

# TESL NS Newsletter



Happy  
Valentine's Day

From the Editor,  
*Fe Leonor Baculi*, TESL Centre,  
Saint Mary's University

Hello everyone!

It's a new year and, yes, Valentine's is just around the corner. I wish there were more hours in my day. Failing that, I wish there were a way to slow down the inexorable march of time. It seems one newsletter is barely out when it is time for the next one. Another day is almost over and the stack of compositions I have to mark has not grown smaller. I guess I'll have to learn how to sleep faster.

There will be some changes in the format of our newsletter. To begin with, the executive body has decided that, from now on, the editor can contribute too, apart from the usual editorial message. Then we intend to solicit contributions by theme. You will be told well in advance what the themes of subsequent issues will be. Please check our website for that. Finally, the newsletter will be wholly electronic, on the Net. No more mailed hard copies..

A word or two about the format of things you may want to submit. Here are the bare bones of instructions. For more information, contact the Editor at [newsletter@teslins.ca](mailto:newsletter@teslins.ca)

1. Submissions should arrive at least two weeks before the deadline. It takes time to reformat them.
2. No pictures, at least no big pictures. We don't have much space. If pictures at all, they should be submitted separately as .gif or as .jpg files.

3. If what you submit is not your work, you must acknowledge the source, preferably with the publisher's permission. Submit the URL instead of copying material from the Net.

4. You may submit material in the body of an e-mail message or in an attachment. If it is an attachment, it can be Text, Word or WordPerfect.

It is my job as the editor to review contributions -- shorten them if necessary, decide whether they are suitable, consider copyright violations, edit out errors where necessary and generally organize submissions within the Newsletter. It is your job as the contributors to sign your contributions and submit them in an electronically before the deadline.

The current winter has not been kind to us but it could have been worse. New Brunswickers have had it much worse than we. No matter how bad it gets, when winter's come, spring cannot be far behind.

Let me conclude with a heart-felt wish - that, whatever else the year 2003 may have in store for us, there be no war. The very thought that hundreds of thousands of innocent people might be bombed out of limb and life makes me shudder. Perhaps you'll join me, when you read these my words, in a prayer that the people who run the big show may find a way to solve the current crisis without bombs.

We look forward to interesting contributions from you for future issues of "The Newsletter." Thank you, and a happy Valentine's to you all.

## Valentine's Day Websites

by David Juteau

Here are some websites that will help get your Valentine' s Day lessons up and running. Enjoy!

Celebrating Valentine' s Day Internationally  
<<http://staff.uscolo.edu/peterssl/topics/internatl/holidays/valentines/day.htm>>

Crossword Puzzle - Valentine' s  
<<http://iteslj.org/cw/1/je-valentine.html>>

ESL Lesson Plans > Games & Activities  
<[http://www.tefl.net/lessonplans/act3\\_stva.htm](http://www.tefl.net/lessonplans/act3_stva.htm)>

Valentine' s Day Links  
<<http://www.everythingsl.net/inservices/valentinelinks.php>>

John' s ESL Holidays  
<<http://holidays.johnsesl.com/php/vday.phtml>>

Lesson Plan: Valentine' s Day  
<<http://www.schoolink.org/csd/pages/esl/valentin.html>>

Valentine' s Day Clip Art  
<<http://www.1netcentral.com/valentine-graphics.html>>

Valentine' s Day Reading Comprehension  
<<http://www.ucfv.bc.ca/esl/valentine.htm>>



