



# TEAL News

Summer 2022  
[www.bctéal.org](http://www.bctéal.org)

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

## Shaping Our Spaces

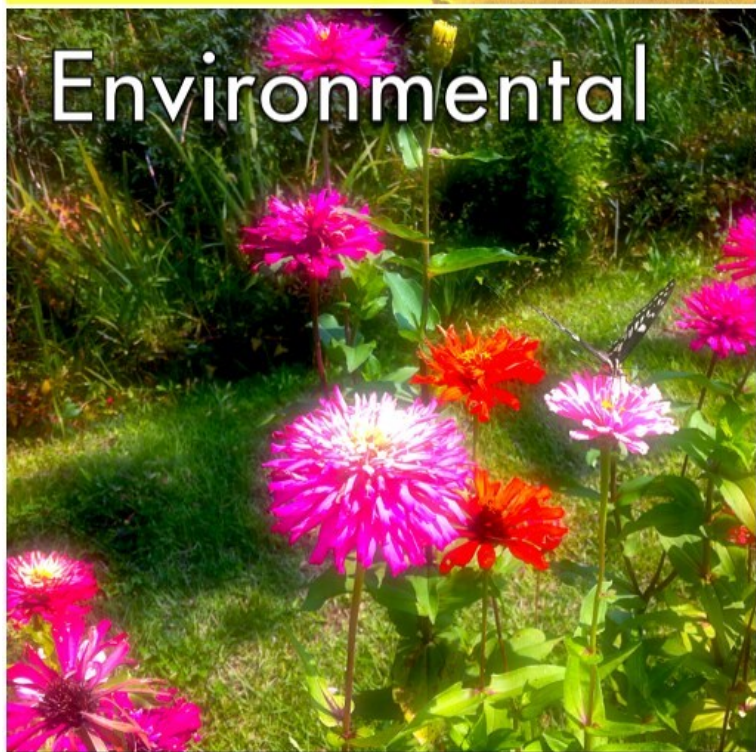


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# Greetings Members

by Cindi Jones

**The old man knows that I never listen,  
So how could I have something to say?**

—U2 This Is Where You Can Reach Me Now

**AS SPRING FINALLY** blossoms and the weather begins to warm, I find myself hopeful and looking forward to the coming year. It is a feeling I have missed in the past two years of shutdowns, mandates, and dire news about the future of international education. The quote from U2 at the top of this article has been playing in my ears as I run and, in my mind, as I interact with others. It has inspired me to listen more. The more I listen the more hopeful I become.

The EAL profession has been grappling with big issues over the past 2+ years. I am inspired by individual practitioners' determination not to let the lessons learned be forgotten. We have had meaningful conversations about racism in Canada, what inclusion could look like, mental health, and the effects of corporate greed. Most importantly, we have begun to reckon with the colossal mess that is created when we avoid meaningful conversations and actions around these difficult and messy areas of our society and in our schools. These are among the lessons learned that we can't forget as post-pandemic life begins to open up and our day to day lives become busier. Think of, as an example, the explosion of conversations about racism post-2020. These conversations are occurring on a scale and with an openness that is unprecedented. Let's not let the latest story about Pete, Kim and Kanye or Amber and Johnny distract us from our priorities and what is important to our lives and in our communities.

As always, the BC TEAL annual conference was inspirational! Our plenary speakers were hopeful, thought-provoking, and challenging. Jennifer Walsh Marr provided realistic hope for the future of our profession balanced with a realistic examination of the endemic precarity of our chosen vocation. Read Jennifer's latest article in the *BC TEAL Journal* at

[ojs-o.library.ubc.ca/index.php/BCTJ](https://ojs-o.library.ubc.ca/index.php/BCTJ). Jeremy Harmer offered up insights into the lessons we take from the pandemic and a song. Learn more about Jeremy's current projects at [jeremyharmer.wordpress.com](https://jeremyharmer.wordpress.com). Rhiannon Bennet challenged our profession to examine the role that English plays in reinforcing colonial structures. Explore how Rhiannon's work might benefit your team at [hummingbirdsrising.ca](https://hummingbirdsrising.ca).

And the plenaries were only the starting point! As in every BC TEAL event, the real power is in member EAL practitioners sharing their knowledge and expertise with their peers. Our community is rich in the depth and breadth of knowledge, skills and expertise and this conference was no different. From rich conversations between speakers and attendees to light-hearted laughter in the Communities of Practice, the event was a much-needed breath of fresh air for those in this beleaguered but enduring field.

I am hopeful for the coming year at BC TEAL. This year we welcome Hilda Freimuth to the board as our Private Sector Representative, Karen Densky will be continuing as Past President, and I will be serving a second term as President. As your board heads into the planning sessions for the next year, we are considering how to best serve the needs of our organization and the various stakeholders. This is a challenge as we strive to meet the needs of various stakeholders and also maintain and maybe even improve the health of the organization and its infrastructure. All while using the lessons we have collectively learned to inform our decisions.

There are several exciting possibilities for the coming year. And, as we, collectively and individually, listen to each other we will be able to have conversations that foster new growth in our lives and the lives of those we touch.

Have a lovely restorative summer season.

*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.



# Shaping Our Spaces

by Karin Wiebe

**IT SEEMS WE HAVE** some shared interests occupying our minds these days. I've participated in conversations with instructors and attended workshops and presentations since last fall which seem weighed towards understanding how to maximize technology for language learning and how to foster equity, diversity, and inclusiveness in EAL classrooms.

I would like to invite you to consider that each of these subjects may actually provide some answers to the other subject. For example, in "Practicalizing Delivery of an Inclusive Curriculum," Grewal explains that EAL instructors have agency to tailor their learning materials to better suit their student's context and asks what are the metrics instructors use to determine if students genuinely feel seen and included in learning materials and activities. Grewal offers that it might be possible to measure a successfully inclusive classroom through student affect because this can be made observable through strategic learning activities. She explains that if EAL professionals could shift focus away from group segregation by ethnicity or immigration status, towards individual learner characteristics, there is potential to grow learners' sense of inclusion and motivation. Her discussion reminds me of a meme which recently came across:

**There's a difference between assimilation, limited inclusion, and belonging.**

**Assimilation says, "be like us and leave parts of you behind."**

**Limited inclusion says, "be a part of us and bring some uniqueness, but not too much."**

**Belonging says, "you belong here; this place is better because you are here, and you are free to take up space."**

*Lester*  
@imterencelester

It may be that the technological tools we have embraced over the past two years have become a potential new space for sorting out our understandings of these subjects. These kinds of memes have the ability to stimulate thinking and discussion of ways to build our classrooms around the personal and particular of each student which Grewal illustrates. In "Open Education Resource: Student-led Learning Content Suitable for

Additional Language Learning Classrooms," Ueda demonstrates how students can use technology to shape their own learning materials and activities in ways that allow themselves to feel seen and included. In the IDEA module example, asynchronous OER content can be harnessed by language instructors for fluency practice, pragmatics, intercultural awareness, and development of listening skills.

In "Learning Tech in LINC: Beyond the Pandemic," Carter recaps his BC TEAL conference presentation, explaining that there were observable shifts in technology understanding and needs over the first two pandemic years. He found that as the original panic of switching to online learning decreased, student engagement with the online platform grew and instructors' curiosity about teaching possibilities in technology appeared. In "Digital Tech Skills and Teaching Beyond the Pandemic," Howe and Kaur explain that some EAL instructors are still experiencing challenges to full use of online platforms for teaching and learning. They offer that there is a need for funding to skill instructors in online learning technologies and to provide them with dedicated time to (re)shape these resources into the individual classroom contexts which Grewal discussed.

