural Sciences and Technology](#) (HICAST) in Kathmandu, Nepal. My role was to host academic writing workshops for undergraduate and graduate students preparing to defend their theses, and also to edit the *Nepalese Journal of Agricultural Sciences*. This was a lengthy task and I spent many days immersed in agricultural research and preparing documents for students and faculty to use after I had gone. It was a bit of a stretch for me being a journalism grad and EAL instructor, but I am always ready for a challenge.

Working with international students on a daily basis back in Canada often makes you unaware of the fact that you have a unique and exciting privilege to have the world at your fingertips. Getting to work in the field, even if it is only for three weeks, reminded me of that in a way I did not expect.

The workshops I held were optional for the students, but those who attended were eager to learn and ask questions. I was often amazed by the detailed queries I was asked and the dedication to which many of the (mostly female) students had to their studies. When I had the opportunity to talk to them during breaks and after workshops, many students shared their desire to succeed and complete their studies so they could lead successful lives. It was refreshing and energizing to see such passion in students who were trying to get their hard work and research noticed by their teachers and the wider academic community.

While I completed my mandate and all the tasks my counterpart asked me to do, I left Nepal wondering what impact (if any) I had made. Uniterra's vision is to increase economic development in areas by providing opportunities to youth and women, but Nepal's mandate is slightly different. Because of Nepal's unique physical and economic environment, volunteers

are placed in areas to provide support in rural [economic development, governance and democracy, gender equality and improved services to different castes](#). I had to realize the best thing I could do with my time in Nepal was not just edit and teach, but also to make relationships that can grow from the seeds planted by me and other volunteers.

It is hard to say if I made much of a difference at HICAST while I was there, but I hope my presence and the materials I developed will help future students and faculty prepare themselves for their futures.

My experience with Leave for Change is one that I will not forget. Watching, listening and learning from the students and staff at HICAST gave me hope for the future of Nepal

and reenergized my own passions for my work in Canada.

If you are interested in getting involved with Uniterra, but are not eligible for the Leave for Change option, I recommend looking into the short-term or long-term volunteer options. There are many industries and job placements looking to be filled. You never know what and where you may be able to lend your expertise.



On clear days, I was greeted with a view of the Himalayas from my office window.



Upon completion of my mandate, I was presented with a certification of achievement and a traditional Nepali scarf.



**Myrissa Krenzler** is an effective writing advisor and Uniterra Program Coordinator at Thompson Rivers University, TRU World.



# Vietnam: Three Weeks to Impact!

by Karen Densky

**WHAT** can be accomplished in three weeks? That's a question I asked myself when I accepted the Leave for Change assignment in Vietnam in November of last year. My goal was to improve the quality of English language teaching at Saigon Hospitality and Tourism College (STHC), in order to increase the language ability of the students who are seeking careers as tour guides, chefs, and restaurant and hotel workers.

Leave for Change is a program offered by Unitera, a development organization funded by Global Affairs Canada and employer contributions. Employers can partner with Unitera, and this partnership provides opportunities for employees to take part in worldwide Leave for Change mandates. My employer, Thompson Rivers University (TRU), is one of the partners, so TRU staff and faculty are eligible to apply. All the expenses related to travel and living costs are covered during the mandate. Unitera also provides health insurance, flight and accommodation arrangements, pre-departure training, and in-country support on arrival. In return, I provide my time and expertise during the mandate, and I also agree to sharing my story and promoting the Leave for Change opportunity.

One of the main areas of focus for Unitera is the support of women and youth in developing countries and sectors. In

Vietnam, the Hospitality and Tourism sectors holds enormous potential in terms of career opportunities for women. In 2017, Travel & Tourism directly and indirectly supported 4,061,000 jobs in the country and that number continues to grow. However, Vietnamese women continue to face many obstacles in their daily lives to gain access to fair and fulfilling employment. For example, women's incomes are considerably lower than men's in spite of the fact that they have closed the gap in terms of education.

The STHC is an institution where many women, both faculty members and students, are looking to diminish the wage gap and improve their living conditions through preparation for successful and meaningful careers. My main contacts and most of the English teachers at STHC were women, which is the same demographic I've experienced globally in the English language profession. Therefore, my mandate aimed to increase the potential for female English instructors to become more confident and be effective mentors and role models for female students.

With a three-week assignment, it was necessary to hit the ground running, so jet-lag wasn't an option. I chose to arrive in Ho Chi Minh City on Saturday, so I had a day to recover before the work began. My first weekend was also a chance to get used to the warm humid weather, the food which was mostly new to me (and



Day 1 with the STHC administrators



A day trip to the Mekong Delta with STHC tour guide students

Continued on next page



Delivering a workshop on increasing engagement in the language classroom



Enjoying Pho!

delicious), and the biggest challenge of all, navigating through the endless sea of scooters. Being a motorcycle rider myself, I was in awe at the dance of the scooters which seemed to be simultaneously chaotic and choreographed.

My goal during the first week was to listen, observe, become aware of cultural norms, and create relationships. I needed the faculty to trust me and feel that I was there to help and not hinder nor critique their work. I conducted classroom observations and workshops for the English teachers. I spent time giving suggestions and modeling activities. Above all, I hoped to demonstrate my love for teaching English and for making the classroom a dynamic space for learning. Learning more English is not just a nice idea, but it may make the difference between a great job and a mediocre one to the 2,000 students who take the compulsory English courses. This is particularly significant to female students who may find themselves in lower paid jobs behind the scenes rather than better paying front-line jobs that require English proficiency.

During my time in Vietnam, I was impressed with the professionalism of the staff and faculty at STHC. I was also impressed by the attitudes and energy of the students. Students volunteered to accompany me on sightseeing and shopping excursions and many took the opportunity to connect every day to practice their English.

In the short time I was at STHC, I feel that I made meaningful professional connections that will continue after the project is over. We truly created a “community of practice” that will continue through an online platform and through a collaborative research project that will determine the scope of the impact on teaching practice as a result of the activities under-

taken during my assignment. I will be presenting the preliminary findings of this research project at the BC TEAL conference in April this year.

So much of Vietnam was completely new to me, the sights, sounds, smells, and tastes; however, the commitment and passion of the educators I worked with made me feel that we share a culture: the culture of our classrooms and the connections to our students that transcends borders. I am grateful that I could share my education and 28 years of teaching experience with international colleagues, and in a small way add to the sustainable development of Vietnam through economic opportunities in tourism.

