



NOTES for ESL

The Newsletter of the ESL PSA
of the B.C. Teachers' Federation



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President's Message

By Marlene Eccles

Wondering what the ESL PSA Executive has been doing on your behalf since our last newsletter? We are all busy teachers just like you, but our commitments have included a few 'extras' in support of ESL teaching and learning.

On February 25 and 26, five executive members - Sydney Dean, Sara Raouf, Stacey MacEachern, Sylvia Helmer and I - attended the New Teachers Conference in Richmond, B.C. This annual event is created by BCTF for teachers in their first few years in the profession and is designed as a professional development event that both helps new teachers in terms of 'getting the big picture' of education in the province, and concurrently offers practical sessions on a wide range of topics.



Jamie Sheets and Talia Choi
Winners of the ESL PSA Book Raffle at the New Teachers Conference 2011

Sylvia presented a workshop session, *Tips and Strategies for working with EAL Learners*, an opportunity to support new teachers who may or may not have any training to work with our new language learners. Of course we talked up the value of belonging to the ESL PSA as well. Those new to the profession take note that this opportunity is available for you annually early in the year. This year's conference included 6 workshop sessions, a publishers display, time to chat with representatives from various PSAs to find out what they can offer and, of course, the delicious and nutritious breakfast, lunch and snacks between sessions. All of this was only \$70.00 for practicing teachers and \$35.00 for student teachers.

Over Spring Break, which I am sure all of us needed, I was lucky enough to be able to attend the TESOL International Conference in New Orleans. If you ever have the opportunity to attend this big sister of all ESL conferences, you will find it somewhat overwhelming, but a very rewarding experience.

TESOL, in its efforts to meet the needs of K-12 teachers, created what they called the K-12 Dream Day. The entire day was focused on issues and concerns particular to those working in the K-12 school system. It was a collection of interactive, practice-oriented sessions that focused on concrete ways to increase student engagement and achievement from pre-school through to high school.

At the K-12 Day, the Keynote Speaker over lunch was Pedro Noguero from New York University. His talk, *The Perfect Storm* addressed an important issue to us all. He pointed out that learning English for many students comes at a price - that price being to lose the home language and culture in order to assimilate into the dominant culture. He cited new research showing that cultural preservation can buffer students from some of the hardships of life in today's society. He further stated "those that decide how long teachers can keep students in school are usually people that know nothing about teaching." The sad result is some of the disenfranchised youth we see in our communities today. He pointed out that it would be far better for the economy if we educated and provided enough schooling for our immigrant children, rather than to push to get them out of school quickly. The United States advocates for its policy of "No Child Left Behind", but in his opinion that wasn't truly the case at all, especially where ESL learners were concerned. He advocated strongly for student assessment for diagnostic purposes, not for ranking purposes. [Does this sound a bit like the FSA?] . He further felt that test scores were like looking at the stock market which changes daily.

Parents trust schools to teach their children and to meet their needs. On occasion a school is able to do just that. He talked about a school in Brooklyn that had high performance scores and yet 30% of the student's had IEP's. They found that at that particular school, teachers and staff members made school feel like a family, a community, and a safe, caring place to be. There was constant mentoring going on between

teachers and students.

He reminded us of how important it is to understand the culture and language differences of our diverse populations, and to help immigrant parents see that teachers know and care about their children. He advocated being aware of the research on what immigrant children require for education and to focus on providing that as our mandate. He also noted that duo-immersion in Canada works and that it is critically important for immigrant children to have, maintain and develop a command of their home languages.

He concluded that recent history shows a hostility to immigration but that in just a very few decades, we will be praying for immigrant children to be well educated as they will be the ones paying our pensions.

Enough of TESOL - there are other reports in this newsletter about the conference.

Have you tried looking for teaching ideas and lessons on the Internet? Mind-boggling, isn't it? There is so much out there and it is very time-consuming to wade through it all and find things that work for YOUR students and may even have some relevance to BC curriculum. The ESL PSA is committed to helping you by posting ideas and resources on our website. We would like to encourage you to share your ideas with us. A single teaching tip or ideas for a whole unit of study are both welcome. Submit your MS Word documents to Sylvia Helmer at shelmer@shaw.ca. She will see to getting it posted on our website for everyone to share. We welcome your ideas and tips. Also, please let us know what you have found useful, and what else you would like to have available for teachers.