These articles reflect members' experiences and discussions which lead us all to new understandings and stimulate new ways of thinking about our scholarship and teaching practices. In reviewing them for this issue, I find that *IDEA*, that is inclusivity, diversity, equity, and accessibility can be created by EAL students through technology, and in turn, the platforms we interact with can be (re)shaped into IDEA-rich environments that reflect each student.

In a way, we are bringing forth a new language from the pandemic which we are using to negotiate and (re)envision how we think about online teaching and learning. With this in mind, I hope you enjoy this issue of BC TEAL Newsletter, *Shaping our Spaces*. I encourage everyone to participate in these conversations. Please submit your articles, questions, or ideas to [editor@bctéal.org](mailto:editor@bctéal.org).



**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*.

## Reference

Lester, T. [imterencelester]. (2022, March 30). *It's about ALL about belonging—please know the difference!* [meme]. Instagram. <https://www.instagram.com/p/Cbu9-N6A03h/>

# Practicalizing Delivery of an Inclusive Curriculum

by Jasnoor Grewal



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**I ASKED A COUPLE** of my friends in the field to share what comes to their mind when they hear the phrase ‘inclusive curriculum.’ Their responses included: diversity, fairness, gender equality, races, ethnicities, etc. One of them also said, “it’s a cliché now” and I promise I won’t be offended if you thought similarly.

Don’t worry, this is not another article telling what we should be doing. It purely aims to start a conversation by allowing me to reflect on my experiences with the topic and welcome those of yours. How many times have we successfully implemented a theory or a method **WITHOUT** any customizations? My count is zero. The extensive and ingenious research out there is to guide us; it’s not strictly prescriptive – it can’t be.

When attempts are made to design curricula that are inclusive, the focus mostly has been to cater to a particular group at a time, using a top-to-bottom approach, or, if not that, more of an outward-to-inward approach. Designing for language proficiency and aims of an individual would be outside the

scope of a publisher or a designer. A teacher will take it from there. Immeasurable research has already been done to identify needs of specific ethnic groups including norms, culture, ways of doing and being, and teaching materials that will benefit that cultural context. We can’t overlook the rich awareness this has brought to enhance our modes of instruction and delivery. My question is – is it enough?

I highly doubt if anything is ever enough. Our efforts can be suitable with a particular group of students but would need to be adapted eventually. We take the steps and methods we are familiar with knowing that we may not be able to achieve everything we aim to, or deliver everything we plan to, and are possibly far-reaching to fulfillment. That being said, how do we then know if our learners are receiving instruction that is capable of making a meaningful difference in their lives by making them feel included?

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## Practicalizing Delivery of an Inclusive Curriculum *continued*

I have been wondering if we could measure progress in terms of affect. Again, not substituting what we already know, but supplementing it with some extra awareness could take us a step closer to the answer. Let's consider sensory perceptions and how these bring out positive, desirable emotions in learners such as comfort, pride, confidence, hopefulness, and accomplishment. Depending on how students internalize information presented to them, they use their senses and perception powers which in turn drives how they feel or how they make sense of situation and surroundings. Reading between the lines by observing learners' expressions and understanding their behaviours are a few means that could be effectively used to gauge the efficacy of our teaching and the positive impacts it may be bringing to their lives.

By building on the practice of using content that provides rich knowledge of the concepts, the further selection of, or alteration to, texts or tasks that are capable of producing an atmosphere of respect for all in the room has hardly ever gone wrong. However, what may seem as 'absolutely normal' for some could be displeasing to others. Certain words, scenes, or activities can trigger shame, discomfort, or unpleasant memorization of past or current experiences. Therefore, checking in with my assumptions has come handy for me.

I would argue that getting to know our learners as individuals and finding attributes that make us alike, instead of segregating students in groups based on their ethnicities or immigration statuses, is a powerful tool to generate an honest sense of inclusion. I recommend walking the path with our learners that springs from their distinctive personalities and then expands outward to support feelings of inclusion and a deeper impression of ownership and originality for all members of the class.

When learners see that the characters in the subject matter represent them in some way, or that they themselves have the power to make changes in learning activities and materials to make them look and behave in a familiar way, we will be supporting our students to build an identity that they envision. Instead of stressing on building an inclusive foundation for each individual in a class, empower students to create their own significant stories that look as beautiful in action as they do here, on paper.

Learners will willingly bring their personal contexts into the classroom to grow their sense of belonging and group membership. For example, I once asked my students to sketch their own characters for a story we were reading. The result was a deeper heartfelt learning. The assignment used one storyline while everyone's characters were uniquely their own. The same character wore a kippah in one depiction, while someone else chose for it to be a boy with a turban. A learner wanted his fifty-year-old male character to be attending college to become a nurse, while someone else had a woman fight fires in the city. As I watched, I could see smiles, feel excitement, and hear a future plan of someone wanting to become an artist, among other emotions. One student cried. It was the first time she had identified with a character wearing a hijab who went to school without fear.

The world is changing quickly and considerably. The ways we go on with our daily lives have far evolved. I try to make sure that the students in my class who haven't had much exposure to technology don't get left behind. Therefore, I must include ample opportunities for them to practise digital literacy and get themselves familiar with critical awareness. We may have not entered the current pandemic fully prepared, but we can surely learn from our experiences and emerge skillful to maximize our students' learning potential under changing dynamics.

Inclusion first starts from within—accepting who we are and appreciating what we are capable of. We're all fighting our own battles. How we work through this, and how we come to understand ourselves each day then trickles out to our immediate surroundings, including our learners. Starting at a foundational level, let's rise to the challenge of constructing classrooms that include unique needs of individual learners, uphold their personal values and ideologies, and deliver instruction with purpose and aim.



**Jasnoor Grewal Kulaar** is a new mom, a teacher, and an MA TESOL student at Trinity Western University, Langley, BC. She stepped into the field of teaching EAL in 2018. She's passionate about spending time with her family, traveling, learning, writing, educating every child, seeing her students succeed, and undertaking new educational endeavours to keep bettering herself.



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## IDEA Module Review: Equity, Diversity, and Inclusivity in English as an Additional Language Classrooms

by Prapti Mallhi



Photo by Spencer Davis on Unsplash

**THE IDEA MODULE** for Foods and Fitness is a learning module that draws on voices and experiences of international students to address culture shock connected to food and fitness. Using an intercultural lens, volunteers recorded a round table discussion that examines different and sometimes difficult issues around culturally relevant foods and physical activities. The discussion is the core of a backwards designed learning module, which was piloted in the English for Academic Purposes course in spring 2022.

The IDEA Module has relevance to all EAL instructors in BC because it offers an open learning resource which can be drawn on for relevant additional language learning. It functions as an asynchronous two-unit learning supplement ready to add to any EAL course syllabus. Learners watch some or all of the panel discussion excerpts (as assigned by an instructor) and can complete some or all of the suggested learning activities. The additional resource pages are designed to assist newcomers to source culturally relevant foods and physical activities and work out how to travel to and from stores and recreation centres using public transportation. These resource pages can be quickly adapted to use links, informative websites and leads suitable for any region.

The module addresses challenges faced by students that result from their transition to a foreign country (and university) and

how (especially) EAL students often lose motivation due to the loss of a sense of identity, community, and belonging. First-year students may feel a sense of insecurity in practising English, which leads to anxiety, poor nutritional habits, isolation, and abandonment of culture. This in turn may challenge academic performance and extend the time needed for overall community integration.