If you’re interested in short-term international development opportunities, contact your employer to determine if they are a partner in the Leave for Change program, and if not, encourage them to explore the possibility. Also, feel free to contact me either through email ([president@bctéal.org](mailto:president@bctéal.org)) or in person at the BC TEAL conference.

For more information about Uniterra and the Leave for Change Program, visit: [uniterra.ca/en/partnership/leave-for-change](http://uniterra.ca/en/partnership/leave-for-change)



**Dr. Karen Densky** has taught EAL for over 20 years at the post-secondary level. She has taught in Greenland, Chile, Vietnam, and Mexico. She is a teacher educator in and coordinator of the TESOL program at Thompson Rivers University, where she also teaches in the EAP and MEd programs. She has been an active member of BC TEAL for over 20 years.



## CONFERENCE DIARY

# BC TEAL Interior Regional Conference Diary Kelowna, B.C. October 27, 2018

by Beth Konomoto

**THE Okanagan College** campus was beautiful and quiet for our Saturday Interior Regional conference. Sunshine was streaming in through the floor to ceiling windows as the First Nations welcome was given. Even though things started a little behind schedule, everyone was ready for a great plenary session with Dr. Kyra Garson. She shared a lot of important and timely intercultural communication research, which is applicable to not only EAL, but to every subject.

Following the plenary, everyone quickly found their way to the first sessions. I was co-facilitating an important conversation with Jennifer Walsh Marr on BC TEAL's *Respectful Interactions*. The participants wrote and talked about their ideas for the draft document that was ratified at the 2019 BC TEAL AGM.

Lunch was sandwiches, fruit, and snacks. We had plenty of space to gather, eat, and talk.

I gave a presentation to a lively group who were interested in online security. They recognized that it was an important conversation to have.

The last session I attended was Jennifer Walsh-Marr's session on the TRC's implications in her own work. I felt so inspired to start looking into how to do this in my own work. I have always really appreciated instructors who were able to inspire me to do my own learning and studying. Jennifer did that for me that day.

The conversations that I had in between the sessions, at the front table and afterwards at the tap house, were just as important as the sessions themselves. I really appreciate the members who are working in the field and helping people with language that has its own intricacies and nuances in this part of the world.



**Beth Konomoto**, BC TEAL's Social Media Chair, spent seven years in Japan teaching students of all ages and levels, and now she is an English Language instructor at Camosun College. She holds a master's degree in TESL/TEFL from the University of Birmingham and continues to learn from a network of talented educators and students both in person and online.

## BC TEAL Upcoming Events



# BC TEAL Island Regional Conference Diary Nanaimo, B.C. February 23, 2019

by Suzy Nachtsheim



Participants listening attentively to the plenary panel.

**VANCOUVER ISLAND UNIVERSITY** was proud to host the BC TEAL Winter Regional Conference on February 23, 2019 with over 60 participants taking part. A planning committee from the English Language Centre of the Faculty of International Education at VIU, co-chaired by Corinne Hamel-Taylor of the BC TEAL PD Committee and myself, worked with BC TEAL organizers to oversee the event. The conference was held in the university's brand new Health and Science Centre, a LEED gold standard building which offers a comfortable, state-of-the-art learning environment. Participants were able to enjoy the plenary, workshops, publishers' displays, and the coffee breaks and lunch served by VIU Campus Caterers while enjoying great views of the campus, ocean, and mountains as we took over the entire 2nd floor of the building for this event. Luckily, the weather cooperated too, an important factor as many had traveled long distances to make it to this gathering.



SWAG included a mini-compass!

The conference theme was *Navigating Change: A Balancing Act*. The conference planning committee felt this was a timely theme given the turbulent waves many of us feel we are currently navigating in our profession compounded by the accelerated change

of pace and uncertainty in global politics, economics, technology, and the environment. This theme seemed to resonate with many of the presenters as it was reflected in several sessions and in the presentations by the plenary speakers.

The committee decided to schedule a plenary panel, moderated by one of our instructors, rather than to have one speaker. The two speakers were able to speak extensively and in depth on the theme of change.

Professor Don Maybin of the Shonan Institute of Technology joined us from Japan, and Dr. Susan ("Sue") Montabello, a

Professor in the Department of Education at SFU, VIU, and the Vancouver campus of City University, both proved to be informative, inspiring, and engaging speakers! Don talked about the changes in education and employment readiness that students in Japan are experiencing and of the transformative power of language learning he has witnessed through an international company he founded a few years ago. Sue reminded us of the importance of embracing change, despite the "messy" aspects of it, as she relayed experiences of having worked with parents and teachers as a principal in the Burnaby school district in both elementary and secondary schools for 25 years.

Participants were able to choose from 16 different concurrent sessions with a wide range in topics such as: "Supporting Students through Change," Navigating EAL teaching choices in today's international market," and "Classroom Management: A Balancing Act."

We had very positive feedback from the post-conference evaluations and were glad that participants were able to enjoy a day of networking, sharing, and learning. About a dozen joined the post-conference social afterwards for a tour of the White Sails Brewery downtown, which included a beer tasting. What a great way to end the day!



**Suzy Nachtsheim** the Chair of the English Language Centre at Vancouver Island University where she has worked with EAL students for the past 17 years. Before that, she taught in Japan for 20 years. You do the math...



## Looking Back at the BC TEAL 2019 Conference through Twitter

by Scott Roy Douglas



@ElidhSingh: And we're off! #BCTEAL19 conference kicks off with Mukwa Musayett/Dr Shelly Johnson and her plenary talk "RED Intersections in EAL: Moving along the Indigenization Continuum within this Colonial Context."



@EALStories: At #BCTEAL19: @jennifermchow talking about Twitter for #PD with @TanyacowieCowie & @DamjiTaslim. #CdnELTchat #ConferenceBackChannel



@LearnEnglishAB: Presenting about tasks, grammar & EAP with @mguardado this past weekend to a full house at #BCTEAL19 looking forward to 2020 already #EAP #tblt #eal #ualberta



@besudesu: Pre-Coffee fuzzy picture with one of the wonderful #volunteers at #BCTEAL19 - thank you!!!