## Valentine's Day Suggestion

from Darlene MacInnis

Years ago I was substituting for a Level 4/5 class. It was around Valentine' s. I asked the class for advice re: what makes for a "good marriage/ partnership". I passed out a sheet of paper with a list of traits ( vocab they had already studied) and asked learners to list the top three traits (noun) that felt were necessary for a "good marriage/ partnership". This lead to a lot of great discussion. We also changed the words to adjectives and they had to qualify why they would describe themselves as having one of these traits. We also talked about countable and uncountable nouns. Then we moved onto a Dear Abby/ class 4/5 exercise. I asked learners to write a request for advice scenario on an index card. They did not sign names and I stressed if I recognized hand- writing it would be kept confidential. The index cards went into a bag. I was surprised by the number of questions.(The class was primarily female). I gave guidelines- let me finish reading the scenario, learners take time to reflect/ compose advice and then ask to provide advice. I took out each scenario and read the request for advice. What ensued was a lot of lively discussion. New vocabulary was put on the board. Lots of questioning ensued/ debate/ some one say arguing. a lot of language functions were used- persuading, disagreeing, interjecting. Those who had been married a long time had so much advice.( I should qualify that I ran this idea by the teacher beforehand to make sure that I was not bringing up a touchy subject- someone newly divorced, a suicide of a partner, estrangement, death etc..) I heard them using pre-taught vocab. Heavier questions were around: arranged marriages, lengthy engagements, non-commitment.

This class remains in my mind to this day.  
<<http://www.adviceline.com/dearlove/today.archive.shtml?M=11&D=13&Y=02>>

**Valentine Idioms (Review)** - submitted by *Anne Kelly*

Fill in the blanks with one of the following idioms. (You will not use them all!):

**to eat your heart out**                      **to wear your heart on your sleeve**  
**a bleeding heart**                      **to put your heart into it**                      **heart and soul**  
**to have the heart for something**                      **to be after your own heart**  
**to have a heart**                      **from the bottom of your heart**                      **turn on**  
**to have your heart in the right place**                      **the heart of the thing**                      **to dread**  
**to know something by heart**                      **to have a heart of stone**  
**to have a heart to heart**                      **to take heart**                      **to have an affair (with)**  
**turn off**                      **can't stand**                      **to get along (with)**                      **to see eye to eye**  
**to have a falling out with**                      **to fall out with elders**                      **put down**  
**to make up (with)**                      **to break/split up (with)**                      **to long/yearn for**  
**to be junior/senior to**                      **to look down on**                      **to look forward to**

1. The performers in the play needed to know their lines \_\_\_\_\_ before opening night.
2. Leo and Kathy sat down and had a \_\_\_\_\_ about their relationship. They talked for hours!
3. The romantic poet wrote a letter to his sweetheart; he said he was \_\_\_\_\_ her to come home.
4. Hank has \_\_\_\_\_ with Louise again; those two just can't see eye to eye!
5. Frank will be so jealous when he sees my new car. He'll just \_\_\_\_\_!
6. I was so happy when Keri got married. I wished her well \_\_\_\_\_.
7. I hate speaking in front of the class. I am \_\_\_\_\_ the day I have to do the media watch!
8. Ron is such a cruel man; he has \_\_\_\_\_.
9. Theresa is a very hard worker; she puts her \_\_\_\_\_ into everything she does.
10. Betty was looking forward to seeing the play; I \_\_\_\_\_ to cancel even though I had so much work to do.
11. James is an attractive man but his attitudes on women really \_\_\_\_\_ me \_\_\_\_\_.
12. Wendy and Peter have \_\_\_\_\_ again, but I bet they will have made up by Friday!
13. I have great admiration for that scientist. She is a woman \_\_\_\_\_.
14. Everyone always knows how Carolyn is feeling; she \_\_\_\_\_.
15. I \_\_\_\_\_ those neighbours of mine; they are so nosy!

**Learning By Heart** (Continued)

Use the sentences to help understand the "Learning by Heart" idioms.