As a Teaching Assistant I have witnessed this phenomenon firsthand. Through the process of conversations around culture shock and the voices of brave EAP students who voiced their struggles, I became fully aware of the need for this conversation to be shaped as a learning opportunity for everyone. International students in EAL courses are often significantly negatively impacted by culture shock more so than domestic students. Therefore, this module may serve as a strategic support for equity, diversity, and inclusion that uplifts English language learners and all international students in British Columbia.

Drawing on interest-driven creator theory (IDC) this module was designed to use interest, creation, and habit to facilitate learning. In the early conception stage, international student volunteers voiced their concerns that there were key elements of academic and campus success missing from their first year in Canada. These elements appear in Maslow's hierarchy of needs model, which posits that intrinsic motivation and life satisfaction (including academic success) requires certain basic, psychological and self-actualization needs need to be met.

The module is divided into two sections: (1) Food for Thought and (2) Food for Fitness. Food for Thought focuses on supporting students in exploring culturally relevant recipes that are nutritious, budget-friendly, and quick. The activities allow

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## IDEA Module Review continued

students to brainstorm how they would cook something unique to their culture and how they would procure the required ingredients, including exploring which stores they would go to, which bus routes they would take and what cooking equipment and processes they require. I was mindful that all international students may not be very accustomed to or familiar with cooking skills or western cooking equipment. Thus, there are activities designed to introduce students to western recipes such as Quick Oats, using common western cooking equipment like ovens (these ingredients and equipment are known to not be used very commonly in many international countries especially countries in Asia). Additionally, the module also provides resources such as UBCO-specific cooking skills workshops where students can work to increase their skills and knowledge of recipes.

The Food for Fitness module addresses challenges that international students experience, such as the lack of access to traditional or culturally relevant sports and games. In addition, accessing public spaces such as gyms also create barriers such as insecurity around body types and levels of fitness. While these students may have been some of the best players in their respective sports in high school, not having access to these sports in Canada significantly impacts their confidence, sense of self, and sense of belonging. Further, the module provides resources to support students in their transition to winter sports that may have not even been a necessity or an option in their home countries. Using the IDC theory, the activities are designed in a way to create a sustainable and safe habit loop, that encourages students to find, access and participate in culturally relevant fitness activities that encourage physical and mental fitness towards supporting academic and overall campus success.

The IDEA Module will be available as an Open Education Resource in late spring 2022 through UBC's English Foundation Program. We will send out an announcement and link to BC TEAL members when it is published. You can explore the site now for learning resources specifically designed for EAL learners at [education.ok.ubc.ca/research-partnerships/english-as-an-additional-language/eal-oer/](https://education.ok.ubc.ca/research-partnerships/english-as-an-additional-language/eal-oer/)

*This project was funded by UBC's Faculty of Education and the English Foundation Program through a Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Decolonization grant.*



**Prapti Mallhi** has just completed her Bachelor of Arts at UBCO. She is passionate about developing equitable policies and programs for students in higher education to support their full and successful participation in academic life. Prapti has worked as a Teaching Assistant for the English Foundation Program, where she developed an interest in bridging culture shock gaps, and supporting students through inclusive and equitable learning.



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As a BC TEAL member, you enjoy reduced rates at the annual conference, regional conferences, and professional development workshops. You are eligible to apply for the many TEAL Charitable Foundation awards and scholarships. And, you can connect with a network of like-minded colleagues across the province.

BC TEAL Membership costs \$50 per year, and there are discounts for students, the unemployed, retirees, and members of BC TESOL (BCTF K-12) or ABEABC.

Visit [bcteam.org/membership](https://bcteam.org/membership) to learn about the many benefits and to sign up.



## Open Education Resource: Student-led Learning Content Suitable for Additional Language Learning Classrooms

by Yukie Ueda

**THE IDEA MODULE** for Food and Fitness was produced at UBC's Okanagan campus in response to a need for English as an additional language learning content that addresses culture shock in relation to food and fitness. A group of international students volunteered to participate in a roundtable discussion, which was recorded for use in the learning module.

Participants wrote their own questions based on their personal experiences during their first year in Canada. The moderator grouped questions according to themes and asked the questions in a casual, conversation style meeting. Participants were asked to explain their perceptions of the challenges they encountered as well as any solutions or successful outcomes that arose.

The overarching goal of the module was to open dialogue between new students about culture shock related to food and fitness and provide local practical solutions. The learning activities for these modules are centred on discussion posts for engagement, with tasks like cooking a nutritious, culturally relevant dish and recording the experience, and attending a fitness class or open gym day and reporting on it. The module designers structured a number of activity alternatives into the units, and the hope is that EAL instructors will use the content either asynchronously as designed, or in a face-to-face class where a segment of the round table can be played, then discussed by students.

The module will be available as an open education resource from UBC's Okanagan School of Education in late spring 2022. An announcement and link to the site will be sent out to BC TEAL members. If you would like to preview the current OER resources available for EAL learners, please visit [education.ok.ubc.ca/research-partnerships/english-as-an-additional-language/eal-oer/](https://education.ok.ubc.ca/research-partnerships/english-as-an-additional-language/eal-oer/).

The following is a sample transcript from the IDEA Module for Food and Fitness, along with a brief discussion of the valuable insights provided by participants.

**Question:** Have you ever experienced discriminatory remarks with respect to food or food-related culture? What do you do in these situations?

Responding to the question of how to make traditional meals in a culturally authentic and affordable manner, one participant replied, "I realized over time that you don't necessarily need all these ingredients to make an affordable and authentic dish." The student further provided the example of cooking their traditional meal by substituting some spices and cooking tools with those available here in Canada, saying, "It is still delicious!" Some students explained they reached out to their family members to ask for cooking advice and instructions to recreate familiar foods while away in Canada. Students were able to creatively navigate situations like this by devising and modifying their traditional recipes to replicate them with locally available ingredients and utensils. It further



Photo by Freepik on Freepik

showed an open-mindedness to experiment with new ingredients and cooking methods as an effective way to maintain their healthy dietary practices.

**Question:** How can you make traditional or favourite meals in a culturally authentic and affordable manner?

One student started off the conversation by sharing her experiences of feeling uncomfortable when people pointed at and judged her for eating her food with her hands. She explained this is a completely normal practice in her culture, and in the example, she was in a culturally relevant restaurant with friends. She explained, "I think people consider ill-mannered or something so that they were talking about it." She

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Photo by Freepik on Freepik

further pointed out the difficulty of identifying discriminatory remarks and navigating the situation as it was her first time dealing with such a situation and she was not 100% sure what to think. These difficult experiences were shared by other students at the panel discussion. In grappling with discriminatory experiences, the significance of reaffirming their food culture and eating habits was emphasized. One student explained, “When I share Indian food with my friends, or even now that I have learned how to make it myself, I realize that this food is genuinely beautiful.” Another student suggested sharing difficult experiences with other international students as they are “all travelling together away from our home countries” and “it can strengthen our bond.” Finally, it was noted that connecting with other students with different food cultures and conversing about them will broaden their perspectives and enable them to embrace new experiences and other food cultures.

**Question:** Have you ever experienced culture shock with respect to physical activity in Canada? What did that look like and feel like?