June is fast approaching and we [the executive and other members] are already busy preparing for the annual ESL PSA Conference. *Teaching the Multilingual Brain* has been chosen as our theme and we are lucky enough to have Dr. James Cummins coming to be our keynote speaker. You may recognize the name of the man who created BICS and CALP as a way to talk about social as opposed to academic language learning. If you are new to the field, here is a link to an easy-to-understand explanation. http://www.everythingsl.net/inserVICES/bics_calp.php

Cummins is well known for his advocacy for ESL learners, their languages and their cultures. Learn more by reading the following article: *Bilingual Children's Mother Tongue: Why is it Important for Education?* <http://www.fipltv.org/Issues/CumminsENG.pdf>

Our executive recently participated in the creation of a flyer: *20 things you didn't know about PSAs*. The link is: <http://www.bctf.ca/uploadedFiles/Public/PSAs/20things.pdf> Check it out and you will be surprised at what the various PSAs do. You should also know that many PSAs offer workshops for schools and districts. To that end, PSA Council has compiled a list of these for circulation to PD chairpersons. Check it out and if you do not find exactly what you might need for your ESL learners, feel free to contact someone on the executive and perhaps we can customize a session to meet your needs. PSAs also contributed to the PSA Council briefs for the BCTF Bargaining Conference on class size/composition, professional development, distributed learning,

technological change, and preparation time. Several PSAs made specific bargaining recommendations to the Executive Committee, all of which were passed and adopted by the Bargaining Conference.

Finally, I would like to encourage you to create or join a PSA Chapter. Consider the benefits of forming a chapter by checking out the details on our website at: www.bctf.ca/psa/eslpsa/ Imagine the comforts of starting the new school year with a group of likeminded colleagues, a bit of money for sundries at your meetings, and making time to share ideas and support each other in your day-to-day work with ESL learners.

Wishing all of you the best during the summer break.

Marlene Eccles, ESL PSA President



21st Century Vocabulary

By Judith Robson

On a recent trip to New Orleans for the Annual TESOL Conference, it was clear that incorporating technology into English language learning has become an important focus for many teachers. Here is something that I learned to liven up a beginner ELL class while they are learning about food.

You will need an LCD projector with computer or SMART board connected to the internet, picture dictionaries or possibly images of food/fridges, digital cameras or camera phones.

1. Introduce food to your beginners using your favourite picture dictionary. Most picture dictionaries have a picture or two of an open refrigerator full of food.
2. Using an LCD projector/computer or a SMART board, search the word 'refrigerator' on flickr. Lots of people, for some strange reason, have photographed the inside of their fridges and shared them on flickr.
3. Choose some appropriate photos and share/discuss with your class. All the time you are reenforcing the vocabulary you have been teaching.
4. Then have your students go home and take a photo of their own fridge with their phone or camera [They all have them!] and share the photos with you. When you return to school the next day, the

students can look at all of their classmates' fridges and talk about the food in their own fridge. Including flickr and their digital cameras really enhances the lesson. Your students will love it.

You have now used a paper copy[the picture dictionary], incorporated an LCD projector/SMART board and digital cameras with very little effort. Now I challenge you to add to this idea. What have you done with technology to enhance your ESL lessons?

Photo Sharing Sites

<http://flickr.com>

<http://picasaweb.com>

Spelling Review

<http://www.spellingcity.com>

Word Clouds

<http://www.wordle.net>

From Phone to Photograph

<http://photobucket.com>

Flashcard Maker

<http://www.quizlet.com>



TESOL 2011: Examining the ‘E’ in TESOL

By Sylvia Helmer and Marlene Eccles



The 45th Annual TESOL Convention and Exhibition was a gathering of some 6,000 delegates from around the world and was held in New Orleans. The food was varied and plentiful, the weather was mild and sunny and Bourbon Street was something to behold on St. Patrick’s Day. It would have been a pleasure to explore and enjoy the many ‘enticements’ of this harbour city but we did not get to enjoy it as much as we would have like to, as there were too many excellent sessions to attend. Oh well, an excuse to revisit this intriguing city just for a holiday. What follows is a snapshot of some of the events of the K-12 Dream Day, a day designed specifically for K-12 educators in the field.

K-12 Dream Day: Engaging ELLs in the Mainstream

“By design, mainstream teachers—with or without ESL credentials—carry the lion’s share of accountability for appropriately and equitably educating English language learners. ESL specialists, though fierce advocates, are few in number and are often as marginalized as their students.”