THE RECENT BC TEAL annual conference at Langara College brought together the English as an additional language teaching and learning community for three days of camaraderie, inquiry, and professional development in April 2019. Enhancing this experience was the lively exchange of ideas that took place simultaneously on Twitter via the hashtag #BCTEAL19. There were around 30 active tweeters during the three days of the conference, with many others following along by retweeting and liking posts. People in Vancouver, as well as all around the world, could tweet, see, and reflect on what was happening during conference in real time. Tweets were particularly lively during the plenary sessions.

The first two plenary sessions took place on the Friday of the conference. At just after 9:00 am that morning, @ElidhSingh tweeted, "And we're off! #BCTEAL19 conference kicks off with Mukwa Musayett/ Dr Shelly Johnson and her plenary talk 'RED Intersections in EAL: Moving along the Indigenization Continuum within this Colonial Context.'" @thespreadingoak soon followed by saying Dr. Johnson's talk was "open, direct, straightforward, passionate," and @EALStories quoted Dr. Johnson as saying "decolonizing and Indigenizing education [means a] commitment to undertake proactive measures aimed at restoring, renewing, and regenerating Indigenous practices, languages, and knowledge." The suggested readings during Dr. Johnson's session inspired @ShawnaWiKo to ask "Twitter reading club anyone?" and @MarrWalsh reminded attendees that #WordsMatter and "Dr. Shelly Johnson teaches us the term #Indigenization entered the lexicon of #Cdn university administration after the #TruthAndReconciliation #CallsToAction released."

The next plenary session on the Friday of the conference was delivered by Dr. Gabriel Diaz Maggioli (@GabrielDiazMagg), with a thought-provoking look at situated teaching for situated authentic learning. @MarrWalsh wrote in a tweet that "@GabrielDiazMagg pokes at #tleap fascination with 'the new'; typically from universities from the inner (geopolitical) circle. This has a messy relationship with #access and #NSE #bias," and @bctea19 reported @GabrielDiazMagg as saying technology is a very good servant, but not a good master." Soon after, @EALStories shared eight factors outlined during the presentation that affect English as an additional language: "the world, the history of ELT, access, quality, goals, teacher education, delivery, and opportunities to use the language." In follow up, @jennifermchow tweeted that "@GabrielDiazMagg says that we need artifacts, mentifacts—attitudes, values, ideas, meanings, and sociofacts—social interaction patterns for intercultural communicative competence."

The final plenary session on the Saturday of the conference, with Tyson Seburn (@seburnt), was on the topic of "our materials oxymoron and the inclusion of LGBTQIA narratives." In one of the first tweets during this plenary, @thespreadingoak pointed out that "we need training on how to make inclusive materials." Next followed several tweets sharing @seburnt's inclusivity statement from his classes. @YuliyaESL shared a picture of this inclusivity statement,

Continued on next page



## Looking Back at the BC TEAL 2019 Conference through Twitter continued

which started off by stating “we are all part of this course together and our diversity can enrich all aspects of it.” @EALStories then tweeted “institutional support is essential for supporting #LGBTQIA but consider also creating an inclusivity course statement,” and followed up with a subsequent tweet “thinking about othering, inclusion, representation, authentic voices, and normalization of diverse groups including #LGBTQIA people.” In consideration of how to include LGBTQIA narratives, @jennifermchow shared @seburnt’s message: “using a normalized approach to create LGBTQIA inclusive materials: integrate LGBTQIA characters in the material. Don’t highlight.” She also shared the message “don’t use debates as LGBTQIA materials because you are suggesting that both sides are okay” and the plenary’s subsequent recommendation to “include a wider variety of stories as LGBTQIA materials.”

These tweets are just a small sampling of many. In general, there was an immense sense of positivity and encouragement evident in the tweets coming out of the conference. For example, @\_balyasnikova wrote “had a blast at #BCTEAL19. From reconnection with colleagues across BC and making new connections to learning from each other and setting new goals, this conference is always the highlight of the year!” @EilidhSingh likely echoed the sentiments of others as well when she wrote “thank you @bctéal for a stimulating, challenging, and invigorating conference. My brain is full. Perhaps more importantly, my heart is too.”



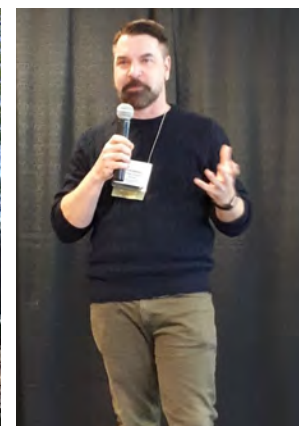
@besudesu: Hello #myfriend #coffee #BCTEAL19 #bctéal



@BCTEAL: #Wineandcheese Thank you #BCTEAL



@sparklanguage: Great day of learning, connecting and hugging former colleagues in LEAP! Enjoyed my bike commute this morning, too. #BCTEAL19



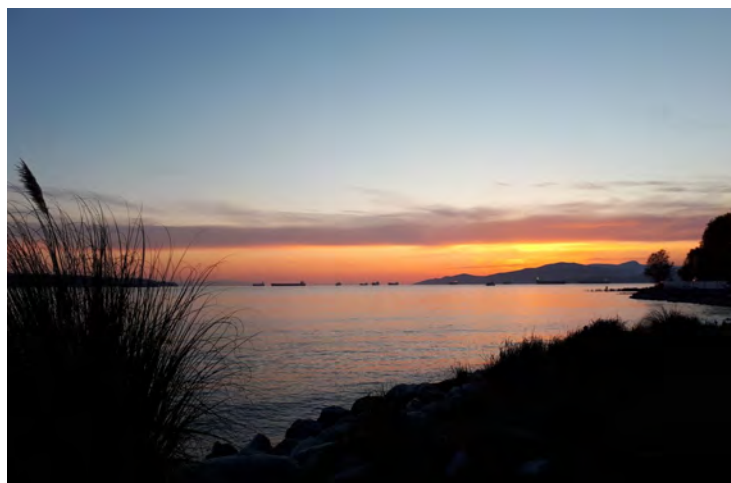
@EALStories Loving listening to @seburnt talking about rejected @BCTEAL hashtags #thisisbctéal #awkbctéaltimes #myweirdconfprep #IfIwasincharge #BCTEAL19



@EALStories: Three-quarters of the #CdnELTchat team at #BCTEAL19: @jennifermchow, @ELTAugusta, & @EALStories. Wishing you were here too, @STanzaSL



**Scott Roy Douglas (@scottroydouglas)** is an associate professor in the University of British Columbia’s Okanagan School of Education. His research focus is on English as an additional language teaching and learning, with a particular interest in English for academic purposes, materials development, and short-term study abroad. He is the editor of the *BC TEAL Journal*.