“Growing up I’ve been playing tennis for about maybe 14 years now, so literally most of my life. Back in India I played so much, and I would play in the blazing sun, and I would get tanned, and it was fun, it was fun doing that. And I was a very outdoorsy person, like athletics, and like just any outdoor sport count me in. I came here and the first thing I wanted to do was play tennis. But how am I supposed to do that when it’s so cold outside? And the indoor courts...they are usually reserved for professional players...and you don’t really have access to these indoor courts. So I feel like it was such a shock to me. And I have never tried winter sports, I didn’t even know the concept of winter sports. So, I can’t play tennis, and I cannot start

learning how to ski now, because it’s going to take me years and years.” The student concluded that one way around it would be to go to an indoor gym, but her expression and body language in the roundtable indicated she was not very happy with this option. Another participant explained that “it’s not just culture shock, it’s identity shock. Because we play for hours, the same sport. I think it’s an educational ... like you do it, this is how you grow up in Asian countries. Like you spend hours trying to be good at something.”

These responses characterize a socialization process where participants improve their physical skills while co-constructing their

communities of practice. Students explained this is part of the overall sense of well-being for them. In British Columbia, there is less emphasis on community building in fitness and recreation centres, and international students feel this is a missing element.



Photo by ASphotofamily on Freepik

The IDEA Module for Food and Fitness is rich with intercultural understandings of student experiences and perceptions that can be drawn on for language learning. We encourage you to explore the module when it becomes available through UBC’s English as an Additional Language Open Education Resources.



**Yukie Ueda** completed her Bachelor in Psychology in Victoria and has over 7 years of experience supporting international students and intercultural learning in Japan and New Zealand. She moved to Canada in 2018 and is currently working on her Master of Education at the Okanagan School of Education, studying how to create a culturally sustainable learning space to better support learners from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.



# Learning Tech in LINC: Beyond the Pandemic

by Paul Carter



Image by Jan Vašek from Pixabay

for the first time in my experience, I was receiving call after call and fielding 4 to 6 calls simultaneously throughout every shift.

It was a time of panic. Teachers were suddenly thrown into remote teaching, and many were not prepared. Add to that the stress and isolation that came with the pandemic, it was easy to understand that some teachers were overwhelmed and trying to rush through the training. Many of the calls in those early days were for issues that were covered in the training courses that teachers had missed in their rush to get students online. Often some calming words and a link to the help file was all that was needed to get a teacher back on

**IT WAS A REAL PLEASURE** and honour to present “Learning Tech in LINC: Beyond the Pandemic” at BC TEAL’s 2022 conference with my colleagues from New Language Solutions – Avenue – LearnIT2teach: Rob McBride, Matthias Sturm, Bonnie Nicholas, and Vesna Radivojovic. I’m not sure that I’ve ever seen such a busy chat during a session, and the breakout rooms were full of engaging and empowering discussions about moving forward and the future of learning tech in LINC. Here is a summary of my part in the panel. It was such a pleasure to be able to connect with everyone at BC TEAL this year. When we share our ideas, we are all richer for it!

As a Mentor and Live Help Assistant for [Avenue.ca](https://avenue.ca) – [LearnIT2teach.ca](https://learnit2teach.ca) I have had a front row seat for the unprecedented past two years of online and blended teaching in Canada. I will be telling the story of the early days of the pandemic on Live Help for years to come. I recall saying in the early days of COVID-19, “I have never, ever seen anything like this!” while Live Help was ringing off the hook ... and it truly does ring—it sounds like an old-style telephone. In March 2020

track. Others were struggling because of limited experience with technology, and these callers needed more support. Sometimes screenshots with arrows and notes did the trick, but in a few cases, it was necessary to fire up a Zoom or Big Blue Button meeting and share the screen to help a teacher grasp what they needed to know to continue with the training and work with their students remotely.

For about a year after the pandemic started the Live Help remained extremely busy, but as time went on the questions started to change; teachers who had called about making a course visible in the early days were now calling for help creating HTML blocks and Assignments in their courses. I could sense this giant ‘pandemic cohort’ moving through Stage 1 and Pre-Stage 2 en masse through the calls that were coming in. By the start of 2021 it was becoming less common to have calls about setting up a course and much more common to be fielding calls about course delivery and creating engaging content for learners: skills covered in Stages 2 and 3 of the Avenue – LearnIT2teach training.

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A project of NEW LANGUAGE SOLUTIONS

## Learning Tech in LINC continued

Another notable difference around the start of 2021 was a change in the tone of the calls that were coming in. At the start of the pandemic teachers were clearly frustrated, stressed, and desperate for immediate assistance and support. As 2021 went on the calls became much calmer, relaxed, curious, and frankly, more challenging to answer as the teachers were taking on more and more complicated features of the courseware and LMS.

Now that we are well into 2022, the number of calls has dropped. The volume is still higher than pre-pandemic times. The questions too have changed; from panic-driven emergency online teaching problems to professional inquiries about the finer points of creating accessible, user-friendly, engaging settlement language acquisition activities online. With so many teachers now refining their online teaching skills, the sky is the limit for learning technology in the LINC programs across Canada.

With that in mind, it is also very interesting to note that learners have experienced a similar learning curve with online and blended classes. Having interviewed 12 LINC provider organizations here in B.C., I can report that many students who originally resisted online learning have now come to embrace it. Many have now realized that they can study at their own pace and in their own space. Similarly, several programs have seen an increase in intake as students who could not attend in-person classes for a variety of reasons, from conflicting work schedules to family commitments to health concerns, now were able to enroll and begin their LINC language studies online.

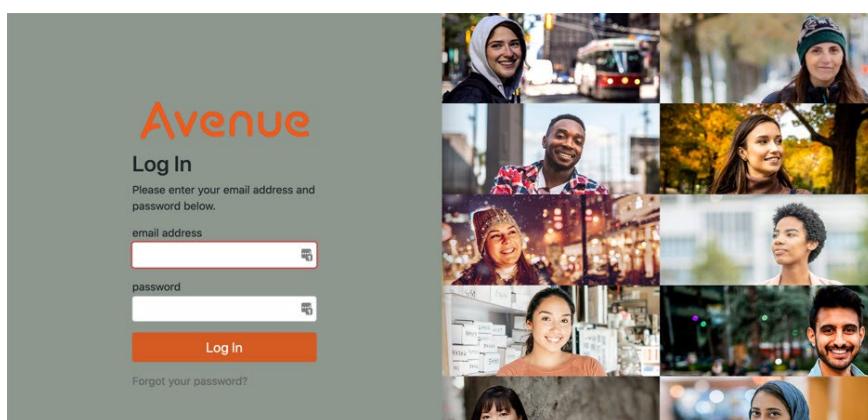
Many teachers also reported a similar experience as they have come to appreciate the benefits of Avenue for course delivery, features like grading and reporting, the possibility for immediate feedback and auto-graded activities, an increase in one-on-one time with students via scheduled video chats, and the ability to work from home. Several providers reported that many teachers have commented that they would prefer to stay online or work with a blended course delivery format when the pandemic finally comes under control.

Having watched the LINC teachers across Canada go from panicked to professional on Live Help, I can attest to their resilience, their desire to learn, their ability to adapt, and their

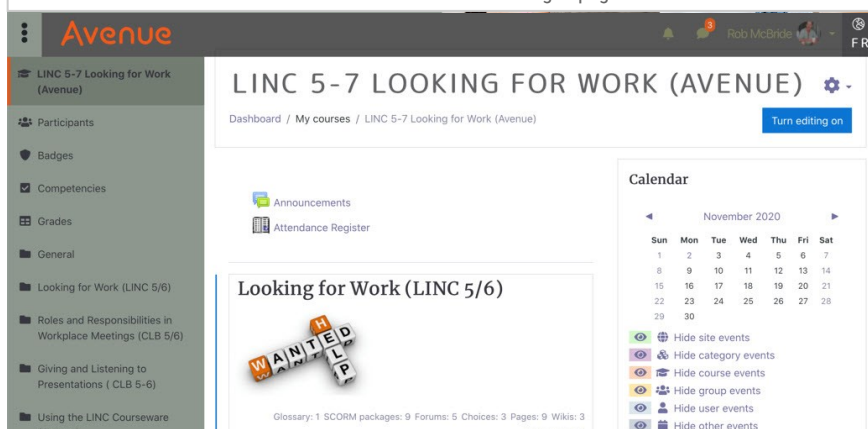
creativity and professional online resource development once they got their footing online...working with technology definitely has a learning curve, but once the first part of the climb is over, it just gets easier the higher you go. I can't wait to see what questions come my way from my trainees and the Live Help callers in 2022. I've been amazed at what teachers have been creating this past year, and they are just getting started!