This quote represents TESOL’s stance and effort to support K-12 teachers and led to the creation of the “Dream Day”. While there were certainly sessions focused on either elementary or secondary teaching and learning throughout the days of the conference, this focus day -for a bit of extra money - offered a wonderful smorgasbord of sessions tailored to the needs of K-12 educators of ESL learners.

The day began with the much-loved queen of Jazz Chants, Carolyn Graham. The apt title for her presentation was ‘*Magic in the Classroom: Using Jazz Chants, Music and Storytelling*. She had us chanting, clapping and composing our own chants in no time - and loving every minute of it. Those of you who do not know of her work, she began with Jazz Chants for Adults and found the chants so popular with learners and teachers alike they soon spawned several children’s versions. Marlene has used Jazz Chants for Children and Jazz Chants Fairy Tales extensively with her intermediate classes - grade level classes with ESL learners in the mix - for many years. Other books include: Jazz Chants Mother Goose, Grammar Chants, Holiday Jazz Chants, Jazz Chants Old and New.

You might want to get a taste of the ‘how to create your own’ from this 2009 version of how she taught us in New Orleans.

<http://www.teachingvillage.org/2010/05/23/how-to-create-a-jazz-chant-by-carolyn-graham/>

For the rest of the day we were offered choices in concurrent time slots

organized into topic strands. These included assessment, instructional strategies, academic language and literacy, and a focus on content-based classroom work. Despite having worked with additional language learners for many years, we both came away inspired and validated - new thoughts and approaches together with reinforcement of what we have been doing that is also considered best practice by others.

For the concurrent workshops on Dream Day, we selected sessions that would provide new insights, ideas and tips for working with elementary-aged learners. Titles of some of the sessions we attended include:

- Teaching Vocabulary to English Learners for Reading and Writing Mastery
- Working with Students From Poverty
- Developing Success: A Program, A Community, A Culture, and Beyond
- Strong Theory and Good Teaching: A Recipe for Writing Success
- What's in a Sentence?
- Connecting Classroom Learning with Students' Backgrounds and Strengths: Funds of Knowledge
- Implementing Family Literacy to Enhance ELL Student Outcomes: Project LEAPS
- Assess without Distress: Authentic Assessment of ELLs in Classrooms

[NB: ELL is the common term used in the

USA for ESL learners.]

All these and the other sessions being offered provided big ideas that were not 'news', but the information was presented in an engaging way and as with all professional development opportunities, there are always new angles and insights to be gained.

Marlene, in particular, found some of the sessions she attended not only beneficial but she is looking forward to working on specifics - the genre of persuasive writing with her grade 2 students. Sylvia is busy 'reframing' some of the insights she gained regarding children's 'funds of knowledge' for discussion with her Teacher Candidates at UBC. In all sessions, the samples provided were clearly laid out and easy for even a non-ESL specialist teacher to follow, and of course, the graphic organizers so necessary for our ESL learners were always included. Marlene is also looking forward to working on an idea for The Three Little Pigs with her class. Information on that and many more sessions is available from the slide-share link listed at the end of this report. You will also find additional useful information at <http://www.writingfun.com>

From the vocabulary session here are some of the tidbits gleaned:

While we know that teaching vocabulary is essential, it is also important to remember that comprehension depends on knowing between 90% and 95% of the words in the text. Knowing words means repeated exposure, explicit instruction and much opportunity to work with words. Apparently students need at least 12 'production' opportunities to own a

word and the words must come out of their own mouths. It reminded us that we do tend to rush vocabulary learning. The session also reinforced the value of teachers modeling through 'Think Alouds' to build fluency as well as aid in comprehension and self-correction. Teaching even young children what the speaker called 'fix-up strategies' further extends comprehension and helps reinforce and teach more words.

In April, Marlene's class will be raising butterflies. She plans to use this as an opportunity to explore elements of Project-Based Learning with the children. According to yet another session, Project-Based Learning should include examining the topic under study with the following lenses:

- To be PBL, the central activities must involve the transformation and construction of knowledge, new understandings and skills.
- If activities present no difficulty or can be carried out with already learned information and skills, it is an exercise, not PBL.
- Project Based Learning addresses the four areas of linguistic/ literacy skills: reading, listening, writing, and speaking.
- Effective Instruction for ELL's should be student directed, connected with students' cultural and individual backgrounds and experiences, and the output should always be considered.