@EALStories: #BCTEAL19! This is English Bay at sunset last night, steps from my hotel.

**Join the conversation! Follow BC TEAL on Twitter @bctéal.**



# Promoting Civic Engagement through Intercultural Education and Skilled Volunteering

by Taslim Damji

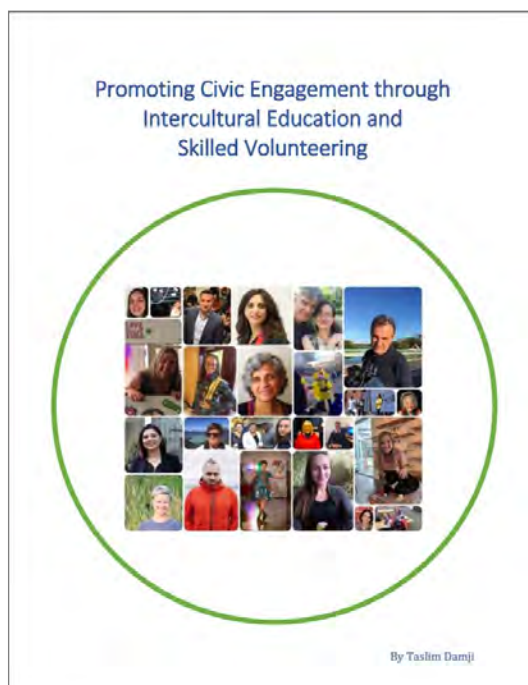
**PROMOTING** *Civic Engagement through Intercultural Education and Skilled Volunteering* by Taslim Damji, is intended for use in intermediate+ levels in LINC and EAL classrooms, pre-employment, employment and settlement contexts. It helps prepare newcomers for volunteering and employment opportunities by

- exploring commonly experienced intercultural challenges,
- understanding challenge through an intercultural lens,
- building strategies to effectively respond to difference, and
- providing guidance for how to process and respond to difference.

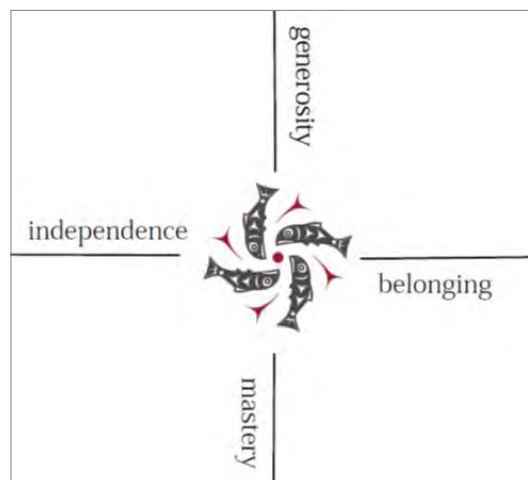
The resource can also be used in volunteer recruitment, onboarding and support, and highlights the necessity for local employers to actively support engagement by cultivating a sense of belongingness and providing mentorship.

The goal of this resource is to promote newcomer civic engagement through intercultural education. It interprets the experience of newcomers and community stakeholders through an inter-cultural lens. Interviews and focus groups were conducted to discover obstacles to civic engagement and explore how a lack of cultural “know how” can prevent newcomers from successfully participating in their communities. Their stories were then used to create a series of lessons that provide an introductory training on how to better understand, approach, and resolve intercultural challenge.

Grounded in intercultural theory and Indigenous teachings around building sustainable communities, the resource helps newcomers bridge intercultural differences. It supports community engagement by preparing newcomers to succeed not only in skilled volunteering opportunities, but also by providing a foundation for their future professional and economic engagement.



This resource is available at [bctea.org/initiatives](http://bctea.org/initiatives).



Dr. Brokenleg Framework adapted by  
Taslim Damji & Aaron Nelson-Moody, 2018

This resource is informed by the Indigenous teachings of Dr. Brokenleg that advocate for self-actualization and community sustainability in four stages:

The Circle of Courage teaches us a different way of seeing our responsibility in supporting others. It reminds us that integration doesn't happen on its own and that we all have an ongoing part to play in supporting integration—which ultimately leads to a sense of personal investment in our communities. In this way, the resource also helps teachers, volunteer recruiters, and employers re-evaluate their own role in successful Newcomer integration.

Intercultural concerns are addressed through a structure that instructors, facilitators, and organizations can use safely in the classroom, in pre-employment programs, and during onboarding orientations to:

- raise awareness of cultural differences and similarities,
- develop comfort with the range of cultural norms,
- discuss differences, and
- devise strategies to successfully navigate intercultural difference.

Topics are introduced through intercultural challenges, perspective taking activities, and roleplays. Templates for peer assessment, self-reflection, and teacher assessment are offered to support an understanding of learning and draw attention to skill enhancement. Culture notes and take-away tips support the teacher to develop a process of discovery for their students.



**Taslim Damji** holds a Master's degree from King's College and has over 20 years' experience in teaching, training, research, and management. She currently works as an instructor and Intercultural and Diversity Consultant. Her approach is grass roots and her goal is to help foster intercultural connection by providing practical tools and safe spaces for dialogue.

# Addressing Refugee Men's Health in the EAL Classroom

by Andrea Solnes & Diana Jeffries

**I AM** grateful and excited to do the work I do, opening doors to look beyond current systems, structures and practices, asking questions such as these, listening and trying to make things better. Throughout the past year and half, I have worked a host of thoughtful and generous settlement and language professionals to better understand how newcomer men are doing in terms of health and mental health, and how EAL (English as an Additional Language) classes can better support them.

Experienced settlement and language professionals say refugee men are adapting less well than women, less equipped and inclined to learn English, and reluctant to attend programs. This impacts their ability to access health services and information, and takes a toll on their mental well-being. A sense of isolation persists. Their frustration at a system they don't understand and loss of agency fuel fear and anger.

Refugee men themselves say that there is a mis-match between the roles and behaviours expected of them as males, husbands, and fathers in Canada and those of their home countries. Many refugee men are used to being the sole breadwinner, some having held down three jobs; in Canada, their wives are getting jobs more easily than they are. Along with the necessity of shared responsibility in earning income, there is also an expectation of shared decision-making. "Everything needs to be discussed", against a backdrop of seeing conversations about relationships and conflict as a poor use of their masculinity.