1. John hated to see Karen with her new boyfriend: he was eating his heart out.
2. It was obvious that Susan loved Tom; she wore her heart on her sleeve.
3. My father called me a bleeding heart because I believed in peace and social welfare.
4. Lisa really put her heart into the card she made.
5. I don' t have the heart to tell her that her favourite doll is broken.
6. She wished him luck with all her heart and soul.
7. He was a man after my father' s own heart; I knew they would like each other.
8. "Oh, have a heart! Just let me go!"
9. They thanked their friends from the bottom of their hearts.
10. Mary brought me some soup when I was sick; her heart' s in the right place.
11. Kevin knew the poem by heart.
12. The wish for peace was at the heart of her story.
13. Donna has a heart of stone. She never forgave her friend for the insult.
14. Dave and I had a heart to heart about our relationship.
15. "Take heart, men. The end is near."

**Learning By Heart** - Match the idiom with its meaning:

1. to eat your heart out	a. to be similar to someone
2. to wear your heart on your sleeve	b. to be courageous
3. a bleeding heart	c. to be jealous
4. to put your heart into it	d. to be kind
5. to have/not have the heart for something	e. everything
6. heart and soul	f. to openly display emotion
7. to be after your own heart	g. to speak openly to another person
8. to have a heart	h. to want/not want to do something
9. from the bottom of your heart	i. sincere
10. to have your heart in the right place	j. someone who is a liberal
11. to know something by heart	k. to have sympathy for someone
12. the heart of the thing	l. to do something with effort
13. to have a heart of stone	m. to have something memorized
14. to have a heart to heart	n. the center of something
15. to take heart	o. to be emotionally cold

## TESL Nova Scotia ESL/EFL Project Opportunities

*Dear ESL/EFL Community:*

Do you have a creative idea for an ESL/EFL project itching to get out but no money? The 2000 TESL Canada conference in Nova Scotia netted a profit; part of that profit was given to TESL NS. The executive is very excited this year to offer two TESL NS ESL/EFL Projects support in the amount of \$1,000 each from these funds. These Project Opportunities are open to any ESL/EFL person or organization, with preference to TESL NS members. The Project must benefit the greater ESL/EFL community in Nova Scotia. Such projects as teacher resources, research, workbooks/activity books and workshops will be considered. Proposals will be submitted to a sub-committee consisting of four TESL NS board members and interested TESL NS members. At this time we would like to invite any TESL NS member who would like to be part of the selection process to come forward. If you would like to be on the sub-committee, please use the e-mail address below to contact us. After the sub-committee has selected two proposals the TESL NS executive will approve the selections. TESL NS board members and any sub-committee members will be excluded from submitting a proposal.

If you or your organization is interested in applying, please submit a written proposal including:

- contact information
- project idea
- benefits to the greater ESL/EFL community
- budget
- timeline

The successful applicants will have to write a final report on the project. Your proposal can be sent by e-mail to **webmaster@teslns.ca** or by letter to TESL NS, Box 36068, Halifax, NS, B3J 3S9. Your name will remain anonymous during the selection process. **The deadline for proposals is March 31<sup>st</sup> 2003.** The sub-committee will make their selections by April 30<sup>th</sup> 2003.

We hope that you will pass on this important information to any ESL/EFL person or organization that you feel would benefit. If you have any further questions, please use the e-mail address above. Good luck!

Sincerely,  
*TESL NS Executive*

Dear TESL NS Members;

Happy New Year! I hope that the year 2003 has begun with energy and enthusiasm. I trust that goals, resolutions and hopes are successfully warding off the winter blues. As President of TESL Nova Scotia I sincerely wish that one of your goals this year is to be actively involved as a member of the TESL organization. This is promising to be an exciting year.

This is my third year as a member of the TESL executive - two as former co Vice-President. Each year I feel a deeper connection to TESL NS. I feel honored to share the duties of TESL NS with 11 dedicated professionals. I was elated to see that many of the board members have remained for another year in either the same capacity or in a new role. David Juteau, a new face, has joined us as a Member-at-Large. We have already put him to work - welcome aboard David! We also welcome Sandee Thompson back from her sojourn in New Zealand - the board now feels more complete with her.