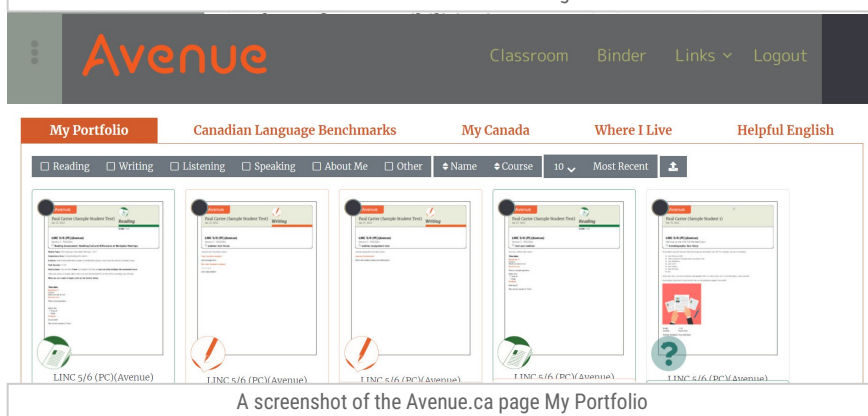
**Paul Carter** supports teachers across Canada as a LearnIT2teach Mentor, Live Help Assistant, Avenue Resource Developer for New Language Solutions, and Certified Moodle Course Creator. He has also worked on projects for ISSofBC, LISTN, NewToBC—The Library Link for Newcomers, and AMSSA.



A screenshot of the Avenue.ca Log In page.



A screenshot of the Avenue.ca LINC 5-7 Looking for Work module.



A screenshot of the Avenue.ca page My Portfolio



# What is an H5P? An Introduction to Creation & Sharing EAL Learning Materials

by Diane Ramanathan

**H5P** is a free and open-source content collaboration framework based on JavaScript. H5P is an abbreviation for HTML5 Package and aims to make it easy for everyone to create, share, and reuse interactive HTML5 content. Interactive videos, interactive presentations, quizzes, interactive timelines, and more have been developed and shared using H5P on [H5P.org](https://h5p.org) ("H5P," 2022).

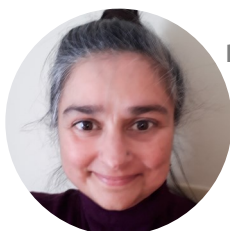
Looking to add H5P content to your Learning Management System? [Tutela.ca](https://tutela.ca) has a growing collection of H5P content developed by Canadian instructors working with newcomers. [Tutela.ca](https://tutela.ca) is free for language instructors working in a Canadian context.

H5Ps can be previewed on Tutela and bookmarked for later use.

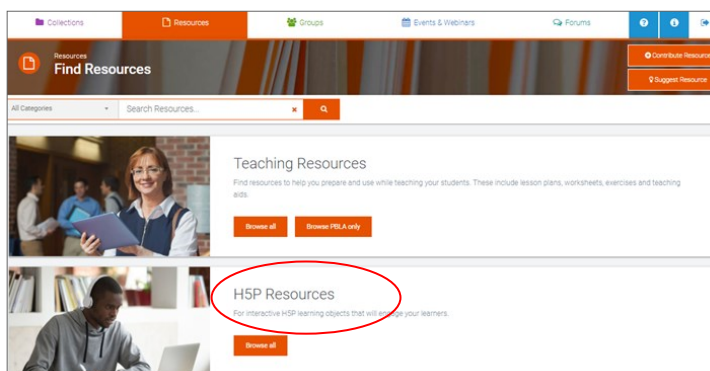
The H5Ps on Tutela are also available in Collections. They are organized by CLB Level.

When imported to a Learning Management System such as Moodle ([Avenue.ca](https://venue.ca)), learners can work through the H5Ps asynchronously and their results can be linked to the grade centre.

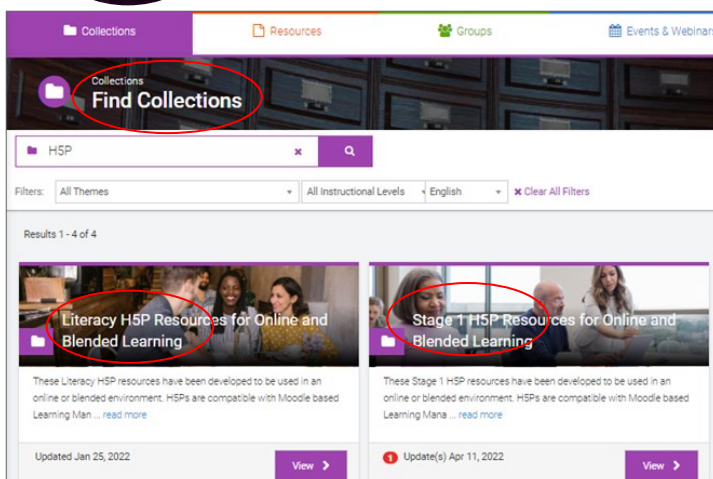
To access these H5Ps you must be a member of [Tutela.ca](https://tutela.ca). Register today!



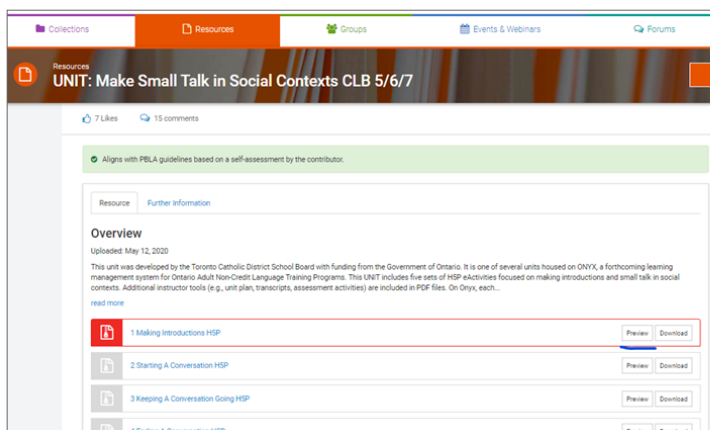
**Diane Ramanathan** wears a few different hats. She is a community coordinator for Tutela.ca, a LINC Home Study instructor and part of the TESL team at Algonquin College. When she is not working, you can see her paddling her kayak down the Rideau in Ottawa.



A screenshot of the Tutela.ca Find Resources page for H5P Resources



Screen shot of the page, Find Collections, on Tutela.ca.



Screen shot of a Moodle course's Unit page for Make Small Talk in Social Contexts CLB 5/6/7, showing a list of activities, with the H5P activity, Making Introductions,



Screenshot of an H5P activity, Making Introductions, from the Unit: Make Small Talk in Social Contexts CLB 5/6/7 in Moodle.