Over-riding these challenges there is willingness to engage in conversations around learning and trying new ways of doing things, both on the part of settlement and language professionals and refugees. The EAL classroom is a hopeful place to address these complex needs and challenges. There, we can build upon the familiarity and trust that typically exist in an EAL classes, experiment with how language instruction takes place to create safe spaces for conversations, and support instructors with the freedom to choose topics and the resources to respond to needs and dynamics of their class. We can

recognize, for example, that providing accurate information around topics such as men's sexual health and smoking are extremely important, but so too are spaces for honest conversations to explore gender roles in family planning, and how men can re-connect with the sense of community that has always been part of their lives.

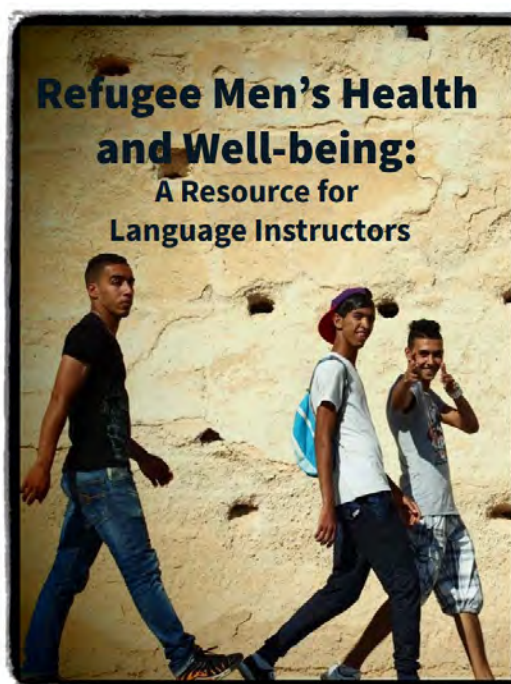
### *Introducing 'Refugee Men's Health and Well-being: A Resource for Language Instructors'*

Diana Jeffries, Mohammed Alsaleh, Taslim Damiji and I received the 2018 [TCF Health Education award](#) to research and develop a resource: *Refugee Men's Health and Well-being: Strategies for Language Instructors*. It is intended to help EAL instructors and male students engage in topics around men's physical, mental, and sexual health in a safe and supported way and addresses the much larger picture of refugee men and their barriers to physical and mental wellness.

In its early stages, the resource team conducted primary qualitative research in order to more clearly understand the barriers facing refugee men and how they could be supported in an EAL class. We led an advisory group made up of language and settlement professionals with knowledge and experience working with refugee men. Mohammed and his co-facilitators

then led two male-only focus groups in Arabic for refugee men in Surrey, one hosted by [Options Community Services](#), and one hosted by [DIVERSEcity Community Resources Society](#). Our research surfaced the following themes: refugee men's lack of understanding around accessing health services and information; the stigma around mental health inherent in most cultures, but particularly those cultures which refugees often represent; and refugee men's challenges in socio-cultural adaptation both within their families and in the community.

In responding to this research and our own experiences and background in developing EAL curricula and programs, the resource provides information, lessons, and resources to help refugee men build language skills around developing healthy



*Refugee Men's Health and Well-being: A Resource for Language Instructors* is available at [bctéal.org/initiatives](http://bctéal.org/initiatives).

[Continued on next page](#)



lifestyles in Canada, accessing health services, connecting with their new communities and building healthy relationships. Through suggestions, considerations, and guided discussion, it deals implicitly with the stigma around mental health and the challenges many refugee men face as partners and fathers in Canada, and encourages instructors to adopt cultural humility into their practice. It highlights the importance of familiarity and trust between instructor and students in choosing and broaching topics.

### **Addressing Socio-cultural Adaptation: A Lesson on Feelings and Male Roles**

With socio-cultural adaptation arising as one of the most prevalent themes in both the advisory and the two focus groups, Diana, content writer for the resource, developed a lesson on Feelings and Male Roles, under the theme of Building Relationships. The lesson begins with stretching and breathing exercises learned in previous lessons, and leads into an activity on identifying feelings and talking with a partner by responding to questions such as: What makes you feel happy at home? What makes you feel angry at home? Who do you talk to when you feel scared? Where do you go when you are tired? The next activity has students sharing in a group who does what household responsibility within their culture. Students become more comfortable sharing differences when the instructor emphasizes that families and cultures are unique, and that no answers are right or wrong. This kind of framework allows for moving into more difficult territory such as a guided discussion on setting boundaries and abuse.

### **Refugee Men's Health and Well-being: The Pilot**

Thanks to receiving the TCF Health Education Award for a second year and the generous donation of space and resources made by DIVERSEcity Community Resources Society, Diana and I, along with EAL Instructor Sean Mullen, have recently completed a pilot project to deliver eight health-related language lessons to newcomer men. While we did not hit the demographic of refugee men nor the numbers we targeted, the experience provided some valuable lessons. Of most significance:

- The instructor and the participants reported that providing men's health-related lessons in a male-only context opened up discussions that may not have occurred in a multi-gendered class.

- Most useful topics and lesson materials included those on: exercise, stress, fatherhood, describing health problems, and discussing anecdotes about depression and anxiety; topics participants wanted more information on were describing health problems and emotions.
- Participant feedback (edited for clarity) from a CLB 5 student included:
  - *I have never gone to see a doctor in Canada because I am afraid of describing my symptoms in English. There are a lot of difficult words about body. In this class, teacher gave me more information about body and health.*
  - *We talked about a lot of things about stress and mental health. It is very useful for me because I am a newcomer. I have a lot of problems. For example, I have no friends, no job, poor language. How to improve children relationship?*
  - *I learned more information ... I want to go to yoga club to try it; ... exercise is useful to release stress. Now, I jog 30 minutes every day and go for a walk after dinner*
- Activities that the instructor added included reading articles on nutrition, building towards a PBLA assessment in the last session, and creating PowerPoint presentations on a health/stress solution.
- The instructor appreciated the supports, including: being introduced to the site staff, regular check-ins from coordinators, and use of the computer lab.
- Despite various attempts to increase referrals, there were only two participants. It leads us to suggest that a more structured and formal attachment to the host organization is necessary in attracting and supporting refugee men in attending classes on these challenging and stigmatized issues.

