

July 2005

TESL NS Newsletter



Editorial

Greetings, Everyone!

I hope this summer newsletter finds you healthy, happy and enjoying the long, lazy days of summer... Ah, not too likely, I'm sure. Probably most of us are too busy in the classroom, teaching our hearts out!

Well, it's been a busy six months since our last newsletter in December. We've hosted a mini-conference, sent two learners to the Learner's Conference, and two to the TESL Canada Conference. In addition, we've been busy planning our conference in the fall, aptly named 'Navigating Strategies: Pointing Learners in the Right Direction'. Our workshop slate is almost full and we have the pleasure of introducing Rebecca Oxford as our Plenary Speaker. Take a look at our website for more information!

Our summer edition of the TESL NS newsletter has lots of interesting tidbits for you, with items from the Learner's Conference and the TESL Canada Conference. There is also a report from the Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks (CCLB), for which I am coincidentally the ESL Expert Field Member for the Atlantic area. After attending the annual Board Meeting in May, I have all sorts of exciting updates for you.

So... Print this off and take it to the beach with you for some great summer reading.

Enjoy the warm weather! See you in the fall at the conference...

Carol Derby
Newsletter Editor

President's Report: Spring/Summer 2005

Well, all is quiet in TESL Nova Scotia. The board members are on break until the summer and it has been quite a year!

Changes to the board:

It was with regret that we accepted Evelyn Spencer's letter of resignation. Evelyn had been on the board for approximately 18 months at the time of her resignation. We wish her well with her plans. We will also be saying goodbye to our Treasurer before her time is up. Joanne Newton will be moving to Beirut in September to work as the Director of Studies at an International House school. We wish her well with her life change.

Mini-conference:

In the late spring, we held our annual Mini-conference for teachers at MISA/HILC. There were four workshops that morning, all set to put teachers in the shoes of our students. Sandra Powell started us off with an overview of methodology and then Sandy Crocker followed with a workshop in Japanese using TPR (Total Physical Response) as its venue. After our break, Caroline Lodge and Dimitri Iatrou used CLL (Community Language Learning) to explore Greek and then I wrapped things up with a TBL workshop (Task Based Learning) which focused on Learning Styles. All in all, it was a very successful event. There were over 40 participants, many from the volunteer sector, and we all walked away with some little tidbit of information that we didn't have when we entered the room. Thanks to all who presented and participated!

TESL NB conference:

A couple of weeks later, a few of us went to Fredericton to participate in the TESL NB conference. Because of the possible strike that was looming at the time, numbers were lower than usual but those of us who went certainly enjoyed our time. The plenary speakers were motivating, especially Bill Holden, and the workshops were practical and informative.

TESL Canada conference in 2008:

Talks have been underway with TESL NB about co-facilitating the next TESL Canada conference when it comes our way in 2008. After a few discussions (which began via email and continued at the TESL NB conference in Fredericton in April), the TESL NB brought the idea to their board and voted a resounding YES! So, we are going to pool our efforts and expertise and share the wealth and the tasks. The conference will be taking place in New Brunswick and the TESL NB board will take responsibility for organizing the space and getting equipment etc. The TESL NS board will be responsible for organizing speakers and the schedule. We are not yet sure where the event is going to take place....Fredericton or St. John, but we will keep you posted. We will be offering some type of scholarship to our membership for folks who wish to go but do not have funding as we feel this will be a good use of funds raised at the last TESL Canada conference that took place in Nova Scotia in 2000.

Learners' forum at the conference:

Before the conference, it was decided that we would fund two learners to go to the conference. We sent out letters, posted the notice on the website and called schools directly. We received 11 applications and narrowed it down to 5 to be interviewed after the entire board perused their essays. The two lucky

winners, Jinrui Wang and Antonio Beho, went to Ottawa and did us all proud. You can read Jinrui's report in this newsletter. Jinrui and Antonio represented different sectors of the community and brought different strengths to the position and we are proud of their contributions.

TESL Canada, 2005:

A few keen Maritimers also went to the TESL Canada conference in Ottawa in May. I was fortunate enough to attend on behalf of the board and I took advantage of the opportunity to speak to members of the organizing committee for the next TESL Canada conference in Winnipeg (fall 2006). They are a very, very organized bunch of people and I am sure they are going to pave the way for us as well. We are going to keep in contact over the next 18 months. Ellen Pilon, our TESL Canada representative, also went to the conference and was involved in board meetings all day Wednesday. Being Ellen, she ended up volunteering on 4 committees so they have promised to keep her busy!

I spent my Thursday at TTPAC/PPCAC meetings (The committees that looks at Teacher Training Programs and the TESL Canada Standards) and we had a very productive day. As soon as the board has voted on our motions, I will apprise you of the decisions. In the meantime, rest assured that I brought our concerns to the meetings and they were addressed.

The plenary speakers were Elana Shohamy, from the Tel Aviv University who spoke of hidden agendas in Language Policies great humour. Karen E. Johnson spoke on Saturday regarding "Teachers' Ways of Knowing". Both plenaries, though short, were informative and presented with enthusiasm and intelligence.