The executive was thrilled at the turnout for the November conference, A Matter of Words. We had 98 participants at the conference, of which 64 attended the Friday night social. It was fantastic to get further acquainted with TESL colleagues from near and far. We were also graced with many speakers from outside Nova Scotia. Just recently we compiled and discussed comments submitted by our members at the conference. All in all the comments were positive and people went away satisfied. The executive will certainly heed all comments when trying to better serve its members.

Presently, the board is hard at work preparing for the coming year. Creative ideas have been flowing for workshops and the restructuring of the newsletter. One of our main priorities this year is to utilize the TESL Canada money. This matter deserves immediate and discerning attention. Information on this and other events will be posted as they unfold on our website:

<<http://www.teslins.ca/>>

I wish everyone a year of peace and hope. If you have any comments or suggestions regarding TESL NS, please feel free to e-mail me at [jayne@hfx.eastlink.com](mailto:jayne@hfx.eastlink.com)

Sincerely,  
Jayne Geldart



## TESL Nova Scotia Report

TESL Nova Scotia had a very busy, successful fall and we have all settled in for the winter. We currently have 63 members. In November 2002, at our annual general meeting and conference, a new executive was voted in. We are happy to say that the majority of members remained on board and were equally happy that we have some new members joining us. The new executive is as follows:

Jayne Geldhart – President  
 Carol Derby- Vice President  
 Bev Eisner – Membership Secretary  
 Sheila Nunn – Secretary  
 Ellen Pilon – Treasurer  
 Fe Leonor Baculi – Editor of TESL NS  
 Newsletter  
 Sandee Thompson – TESL Canada  
 Representative  
 Members at Large:  
 Maureen Sargent  
 David Juteau  
 Anne Kelly

Darlene McInnis  
Norma MacSween

We would like to thank past executive members for the support, dedication and time that they have given over the years.

The theme of the conference in November was "A Matter of Words". We had two plenary speakers, Dr.'s Horst and Cobb, who both hail from Concordia University. Dr. Horst spoke on her experience and current research surrounding the benefits of extensive reading in order to acquire new vocabulary. Dr. Cobb used Krashen's idea about lexical acquisition as a base for computer-based learning materials. Our membership indicated in a post-conference survey that our plenary speakers were the biggest hit of the conference once again indicating a desire from our membership for professional development and stimulating discussion! Other guests to our conference were Marlene Pointek from Frontier College in Toronto, Pauline McNaughton from Canadian Language Benchmarks, Jacinthe Paille from Quebec, Carol Ann Spencer, Carolyn Lennox and Beth Vye from New Brunswick and Sonja Knutson and Ida Palazzo from Newfoundland. Some of our own Nova Scotian natives also presented workshops: Sharon Karn and Pat Pierce from Wolfville, Nova Scotia and William Kerr, Sandra Powell and Pamela MacDonald from Halifax, Nova Scotia. Thank you to all presenters. Without you, we would not have a conference!

Due to the success of the November conference, the executive has been tossing around the idea of a 'mini conference' this spring rather than conducting a series of workshops as we have done over the past few years. Getting our membership out to workshops in the winter is very difficult. Who wants to leave the warmth of their home once they have arrived after a long day teaching? Nonetheless, our membership HAS indicated that they want workshops and value professional development. Although we

have not ironed out all the details yet, we believe the mini conference towards the end of the school year...and before summer EFL begins in earnest, may be the answer. We will keep you posted.

Early in the New Year, we organized a phone tree and called past members to gently remind them that we are still here. This resulted in a few members rejoining us. As always, discussion ensued as to how to keep membership interested in joining TESL NS when we are all so busy and see each other at work every day. Since the ESL/EFL body is small in the Maritimes, planning and organizing workshops and conferences and putting out newsletters usually falls to the few members on the board. Folks at the different schools usually rotate on and off the board so the various committees and tasks still involve members at the different schools in the Halifax area. We have been brainstorming on how to keep people involved without burning them out, hence the 'mini conference' idea. We will keep you posted on whether it is a success or not.