### **Moving the Work Forward**

We remain interested and dedicated to supporting EAL and settlement providers with resources to address the diverse needs of clients, and help shape initiatives moving forward. We would be happy to work with you and your organizations, providing training, partnering on new programming, or finding other ways to support immigrant men's health and well-being.

#### **Get in touch with us:**

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Diana Jeffries, Manger Education and Training, PIRS  
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**Andrea Solnes** is a Settlement Language Consultant and has worked in the settlement sector as EAL instructor, manager, and curriculum developer. She currently works with various organizations and individuals to co-create responsive and inclusive learning spaces, workplaces, and communities.



**Diana Jeffries** is the PIRS Education and Training Manager. She specializes in working with refugees and people with multiple barriers. She has extensive experience as an EAL instructor, has written numerous curriculum and resource guides, and leads training on trauma-informed instruction and community and art-based learning.

## A Conversation with Dr. Shelly Johnson

by Natalia Balyasnikova

***DURING** the BC TEAL 2019 Annual Conference, BC TEAL had an opportunity to talk with one of the keynote speakers, Dr. Shelly Johnson. Dr. Shelly Johnson (Mukwa Musayett), Saulteaux, is the world's first Canada Research Chair in Indigenizing higher education and an Associate Professor at Thompson Rivers University. She shared some of her thoughts about the current state of teaching English as an Additional Language.*

**In your opinion, what is the most important thing to remember while working with language learners?**

In BC, many post-secondary English language learners have not had the opportunity to experience K-12 learning in Canada. As students arriving from foreign countries, their understanding of Indigenous issues is likely incomplete or non-existent, just as knowledge of Indigenous issues is for many domestic born students. This is a function of an exclusively taught Canadian curriculum that has either deliberately or covertly erased Indigenous history, ways of knowing, and being. TEAL instructors should be aware of, and use, widely available Indigenous resources for newcomers. For example, in the greater Vancouver area, the [First Peoples: A Guide for Newcomers](#) is an invaluable reference that should be mandatory for courses taught in the lower mainland. Other regions may have similar resources, and teachers must work to ensure inclusion in their curriculum.

If your post-secondary institution does not have Indigenous Elders or instructors, TEAL teachers must be supported to reach out to the local First Nations, Métis, or urban-based Indigenous agencies to access teachers to provide accurate Indigenous content and context.

It will be helpful for TEAL teachers to inform themselves if the students in their classes belong to tribal communities in their home countries, and to ascertain if common tribal understandings of land, water, kin relationship, roles, and responsibilities exist. These common understandings will engage student learning and experiences with similar issues involving Indigenous peoples in Canada, including Treaties, culture, and language.

Students and instructors who have a better understanding of the intergenerational, trauma, and violence-informed ways in which systemic and historical colonial violence (such as Canada's child welfare, residential school, justice system over-representation, and Indian hospitals) continue to impact Indigenous peoples today, will be better prepared to work, learn, and live alongside Indigenous peoples.



Dr. Shelly Johnson, (Mukwa Musayett)

**Where do you see our profession heading? What challenges and opportunities will we face in the next years?**

Education was used as a weapon against Indigenous peoples throughout the 120 years of Canada's Residential School project. Today many Indigenous peoples have a distrust of the current school project; believing that assimilation is still the educational policy of Canada. Building trust and capacity to truthfully teach about Indigenous peoples experiences in Canada is the responsibility of all Canadian teachers. A place to start is

for every teacher to familiarize themselves with the [Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Calls to Action](#) (2015). This document provides one opportunity to build student awareness and understanding regarding Indigenous issues in Canada. It is not the sole responsibility of Indigenous peoples to educate in this regard, rather it is the responsibility of all of us. The increasing corporatization of post-secondary institutions, funding provided by oil and gas, and the commodification of education are issues that concern Indigenous peoples for their potential to relegate Indigenous knowledge to a third-place position in matters of import.

**What was the most valuable advice you have been given as you were starting out in the field?**

As an Indigenous woman working in a colonial education system, the guidance of my Saulteaux Elder, Bones, continues to ring in my ear. He told me, "Mukwa Mayett the Creator made you this way and put you in that place for a purpose. When you do those things always ask yourself if they are good for your children and grandchildren. Always remember who you are in your heart. Never pick up something new and leave behind who you are, who we are and what we believe" (Personal communication, November, 2006).



**Watch Dr. Shelly Johnson's BC TEAL Plenary: *Red Intersections in EAL: Moving along the Indigenization Continuum within this Colonial Context* on YouTube: [tinyurl.com/BCTEAL-Johnson](https://tinyurl.com/BCTEAL-Johnson)**



# A Conversation with Tyson Seburn

by Natalia Balyasnikova

*WE sat down with one of the keynote speakers at BC TEAL Annual Conference to talk about the state of our profession and ask for advice!*

*Tyson Seburn is an EAP instructor and Assistant Academic Director of International Programs at New College, University of Toronto. He holds an MA Educational Technology & TESOL from the University of Manchester. His main interest focuses on exploring identity and its various impacts on teacher development.*

**In your opinion, what is the most important quality of an English language teacher?**

While it's very difficult to pinpoint just one quality as being the most important, I'd argue that we need to recognise and acknowledge that we are not simply language technicians whose role it is to enter the classroom and transfer our knowledge and experience of language into the minds of our learners. All of us in the class are human beings and we represent aspects of the societies we come from and enter. In education of all contexts, we share a responsibility with learners to change, presumably for the better, not only our use of language itself, but also the social spheres in which we operate with language. Our classrooms are a microcosm of society itself and together we can capitalize on this opportunity; ignoring this in favour of avoiding the social issues all of us are a part of may be an injustice to the platform of communicative education itself and the meaningful use of language that arises from it.

**Where do you see our profession heading? In the next years, what challenges and opportunities will we face?**

We are slowly moving from predominantly intuition/experienced-based language teaching towards more evidence-based practice. The crossover between language acquisition researcher and classroom practitioner is strengthening,



Tyson Seburn

particularly through an awareness of the gap that has existed between these two groups. This is evidenced by the increasing number of early career language teachers who seek experience after completing deeper and higher education levels in the field. It also impacts the profile of 'the language teacher' itself insofar as demand for better working conditions, more job security, and expectations on pedagogical quality increase. One resulting challenge continues to be the tension between industry and profession and all stakeholder roles in contributing to one while aiming for the other. In addition, issues of gender

balance, native-speakerism, and representation are gaining global attention as part of this and I'm excited to see where we go as a profession in the coming years as a result.