## Reference:

H5P. (2022, April 15). In Wikipedia. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/H5P>

# Digital Tech Skills Beyond the Pandemic

by Joanne Howe & Indi Kaur



Photo by Freepik on Freepik

**IN MARCH 2020**, ELL and LINC instructors were thrown into the deep end of the pool: teaching LINC online, scrambling to get a Big Blue button or Zoom account, and Avenue ... we had to finish more than Level 1? We all muddled our way through it.

Fast forward to April 2022, and how are the ELL and LINC classes now? Some classes have gone back to in-person, some are hybrid, and some are online only. Most teachers and students feel happy to be online and stay at home, some online classes are thriving and others not so much. Those teachers and students who persevered and kept going over the last two years will agree that they have gotten used to being online, can join an online class and can teach online. But how do we know if these lessons are effective and engaging?

How do instructors feel about teaching online now, given your current work-at-home environment? Do you feel confident with your digital tech skills or is there room for improvement?

Let's face it, there is always room for improvement and continuous learning but what's holding you back? According to data from a teachers' focus group we ran in conjunction with the research organization Blueprint, here are some reasons why your digital tech skills might be static:

1. Too busy with regular classes and lesson prep
2. No extra time in the class for lessons, PBLA assessments *and* extra computer training
3. No professional development days allotted to developing digital tech skills
4. Not sure which skills or apps to learn more about
5. Noise and distractions while working from home

If you can relate to some of the reasons listed above, here are a few tech tip shortcuts to try (no really, try it!):

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### Taking a Screenshot (computer or laptop)

PC: WINDOWS key + SHIFT + S

MAC: COMMAND + SHIFT + 4

Press the three keys at the same time, select the area to screenshot, then save image or paste into an email or document.

### Rename Attendee in Zoom

For participant: Click on the three dots in the top right corner of their participant window, select 'Rename.'

For host: Click on the participants icon in the toolbar, which will display the participant list. Hover the cursor over a participant's name and click on 'More' to give you the option to rename them.

### Reactions Button in Zoom

In the toolbar, participants can click on the 'Reactions' icon to express feelings with emojis and 'Raise Hand' to ask a question, then select 'Lower Hand' when the question has been asked. If participants join Zoom with their cell phone or tablet, the 'Reactions' icon is found by tapping the 'More' button or the three dots.

### Student Screensharing

In the Zoom Settings, allowing participants to share their screen enables the instructor to see where the student might be struggling, in terms of their tech skills, for example, unable to find a function in an app like Word or PowerPoint.

teacher-centred workshops to learn how to develop and apply new digital tech skills.

Based on recent LINC instructor focus group findings, LINC and settlement organizations can support LINC instructors in the following ways:

1. Arrange digital tech support and paid skills training workshops, outside of instruction time.
2. Block off space and time for Pro-Ds for instructors to share ideas, skills and collaborate.
3. Create collaborative Pro-Ds for pandemic-fatigued instructors.
4. Discuss funding for training workshops and more allotted professional development time as an essential component of government-funded contracts for LINC services.
5. Encourage in-class peer-instructor observations to learn new ideas and lesson delivery.
6. Follow up and acknowledge the important role that LINC instructors play in the settlement journey of newcomers.

*It's a sad irony that it's during the times we most need to ask for help that most people are reticent in doing so.*

*—Dr. Margie Warrell*

If any of these tech tips are new for you, but you didn't try the instructions, what's holding you back? Being out of your comfort zone or fear? Author and leadership advisor, Dr. Margie Warrell (2015) writes, "It's a sad irony that it's during the times we most need to ask for help that most people are reticent in doing so."

IRCC recently funded the creation of some digital tech skill resources by [ISSofBC](#) and [MOSAIC](#). Another useful resource is [LinkedIn Learning](#), that can be accessed through your organization or with a public library account. Technology-shy LINC instructors can participate in upcoming LINC Co-Design

With online classes, we have become isolated and disconnected from people outside of the home and workplace. As we transition back to the new normal in the classroom, how can we as individuals and organizations build better community connections, encourage a positive workplace environment and allow space to improve the overall delivery of LINC?

If you would like to participate in the LINC Co-Design digital tech workshops, have new apps to share, or questions, please email us at [howej@douglascollege.ca](mailto:howej@douglascollege.ca) or [kauri17@douglascollege.ca](mailto:kauri17@douglascollege.ca).



Joanne Howe & Indi Kaur are LINC instructors who teach through project-based and experiential learning. They are the facilitators of LINC Co-Design at Douglas College Surrey. They are co-designing the program with students while integrating CLB 2/3 English and basic digital tech skills.

### Reference

Warrell, M. (2015, March 24). Asking for help is a sign of strength, not weakness. *Forbes*.

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/margiewarrell/2015/03/24/asking-for-help-is-a-sign-of-strength-not-weakness/?sh=158b843d6e01>

# New Members: What is iTEP all About?

by Lorena Chatwell

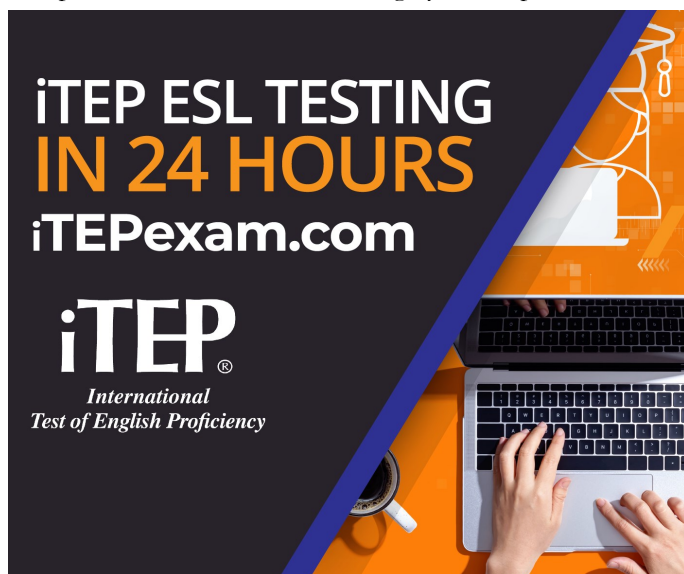
**iTEP INTERNATIONAL** is excited to announce our new membership with the BC TEAL Association. Our iTEP Canada team looks forward to meeting with our fellow members and continuing to do our part to support and serve the profession of teaching English as an additional language. Learn more about iTEP at: [www.itepexam.com/about-itep/](http://www.itepexam.com/about-itep/).

## Who is iTEP International?

iTEP International is a Los Angeles, California-based company that provides English testing solutions to the international education community. In 2008, iTEP created the first fully Internet-based all-skills English language assessment test, the **iTEP Academic-Plus exam**. For the first time, non-native English speakers could securely assess their English language fluency online and on-demand.

Since then, iTEP and its team of linguists and ESL specialists have continued to develop innovative English testing solutions for all phases of the international student evaluation experience, including test prep, pre-arrival, admissions, and placement. iTEP partners with universities, colleges, K-12 schools, and language schools all around the world to provide flexible English testing. See iTEP's full range of products at [www.itepexam.com/products/](http://www.itepexam.com/products/).

Our unique services offer customizable exams that can be tailored to fit the needs of each client, concise exams that can be completed in 90 minutes or less, superior customer service, 24/7 testing availability, 24-hour grading by highly qualified ESL professionals, delivered on a highly secure platform.



Since 2008, iTEP has helped hundreds of schools around the world find testing solutions that suit their needs including Seneca College, Niagara Christian Collegiate, and Sheridan College. Read more about schools iTEP has helped at [www.itepexam.com/about-itep/itep-news/](http://www.itepexam.com/about-itep/itep-news/).