Carol May's resignation and the Life Member Awards:

As some of you may know, Carol May, TESL Canada's Executive Director, will be retiring at the end of this year. She has decided that it is time to hang up her TESL hat and put on a golfer's cap instead! We celebrated her many accomplishments Thursday night at the opening ceremonies and all of the board members sang a medley of songs to thank her for all that she has done for the organization. She was also honoured with a life time membership award, along with Tracey Derwing, that evening and David Mendelsohn and Alison Norman on Friday night. Clearly, no-one is more deserving of this prestigious award than Carol!

TESL NS conference, October 2005:

As for this coming year, TESL NS is planning our annual conference for the Halloween weekend, October 28th and 29th. The theme is ***Navigating Strategies: Pointing Learners in the Right Direction*** and the plenary speaker is going to be Rebecca Oxford! If anyone is interested in volunteering to present a workshop or a paper, please check this website for an application and check the deadline. We already have many offers so there may not be many spaces left. If you are interested, please get your application in soon. Also, like last year, you will need to pre-register. This will ensure the right number of people for the different workshops. Please check the TESL Nova Scotia site for more information and updates.

Projects, 2005:

This year, we had a couple of applications for our project money. Unfortunately, after much discussion, the board decided that neither was appropriate for the funding and we had to inform the applicants of our decision. As you can imagine, this was not an easy thing to do. Clearly, we realize

that applicants put a lot of effort into their applications and there are bound to be disappointments. However, we want to ensure that the money raised at the last TESL conference is well used for the benefit of the TESL community at large. We have decided not to offer any more project money between now and the next TESL Canada conference here in the Maritimes and will instead, use the money to send some people to the conference that year. In this way, we feel we will be honouring those who worked so hard on the last conference and will be supporting those who would otherwise be unable to attend. Again, we will keep you posted on the specifics as it gets closer to the date.

It has been a full year of activities and we welcome all members to get involved by writing for the newsletter, raising issues and sharing ideas.

Respectfully submitted,
Sandee Thompson,
TESL NS President

Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks (CCLB) Updates

The following are some updates and new information from the Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks (CCLB). While they are directed to immigrant language school teachers, the information will be of value to everyone.

Canadian English Language Benchmarks Assessment for Nurses (CELBAN): an online communications skill assessment for foreign-educated nurses, CELBAN, has been completed and went online May 10, 2005. It will remain under review for three months and be modified based on used

data collected. It consists of two deliverables:

- CELBAN Readiness Self-Assessment tool
 - CELBAN preparatory materials
- For more information on CELBAN, visit their website at www.celban.org.

Canadian Language Benchmarks Literacy Placement Tool (CLBLPT): CCLB is developing an ESL literacy placement tool aligned to literacy benchmarks in both English and French.

Canadian Language Benchmarks Placement Tests (CLBPT): CCLB has developed two new versions of the CLBPT (form 2 and 3). An employment related version (form 4) is being piloted in May and should be ready for release in the summer.

Canadian Language Benchmarks Self-Assessment Tool: With the Centre for Language Training and Assessment (CLTA), CCLB is developing an online assessment tool, CLB 1-10 in English and French, that can be used anywhere for both immigrants and prospective immigrants. It will be launched as a key feature of the Citizenship and Immigration Canada "Welcome to Canada" portal, which is currently under development.

English Language Assessment for the Workplace (ELAW): A communicative assessment tool to assess CLB 7-10 is being developed. It is designed for clients with post-secondary education who are looking for employment. The tool will assess clients in less than 90 minutes. Another feature of this tool is a 15-10 minute screening to help employment counsellors identify clients in the CLB 7 range prior to a full assessment. It will meet the needs of a range of workforce related programs.

HRSDC Essential Skills (ES) and CLBs - A Comparative Framework: CCLB is developing a comparative framework that will bridge the two national skills standards. It will provide tools and resources to support their use in the language training community and labour market. CCLB has two major projects that will help bridge the CLBs with ES:

- Online Essential Skills Resources for ESL/EFL Professionals. This will enable teachers to incorporate ES materials and resources into their classrooms.
- Language Profiling of Tourism Sector Occupations Based on Essential Skills Profiles. This involves the development of a methodology for benchmarking the language demands of an occupation in the tourism sector. This will be used as a starting point for benchmarking other occupations. An Occupational Language Analysis (OLA) defines language used in the occupation in terms of CLBs and ES Profiles. The OLAs will be available on the www.itsessential.ca website, which is currently under construction.

For more information on the comparative framework, visit:

www.language.ca/HRSDC.htm. For more information on ES, visit: www15.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/english/general/es.asp.

Teacher/Learner Resources: CCLB has developed teacher resources which can be viewed and ordered directly from the CCLB website at: www.language.ca/pub.html.

- CLB Posters
 - CLB 'Can-Do Checklists'
- CCLB has developed teacher/learner resources which can be downloaded for free

from the CCLB website:

www.language.ca/learners/newlearners.html.

- Sample lessons plans to orient students to CLBs at levels 3/4, 5/6, and 9/10
- Learner's pamphlets in eight languages

Be sure to check out the CCLB website for more information and further updates at www.language.ca.