**What was the most valuable advice you have been given as you were starting out in the field?**

"Give yourself a break." It's great advice because it spans several situations we face across our entire career. It can suggest that adhering to initial teacher training approaches toward meticulous lesson planning might result in burnout quickly. It can suggest that it's OK to mess up in class sometimes and the world won't end for anyone. It can suggest that we don't need to know everything and answer every learner question at that moment; we can and should be learners ourselves. The one that I continuously struggle with is that we should literally take breaks from ELT by balancing the time we devote to it with continuing to develop our other interests. So, give yourself a break, everyone.



Natalia Balyasnikova is a PhD Candidate at the University of British Columbia, Language and Literacy Education. She is also the editor of *TEAL News*.

# Reviews of BC TEAL from Beyond BC

by Shawna Williams

***ALTHOUGH** BC TEAL is a provincial organization, every year the annual conference sees more and more out-of-province attendees. During this year's 51<sup>st</sup> annual conference at Langara College, I had the honour to meet participants from right across Canada as well as the U.S. Many of the attendees I spoke with commended BC TEAL on our conference and its unique and special vibe. I wanted to know what it was that resonated so positively with our attendees, and so I sent them an email to ask, so that I could share the specific thoughts with the board, the organizing committee, and the membership. Several people quickly wrote back with some passionate replies. (See below.) Such feedback could have us resting on our laurels, but we take all the feedback we receive and see how we can strive to keep doing what we do well. In 2016 our conference hashtag was [#WeAreBCTEAL](#), and I honestly believe that at the root of it all, is the desire to have a conference that builds inclusivity, community, and membership.*

## From the east coast ...

The BC TEAL conference has been on our priority PD list for a few years now due to the scope of topics covered in the workshops, the quality of plenary speakers, and the opportunity to connect with so many others working in the settlement language sector. We've found the BC TEAL conference has been able to draw participants from across B.C. and from across Canada. This has been helpful for us to make connections, find out more about what is going on in the settlement language sector in disparate parts of the country, and to be able to share experiences and best practices with a wide range of colleagues. The BC TEAL conferences have a good balance of workshops addressing the needs of different sectors. The workshops have consistently provided us with great ideas and information to bring back to Nova Scotia and share with our colleagues here.

—Anthony Caldwell; ISANS, Halifax

... so many great ideas come from conferences....It can be really inspiring, thought provoking and all around enriching to send us out there and bring ideas back.

—Rowan Furlotte, ISANS, Halifax

I heard a lot on the BC conference being great so I was pleased to go. I learned a lot and was super happy to have so many workshops on Indigenous relations as you seem ahead of us on that. I also was happy to see one of the main speakers being on LGBTQ+ relations. I think we have to keep pushing and challenging our traditional methods.

—Laurie Burns; ISANS, Halifax

## From Ontario ...

BC TEAL has a different atmosphere than anything else I've been to. There is a warmth and compassion that is present through the refugee awards and the care that goes into acknowledging the volunteers, and even the conference itself. I'm also impressed with the creativity of the conference planners whether it is doing a pop-up dance, a PechaKucha, a New Orleans second line, or a time capsule of old teaching equipment. There is also a real team vibe that is apparent even to an outsider. BC TEAL is inclusive, the volunteers don't take themselves too seriously, and the conference keynotes and planners disrupt just enough to challenge conventional thinking. BC TEAL has a charm and a flavour that is unique ... and each BC TEAL conference is special and distinct from the others, but all of them have been high quality and high interest. ... I always feel welcome and I'm quick to tell others I meet about this wonderful organization.

—James Papple; York University., Toronto

[The TCF Awards] is a small, intimate ceremony and that's how it should be, but I want to share that for me it is one of the most exciting elements of the conference. I have gooseflesh just thinking about it. It epitomizes everything that is strong in what we try to do in teaching EAL. That it is not just about *abc, xyz* but about reaching out and making a difference in people's lives. That handful of young (and inspiring) people represent the tens of thousands of people we are privileged to come in touch with, whose lives we touch and who touch ours. I salute BC TEAL and everyone who works on that initiative —so good!

—Claudie Graner; LINC instructor, Toronto

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From Alberta ...

I've been coming out to the BC TEAL conference for every year since 2013. I have family on the Lower Mainland and I'm in Edmonton, so Vancouver is always a destination for me, both to see my kids and to smell the sea air and to see something growing. But I could find a cheap flight and come out to Vancouver any time. I come for the BC TEAL conference because it is consistently excellent: well-organised and with great plenaries and useful sessions. But it's more than that. The BC TEAL community is so welcoming and so much fun, that I feel I am learning with friends. The BC TEAL conference has become an essential part of my personal PD. I've already bookmarked the dates for #BCTEAL20!

—Bonnie Jean Nicholas;  
Norquest College, Edmonton

I really enjoy BC TEAL and not just because I love the location. In my role in EAP program development, I find that since the demise of the TESL Canada conference there simply isn't a better conference for this area than BC TEAL. TESL Ontario tends towards LINC and in Alberta there are very few EAP programs left. So in order to hear from colleagues and share ideas it is essential and delightful to come to your conference. In addition, the organization and treats are always spot on! See you in 2020!

—Justine Light; University of Alberta, Edmonton

From afar ...

BC TEAL is a very special conference. The vibe is what made me come here again, despite all the expenses a trip to Vancouver entails. The conference feels alive, invigorating, and not stiff or superficial, as some other TESL events elsewhere. It feels like an event for members, not for the board or "funders". The issues addressed are real and relevant, rather than imposed from above. The membership fee is cheap compared to the benefits it gives you .... Not to mention bursaries, awards, and financial assistance opportunities for members and students! [BC TEAL seems a] truly grass roots organization and event – a huge thank you to all who contributes to making it happen!"

—Anonymous

From the United States ...

My colleague and I attended BC TEAL in 2015. We were both so impressed by the professionalism of the conference, the friendliness of the participants, and the diversity of topics. I was eager for another chance to come back to BC TEAL. Fast forward to 2019 ... It seemed like the right time to come back again ... Since returning from the 2019 conference, I have been encouraging my PSU colleagues to attend a future BC TEAL conference. As I told them, it was a transformative experience for me this year because of the impact many of the presenters had on me. The work happening in Canada surrounding reconciliation with First Nation peoples is light years ahead of where we are in the US. I was amazed by the passion and professionalism of many instructors who struggle to pay the bills, and I found the sessions on inclusiveness to be good learning opportunities. As someone with 25 years of teaching experience, I have had the opportunity to attend many conferences, but none of them has inspired me quite like BC TEAL.