We have also decided to revamp our TESL NS newsletter, which will be available for viewing on our website at [www.teslins.ca](http://www.teslins.ca) after February 12th. Since our newsletter is no longer available in hard copy form, unless explicitly requested by a member, we thought it was time to make it more user-friendly. Members asked us to include practical teaching tips, useful websites and themes. We are going to set deadlines and let the membership know what they are and what the themes will be so that they can send us submissions as well.

Meanwhile, we are starting to think about the CAAL/ACLA sessions. I have been calling around to locate a speaker for our fundraising session and Maureen and I are trying to think up some good activities to show people the Maritimes in style. How does a trip to Peggy's Cove or whale watching sound? Without a doubt, a seafood dinner will be in order somewhere.

So, other than bracing for more unusual “Ontario-like” cold weather (I can say that since I am originally from Ottawa), there is nothing else to report from Halifax. Keep warm and don’t forget to turn your car lights off so your battery starts in the morning!

Respectfully submitted,  
*Sandee Thompson*  
 TESL Nova Scotia representative



## Internet Research? Whaaat!

By *Ellen Pilon*

International Language Institute

With today’s sophisticated search engines, Internet research is a piece of cake. All it requires is minimal skill and some good thinking. The thinking part is easy, right? After all, we’re all teachers and used to nimble thinking. If you have a computer and are connected to the Internet, the skills are just as easy.

There are innumerable excellent ESL/EFL websites, for both teachers and students. The language community thrives on sharing information: lesson plans, tips and techniques, grammar points, writing activities, thematic units, classroom dynamics, interactive exercises, etc. But the ESL/EFL sites are just a seedling compared to general teaching websites which are prolific, and growing daily. These, too, are very useful, with appropriate modifications for adults.



Despite a file of thousands of excellent bookmarks, I always search on Google ([www.google.ca](http://www.google.ca)). If I can’t find what I want on Google, there are two reasons: (1) my search terms are inadequate (2) information in the form I want isn’t readily available. Toss out those

bookmarks and keep only a few of the best ones you are using this month! Cultivate a search engine, and find exactly what you want in minutes!

The Internet search engines work like any sophisticated database. You can use an assortment of Boolean logic techniques to access useful websites. Depending on the search engine, you can conduct ultra-sophisticated *+this* and *-that* and “*blah blah in quotations*” to get specific information. A useful site to learn what techniques to use with which search engine is: <http://www.searchenginewatch.com/>. This has been THE best source for years, since Internet searching became an art.

The easiest, quickest and most thorough search technique, however, is a string of keywords. Webpage designers include these words, called metatags, for the search engine bot to pick up, facilitating searchability for end users. Use keywords that are not too general, not too specific, not ambiguous, and spelled correctly. Often Google will correct misspellings, and often websites include misspelled words anyway. But these are most likely not the cream of the website crop. Refer to Google’s Advanced Search page, and the Advanced Search Tips for all the details.

So for Valentine’s Day, rather than trying to remember where you put all that useful stuff from last year, just search in Google:

**Valentine’s ESL** : this is a good search strategy, because you want both words to be used in the description and/or content of a webpage. This returns 2,000 hits.

**Valentine ESL** : this is OK, but not as precise; there are names “Valentine” that may be unrelated to St Valentine’s Day. Actually this returns over 5,360 hits, which is too large.

**“St Valentine’s Day”** : this brings a motley assortment of 46,200 hits.

**Valentine’s EFL** : This provides 403, but notice most of the websites include ESL, so limited to EFL is not productive.

**Valentine' s ESL "lesson plans"!** This gives you 278 hits, many from the best of the ESL websites.

Practice with the keywords, and soon you'll be an expert. A word of warning: a number of websites have been created by enthusiastic ESL students. Always check the accuracy and veracity of sites you appropriate for your lessons. Proofread for grammar, coherence and spelling.

The attraction of using websites is that you can copy and paste what you like, including pictures, into a Word document, format it any way you like, grade the language, edit and augment, and voila! a great lesson.