## Examples of iTEP English language testing solutions in Canada

At Seneca College in Toronto, Canada, the school's English Language Institute (ELI) needed a test that could accurately assess and place students into one of the program's eight levels. In 2019, the head of ELI, Director Martine Allard, found the perfect solution with iTEP's Academic exam. The exam offered turnkey solutions with fast results, an easy-to-use platform, and lots of flexibility. Director Allard spoke of the institute's specific needs, saying, "We wanted a computer-based academic test that would be appropriate for a program like ours since we prepare students to study at the college." To meet those needs, ELI was able to customize their iTEP Academic exam and split it into two parts with Listening, Reading, and Vocabulary separated from Writing and Speaking.

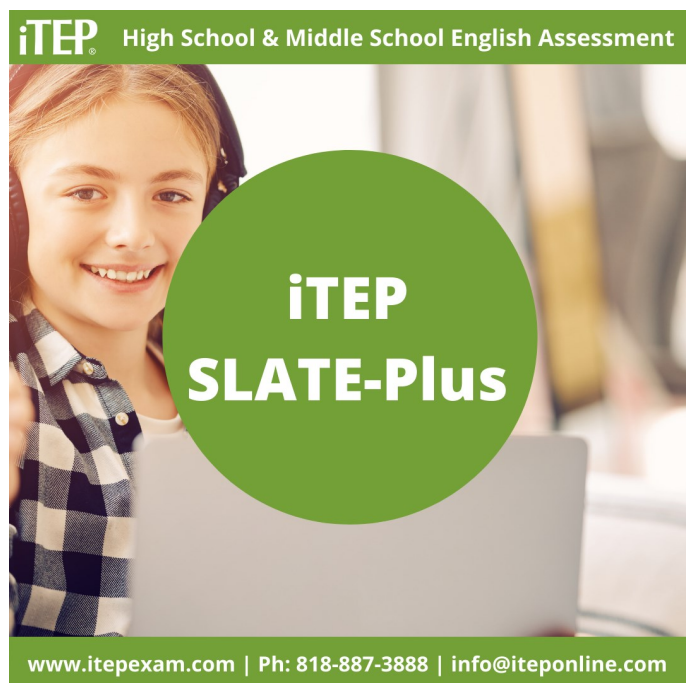
Exam testing was also made highly flexible, so students could be tested in groups or individually as needed. Results were available in 24 hours or less, allowing the test administrators to access them on the iTEP platform through the ELI's own account. Administrators could save results, manage data, and easily share results with teachers to gather feedback.

Read how Seneca College keep students in mind with their iTEP solution at [www.itepexam.com/seneca-college-eli-places-students-with-itep/](http://www.itepexam.com/seneca-college-eli-places-students-with-itep/).

In 2013, iTEP provided Niagara Christian Collegiate (NCC), a private boarding school in Ontario, Canada, with a fast, flexible, and reliable exam when the school's previous "pen and paper" exam was no longer available. The school's Director of International Education, Jackie Angi-Dobos, was pleased with the results she saw at her school by using **iTEP SLATE-Plus**. The school did first-time placement tests or skills reassessment tests when students arrived on campus. With iTEP SLATE's 24/7 availability and fast results, students could be assessed in the brief time before the start of classes or even in their home country if they experienced visa delays.

Continued on next page





The fast, comprehensive results provided NCC staff insights into key areas where students needed more practice. iTEP SLATE results also helped students and student counselors discuss course selection promptly before the start of class. The exam results were easy to manage and highly shareable, so test administrators could send them to parents, students, student counsellors, and ESL teachers for consultation. In a Q & A interview about the experience, Director Angi-Dobos said, "iTEP Slate testing meets all of our international student testing needs. You will hear me recommending it to any high school that has English Language Learners. No guessing required, iTEP provides quick, accurate results."

Read the full Q&A interview with NCC's Director Jackie Angi-Dobos at: [www.itepexam.com/niagara-christian-collegiate-adopts-itep-tests/](http://www.itepexam.com/niagara-christian-collegiate-adopts-itep-tests/).

In 2020, the Covid-19 pandemic made Sheridan College's paper-based proficiency test unsafe for students to take at their Ontario campus. It wasn't possible for Sheridan to transfer their own test online; instead, they needed a new test that was securely monitored for academic integrity. It also needed to thoroughly assess all English proficiency skills yet be brief enough for students to take during a single session.

The [iTEP Snapshot exam](#) offered a turnkey solution with its 60-minute assessment that evaluated students in all skill areas: Grammar, Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing. iTEP Snapshot exam was available on-demand and delivered results in 24 hours or less, graded by certified ESL professionals. The iTEP Snapshot exam scores also matched the school's tiered



ESL program for easy placement. The smooth and reliable testing provided through iTEP Snapshot was essential for the continued success of Sheridan College's ESL program.

Read the full story of how Sheridan College found their iTEP solution at [www.itepexam.com/itep-case-study-pre-arrival-testing/](http://www.itepexam.com/itep-case-study-pre-arrival-testing/).

Since 2008, iTEP has worked with middle/high schools, universities and colleges, agencies, and language schools in countries around the world to create secure, affordable, on-demand testing for all. Find out more about our Canadian services on our new page for all things iTEP in Canada: [www.itepexam.com/itep-canada/](http://www.itepexam.com/itep-canada/). We look forward to connecting with members of the BC TEAL Association community and will be attending several upcoming conferences throughout Canada including the CAPS-I Conference, the CBIE Conference, the Languages Canada, and BC TEAL Conferences next year. We hope to see you there!

**iTEP®**  
*International*  
**Test of English Proficiency**

Find out more about what is happening at iTEP on any of our social pages: [LinkedIn](#), [Twitter](#), or [Facebook](#).



Lorena Chatwell is iTEP's Business Development Manager for Canada & Brazil. She can be contacted at [lchatwell@iteponline.com](mailto:lchatwell@iteponline.com)

# Better Practices to Support Language Volunteers

by Marijke Geurts, Matthias Sturm, & Shabana Shahzad

This is a companion article to the BC TEAL conference presentation “Supporting Language Volunteers: Building Partnerships and Increasing Capacity with TBLV,” by Marijke Geurts, Matthias Sturm, and Shabana Shahzad.

In a world where things remain uncertain, how can we move forward? During the course of the pandemic, many language programs have gone through considerable changes. First, programs were moved online, which for many language volunteers meant they could no longer participate the way they were used to. Now things change again as programs move back to an in-person or blended format; likewise volunteers will find their way back to support EAL learners, possibly in new ways. In this article we look at different aspects of supporting and training language volunteers.

Let us begin by looking at what motivates volunteers and the kinds of activities language volunteers participate in. Stukas et al. (2014) identified the top three reasons for volunteering as a *values* function, with volunteers seeking to express prosocial and humanitarian values through action; an *understanding* function, with volunteers seeking to learn more about the world, other people and their own skills; and an *enhancement* function, with volunteers seeking to feel needed. Their research shows that when these other-oriented goals are obtained, volunteers feel good about themselves, and actually report higher levels of well-being (Stukas et al., 2014).

From our own research, and responses to the polls in our workshop, we can see that in a classroom environment volunteers typically work one-on-one with a student, monitor and support when students are working independently, support group activities or as a conversation partner. On top of that there are different ways someone could support an instructor in an online class. For example, volunteers can help moderate

online classes, model language, and provide tech support to students (Sturm, 2021). During a recent presentation, participants indicated that volunteers could also help with learning vocabulary, talking about the news, or playing language games.