—Gwen Heller Tuason;  
Portland State University, Oregon

I echo Gwen's comments about learning so much from the presentations on reconciliation with First Nation peoples and the conversations and presentations on inclusiveness. What set this conference apart from many others I have attended was its professionalism and positivity. Attendees were there to engage, in every sense of the word, as were presenters. The conference empowered our field, and our missions, leaving participants energized, inspired, and increasingly collaborative. I look forward to further creative collaborations.

—Suzanne Kaplan-Fonseca,  
New York University, NY



**Shawna Williams** is a Curriculum Consultant with the Teaching and Curriculum Development Centre at Langara College. She co-chaired the 2019 annual BC TEAL Conference. With more than 10 years of conference planning, she claims this was her last on the organizing committee.

# Scott Roy Douglas: BC TEAL's Newest Lifetime Contributor

by Eilidh Singh

***EVERY** other year, BC TEAL names a deserving member as an Honourary Lifetime Contributor. This year, we are very proud to announce that Dr. Scott Roy Douglas's name has been added to our list of esteemed BC TEAL members who have made significant contributions to our EAL professional community and who serve as inspiration for us all. Scott received the 2019 BC TEAL Lifetime Contributor Award on April 12, 2019 during the annual conference held at Langara College. Below is the nomination BC TEAL received from his nominator, Eilidh Singh.*

Dr. Scott Roy Douglas is an associate professor in the University of British Columbia's Okanagan School of Education, and he is a well-loved member of the BC TEAL community. He has been an active, enthusiastic, generous, highly-valued and respected member of BC TEAL for many years, and has made truly outstanding contributions to the BC TEAL and wider communities in many different ways, from conference presentations and workshops, poster sessions, taking on the role of Master of Ceremonies and participating in the BC TEAL Conference Pecha Kucha events, writing for the newsletter, completing and contributing to the Climb for the Cause, and of great importance and significance to the organization, he set up the peer-reviewed *BC TEAL Journal*, which he also edits. He has volunteered what must be thousands of hours to BC TEAL, and has contributed enormously to its professional reputation in everything that he has done. He has been and is always extremely generous, kind, patient, and thoughtful in sharing his expertise, knowledge, and time, and as such, he sets a wonderful example to his peers and BC TEAL members. I can think of no one more deserving of this award than Scott.

### Career highlights

In his professional life, Scott enjoys working with a wide variety of teacher candidates, graduate students, and in-service teachers exploring English as an additional language teaching and learning in K-12 and adult contexts. His particular research interests include English language assessment and English for academic purposes curriculum, applied linguistics, vocabulary, and materials design. Scott has also authored and co-authored a number of textbooks, and he was the series editor of the recently published *Academic Inquiry* textbooks. He has published numerous articles, he has contributed many chapters and editorials, he has delivered many keynote addresses and refereed conference presentations, and he has given a large number of invited talks and lectures. He is a valued and well-respected member of his faculty and professional community.



Top to bottom: Dr. Scott Roy Douglas with his award.

The next BC TEAL Lifetime Contributor award will be presented in 2021. Read about our many Lifetime Contributors at: [bctéal.org/membership/lifetime-contributors](https://bctéal.org/membership/lifetime-contributors).





## Call for Submissions

### 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 the teachers of English as an Additional Language in British Columbia. Latest issues are distributed to institutions across the province, online through BC TEAL's website, and selected articles are shared through BC TEAL's Blog and on social media.*

TEAL News invites submissions for the Fall 2019 issue with the theme *Pushing the Boundaries*. Newsletter articles are usually 500-1000 words in length. The deadline for submissions to the next issue of *TEAL News* is September 1, 2019. Please contact Natalia Balyasnikova, editor, with your submission ideas: [editor@bctéal.org](mailto:editor@bctéal.org).

We're looking for:

- Articles about your research projects or classroom practices
- Anecdotes and stories about your professional experiences
- Book or article reviews
- Reports and reflections about talks, seminars, or conferences that you've attended
- Creative work!

### BC TEAL Journal

*The BC TEAL Journal is the peer-reviewed scholarly publication of BC TEAL. It exists to promote scholarship related to the teaching and learning of English as an Additional Language in British Columbia, with articles explicitly reflecting the various contexts and settings of the BC TEAL membership. The journal is freely available as an open access publication, and BC TEAL members are encouraged to register as reviewers, authors, and readers on the journal website.*

The *BC TEAL Journal* invites the submission of original previously unpublished contributions, such as research articles or theoretical analysis, classroom practice, and opinion essays, from all sectors and experience levels represented by the BC TEAL membership. Research type articles are typically 7,000 words in length, plus references. Theoretical analysis, classroom practice, and opinion essays are typically around 3,500 words in length, plus references. Manuscripts are accepted on an ongoing basis throughout the year, with papers that have completed the review and editing process being published as they are ready. Articles are gathered into a single issue over the course of one calendar year. For more information on the submission process, please refer to the *BC TEAL Journal* website: <http://ejournals.ok.ubc.ca/index.php/BCTJ>. All papers should be submitted through the journal website.

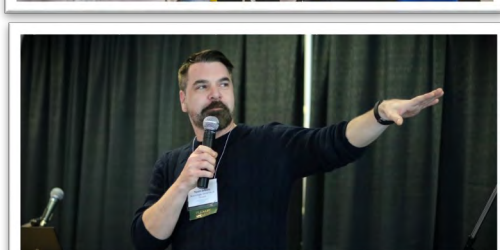
Recent articles published in the *BC TEAL Journal* include topics such as:

- Teaching and learning English for academic purposes
- Academic misconduct in higher education
- Belongingness and learning English as an additional language
- Early language and literacy needs
- Portfolio-based language assessment
- Supporting students with refugee experiences
- Service learning and English language learning



*Memories of BC TEAL 2019...*

*Intersections in EAL: Interculturalization, Indigenization, Identity*



Join us for BC TEAL 2020 at Douglas College, April 30-May 2. Details at [www.bctéal.org/events/](http://www.bctéal.org/events/)