Copyright? Well, that's another story!



## **The Secret of a better memory**

by *Fe Leonor Baculi*

TESL Centre, St. Mary' s University

You think you have been cursed with a bad memory? In all probability, your thinking is wrong. The fault is not with your memory but with you: you don' t know how to make good use of your memory.

Many years ago, at university, some friends of mine took part in a big memory experiment. Unfortunately I could not take part myself, but my friends kept me so well informed that I benefitted almost as much as they themselves did. I' ll try to let you in on the well-kept secret. Of course, I' ll have to simplify things. If I tried to describe the whole experiment, I' d have to write a book.

The participants were divided into several groups. To begin with, all of them were asked to memorize a certain number of nonsense syllables. They were to memorize them till they could recite them to themselves without hesitation, record the time it took them, and then stop.

They were tested at various intervals - one group after 12 hours, another after 24 hours, yet another after two days and one after a week. A first finding was that after 11 hours, much (some 70%) had been forgotten, after 24 hours almost all of it (90%) had been forgotten and after a week virtually all (99%) had been forgotten.

Next they were asked to memorize the syllables again till they knew them well. A first interesting difference was noted. For the sake of simplicity, I' ll focus only on two groups - the 24-hour group and the 7-day group. The interesting difference was that, though the two groups were almost equal in the amount they had forgotten, they were vastly different in the amount of time it took them to reactivate the material they had memorized. While it took the 7-day group almost as much time to reactivate the material as it had taken them to memorize it for the first time, it took the 24-hour group less than half as long.

When they were tested again - the 7-day group after 7 days and the 24-hour group after 24 hours, more interesting findings came to light. The first group had again forgotten almost all of the memorized material, but the second group had forgotten only about half of it.

The procedure was repeated. Again, the seven-day group had forgotten almost all the material and it took them almost as much time to reactivate it as it had taken the first time. The 24-hour group, on the other hand, had forgotten only about 25%, and it took them only a small fraction of the time to reactivate the material.

After two more repetitions of the procedure, the 24-hour group had forgotten nothing while the 7-day group had again forgotten much of it and it took them much time again to reactivate it.

What's the moral of the story? To begin with, you should make a clear distinction between short-term and long-term memory work. If there is something you need to memorize ONLY for a test, memorize it the evening before. Leave yourself enough time to reactivate it the next morning, before forgetting has done its destructive work. It won't take you long to reactive it and you will remember it for your test. A day later, you may have- a week later you quite certainly will have -- forgotten it. But not to worry: you needed to know it only for the test. This is short-term memory work.

There are things you will want to remember for a long time, maybe for forever; e.g., vocabulary in a new language. You'll need to approach such things differently. Start out by memorizing the material. Memorize it till you know well and then stop. Putting more time in once you know the material seems not to make any difference for long-term retention. It would therefore be a waste of time.

Reactivate the material within the next twenty-four hours, . Though you may seem to have forgotten much of it, it won't take you long to reactivate it. Again, stop after you know the material reasonably well. Putting more time in at this point would be a waste of time.

Reactivate again long before the next 24 hours are up. You'll find that you have forgotten little and that it takes little time to fully reactivate the material again. Though it may have taken you half an hour to memorize a given amount of material for the first time, it may take you only a few minutes to reactive it during the second 24-hour period. Reactivate two or three more times and the material will be yours to know till old age starts to cloud your memory.

One more point. If you painfully memorize a given amount of material now, not to touch it again for a week or two, you have really wasted your time; for, if you set out to reactivate the material again after such a long interval, you will have to invest virtually as much time in the

effort as the first time you set out to do so. You **WOULD** be wasting your time. Put what I have told you to good use, and you will be surprised how well your memory serves you.



**TESOL International  
Research Foundation (TIRF)  
Research Proposals 2003**

Check the websites for information:

<http://www.tesl.ca/TESOL%20research%20proposals.htm> and: <http://www.tirfonline.org/>