Her students will be using computers to first learn about and then follow the journey of the Monarch Butterfly, planting some milk weed in pots outside

the classroom and eventually the Monarch Butterfly will metaphorically - in real life the Painted Lady butterflies - make their journey from Mexico to Williams Lake, B.C.

This project helps to address multiple intelligences and learning styles, as well as incorporate much higher level thinking, planning, viewing, representing, reading and writing. Content and language goals will be addressed, as well as general skills. When full grown, the class will release the butterflies into their very own beautiful garden.

On a closing note, butterflies have a lot to teach us. Marlene and Sylvia played 'butterfly' across dozens of topics at the conference, 'landing' long enough to drink in the nectar of new ideas, relish the validation of what we are already doing well and move on with renewed enthusiasm and energy for teaching and learning. In this regard we would like to leave you with a quote:

The Butterfly counts not months but moments - and has enough time.

by Rabindranath Tagore

NOTE: TESOL encourages presenters to save trees by posting their powerpoint presentations and handouts on slideshare. The link for many of these presentations is:<http://www.slideshare.net/event/2011-tesol-annual-convention-exhibit>

Enjoy and should you have specific questions about sessions we attended, feel free to email us. If you decide to download an idea and try it out we would love to hear about it.

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West Vancouver's New ESL Reporting Program

by Marc Tremblay

Assessing ESL learners has become a 'hot topic' as each district searches for the 'just right' toolkit to allow a snapshot of what learners strengths and needs are so programs can be put in place accordingly. What follows is what is currently being done in West Vancouver at the elementary level. Hopefully there are elements you can adapt to support your own assessment needs in your district or school.

All elementary schools in West Vancouver have implemented a new Report Card application for the 2010-2011 school year. "Report Central" is a web based reporting application that was piloted in two elementary schools during the spring of 2010. Because of its success, the program was purchased to replace the Report Writer application which was no longer supported by the company that created the application.

Report Central was developed by the North Vancouver School District. The application aligns with three of our district goals:

1. To develop a web based environment;
2. To align with Ministry expectations on reporting;
3. To simplify and converge the number of applications we have within our district.

Report Central was designed to allow teachers to comment, in relation to learning outcomes, what a student is able to do, areas for further attention or development, and ways of supporting the students in his or her learning.

ESL teachers at Hollyburn Elementary School were given the opportunity to pilot this reporting application. Because of its enormous success, the district ESL teachers will be using Report Central across the

district during the coming school year 2011-2012.

The benefits are as followed:

- No more inserts
- Consistency across the district
- Classroom teachers are involved in the process, creating one document. This ensures discussion and consistency of comments.
- When dealing with a large population of ESL students, this is faster and more accurate.

Do feel free to respond to Marc if you have questions, and we would invite others to write about what is happening in their school districts so we can all learn. Please send such questions or submissions to the newsletter editor, Sara Raouf at snraouf@gmail.com





ESL PSA Conference News

We need your input...

What: The ESL PSA Conference, *Teaching the Multilingual Brain*, Keynote Speaker Dr. James Cummins, OISE

When: Friday, October 21, 2011

Where: Eric Hamber Secondary in Vancouver.

We are in the process of formulating a *workshop plan* and we need your input.

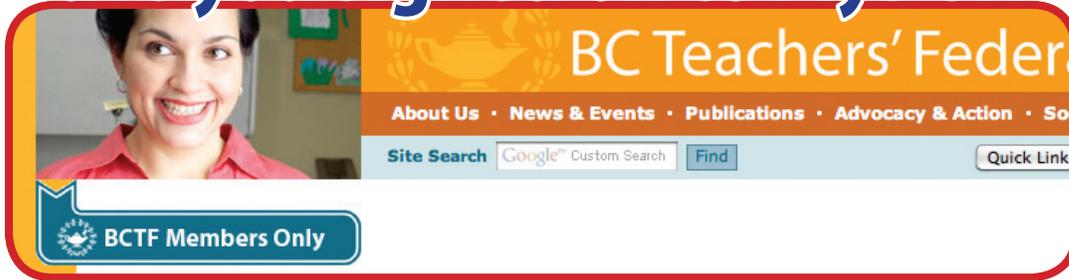
If you have some *ideas about what you would like to see at the conference*, please contact us. After all, this is *your* conference and we are listening!

Also, don't hesitate to *present a workshop yourself* or tap someone else on the shoulder!

Please contact our workshop coordinator at ashunter@vsb.bc.ca
Ann looks forward to hearing from you!

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