To be successful in their roles, volunteers can benefit hugely from training. Needs assessment results (see figure 1) show that volunteers themselves see most of the need for training in the areas of “English for daily activities,” “Working with mixed levels,” “Helping learners with pronunciation,” and “How to adjust your speech to be more comprehensible to lower level learners.”

Durham and Kim (2019) point out “that there are common areas that volunteer instructors may be lacking in. These include knowledge of adult second language learners

and their learning process, effective instructional methods in relation to adult ELLs’ backgrounds, and relevant cultural knowledge.”

We have already seen the three most important motivators for volunteers. However, it is interesting to note the barriers as well. There are structural barriers such as not having enough time, or scheduling conflicts and intrapersonal constraints such as a perceived lack of skills needed for volunteer work, and fear of the unknown. When you offer training to volunteers, some of these barriers can be broken down. Research supports the idea that training, in the form of coaching and reflection on learning can have a powerful impact. “Training should include not only pre-service introductions, but consistent support during their instructional practice, including invitations to reflect and dialogue about their teaching” (Shufflebarger, 2021). With these kinds of supports, volunteers will be more successful in their teaching practices, whether that is in a classroom, leading a conversation circle, or working one-on-one. The result is more effective volunteering that will help newcomers improve

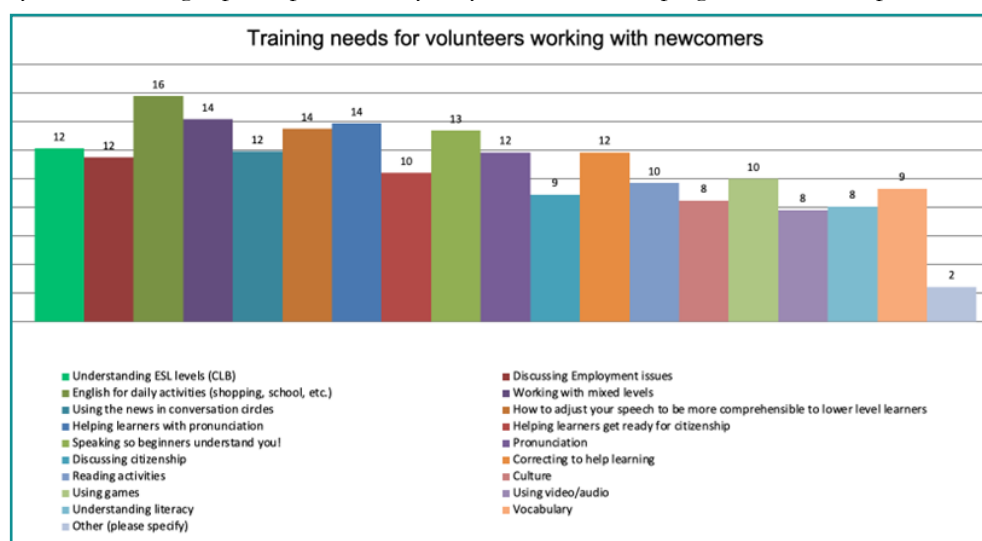


Figure 1: Training needs for volunteers working with newcomers

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## Better Practices to Support Language Volunteers *continued*

their language skills. Volunteers in turn develop feelings of competence and efficacy that will keep them motivated and engaged.

The Avenue – LearnIT2teach Project has developed the TESL Basics for Language Volunteers (TBLV) course for organizations looking for a just-in-time training opportunity for their language volunteers, or looking for supplemental training to support their existing volunteer preparation. The course is offered on [Avenue.ca](https://avenue.ca) and provides the background orientation needed for language volunteers to understand the opportunities and challenges in their work with newcomers. It also gives lots of practical suggestions that can be used right away.

The seven topics are:

1. Introduction to Terminology and Canadian Language Benchmarks (CLB);
2. Working with Lower-level Learners (Literacy Learners);
3. Providing Action-oriented Feedback and Improving Pronunciation;
4. Using Materials from the Real World: Working with Realia Across the Levels;
5. Daily Life and Employment (topics that are of direct importance to newcomers);
6. Canadian Culture and Citizenship (This topic builds cultural competency for volunteers and gives volunteers tools to help newcomers understand Canadian culture. This topic also addresses Truth and Reconciliation.); and
7. Remote Volunteering (High tech and low-tech ways in which volunteers can work with a newcomer if in-person sessions are not possible.)

The TBLV course as a whole, not just the 7th topic, trains volunteers in an online environment. If LINC teachers are using Avenue, then volunteers will be able to help learners better because they have taken their own training on this platform.

Funding from Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) allows the Avenue-LearnIT2teach Project to offer the TBLV course to non-profit organizations that offer language

training programs to newcomers. The Avenue – LearnIT2teach Project will train your staff to become local coaches for the volunteers in your organization. Then we will host the TBLV course and assist with adaptation for local needs.

The TBLV course is very adaptable to local conditions and needs. The local or regional direct provider chooses how to offer the modules: Presenting a new module each week or as needed for a just-in-time approach. For example, Unit 7 on remote volunteering may be provided as a stand-alone or fore-fronted. Organizations can also train specialized groups of volunteers, for example, those working with literacy or higher level students, conversation circles or in the classroom.

In our recent workshop we asked participants “Why do you think it’s important to offer training?” Among the answers was this quote: “It helps volunteers feel comfortable and confident while teaching when they are trained.”

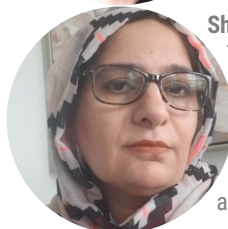
If you are interested in TBLV please contact [marijkeg@avenue.ca](mailto:marijkeg@avenue.ca).



**Marijke Geurts** received her MA in Education, Language & Literature from The Netherlands and completed her TESL certification in New Brunswick. She works with New Language Solutions as an online content developer and Learn IT2 Teach/Avenue Trainer. When she is not creating learning activities, you can find her in the garden or kitchen.



**Matthias Sturm** (he/him) is the evaluator and researcher at New Language Solutions. Matthias is also a PhD candidate in the Education Faculty at Simon Fraser University.



**Shabana Shahzad** has over twenty years EAL teaching experience and also works as the PBLA Lead Teacher at Centre for Newcomers, Calgary AB. She has facilitated the organization’s transition to online learning during the pandemic through PD sessions, one on one support to teachers and students. Shabana is passionate about sharing things she learns.

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# CALLforSUBMISSIONS

## 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 include:

- "Placing Students for Success: A Comparison of IELTS, Local, and Other Placement Methods for English for Academic Purposes Courses" by Jane Steiger
- "The Promise and Precarity of Critical Pedagogy in English for Academic Purposes" by Jennifer Walsh Marr
- "White TESOL Instructors' Engagement with Social Justice Content in an EAP Program: Teacher Neutrality as a Tool of White Supremacy" by Leah Mortenson
- "English for Academic Purposes Writers' Use of Reporting Verbs in Argumentative and Cause-and-Effect Essay Exams" by Pakize Uludag, William J. Crawford, and Kim McDonough
- "Thriving through Uncertainties: The Agency and Resourcefulness of First-Year Chinese English as an Additional Language Writers in a Canadian University" by Jing Mao

## 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.bctea.org), with selected articles and event news shared through [BC TEAL's blog](https://www.bctea.org), [Twitter](https://twitter.com/bcteaorg), and [Facebook](https://www.bctea.org) page. *TEAL News* invites submissions for the Fall 2022 issue. Newsletter articles are usually 500–1000 words in length. Please contact the editor, Karin Wiebe, with your submission ideas at [editor@bctea.org](mailto:editor@bctea.org).

We're looking for the following:

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