TESL Canada Conference – Board Report Ottawa May 26 - 28, 2005 Ellen Pilon

First of all I would like to thank TESL NS for sending me to the conference and to the Board meeting for TESL Canada. I really enjoyed being involved in the Board activities and attending so many stimulating workshops. I also enjoyed representing TESL Nova Scotia.

Before the conference began there was a day-long Board meeting. Nothing controversial was discussed this time, and the subject of Standards was avoided. Instead focus was on the retirement of the Executive Director, Carol May. She will continue until the end of the year, but a replacement needs to be found and trained in the fall. There was considerable discussion by the board on whether the Board should look for the perfect person, or look for someone in a specific location who could do the job. Person or place: Carol May works out of her home, so office costs are minimal. There isn't enough money in TESL Canada to operate an office. The decision is left up to the committee.

The term of the TESL Canada Journal

editor, Sandra Kouritzin, will be finished this year so a new editor needs to be found.

The notice for this position is available on our website in the News section.

The TESL Canada 2006 conference will be held in Winnipeg October 19 - 21.

A new board has been voted in with Shailja Verma of Ottawa as the new President. With the board restructuring there are no longer Members-at-Large, per se, but each of those 5 positions is now in charge of some aspect of TESL Canada. Everyone is expected to participate in different parts of the organization so I am now not only on the TESL Canadian Educational Foundation committee, I am also on the Advisory to the TESL Canada Journal, the Testing Committee, and responsible for Linkages so therefore part of the Public Relations committee.

The board also decided that nominations for office need to be better publicized so that TESL members outside the current board can be encouraged to run for a position. Officers only hold office for 18 months, from one conference to another. It was suggested that we encourage nominations then have voting by ballots mailed out to the membership at a whole. The timing of the AGM is poor (7:15 Saturday morning), but it is difficult to accommodate it in another time slot.

The board will next meet face-to-face in Calgary at ATESL November 4 - 5, 2005. I have applied for financial assistance from TESL Canada since the airfare will be a prohibitive cost for our small organization.

TESL Canada Conference – Workshop Summaries

Ottawa May 26 - 28, 2005 ~ Ellen Pilon

Plenary Speakers: The two plenary speakers were Elana Shohamy of Tel Aviv University and Karen Johnson of Penn State University. Both were experienced, polished speakers, but the content was not as interesting as the smaller workshops. Perhaps the large room was too stuffy, and both took place after lunch, Elana on Friday, Karen on Saturday. Perhaps it was the room that just had rows of chairs like an auditorium.

Elana Shohamy spoke on "Hidden Agendas of Language Policies in Affecting De Facto Language Practices". The crux of her speech was that language testing is included in citizenship requirements everywhere, but maybe this isn't right. She questioned whether a national language should be imposed. She raised good questions, and made her point of view clear without lambasting the other side.

Karen Johnson spoke on "Teachers' Ways of Knowing: Reclaiming Professional Development". This focused on teachers learning about themselves, particularly in a practicum situation. She pointed out that training and education are certainly important in a teacher's development, but how the teacher applies what she learned in the classroom is important too. Each individual will apply her knowledge and education differently, and will apply them differently in different classes. Knowing the students is important in adapting tasks appropriately to their interests and experiences. She advocated teaching journals which not only include reflections but also visuals to help a teacher reflect again after the teaching session.

Workshop: "Getting Published" by Julia

Williams, author of *Learning English for Academic Purposes* and David Wood, author of *Making the Grade*.

This was a publishers' workshop (Longman) where the authors and an editor discussed the process of getting published. A prospective author should read the guidelines for submitting a proposal, available on the Longman website. Julia and David used materials they created, which had already worked well in their classes. First a cover letter, description of the units and a complete unit go to the publisher. Once the publisher is interested, chapter samples are sent to a wide range of reviewers whose opinions help shape the fledgling book. The whole process takes at least 2 years, and the author doesn't make a lot of money. Copyright problems require changes in listening and reading materials when there are unreasonable costs involved, even for web-based materials. Julia emphasized the importance of developing a solid vision of the book, and writing it down because it gets compromised in the editing process. It is important to stick to that vision. She also mentioned that it takes a tremendous amount of time, but it is definitely a worthwhile experience.

Workshop: "Finding time for 'Process' in an EAP Context" by Julia Williams.

Following the previous workshop, Julia now talked about her book. I had already seen the book weeks before the conference, and was impressed. It was the book I wanted to write myself, so I guess that project can wait awhile. Julia said she wanted a book that would better prepare students for the university experience: authentic texts, longer readings, complex topics, more interesting academic themes. Process writing is an important component of the book, including writing strategies to guide

students.

Workshop: "Teaching Vocabulary" by Desa Cazic-Kalem of Winnipeg.

In this excellent workshop Desa shared her ways of teaching vocabulary to adult immigrants at lower levels. Her enthusiasm and awareness of what her students required were refreshing. Her first activity was one that would work well with high level students. She cut up quotations into individual words, and we had to assemble the quotation. This is an excellent task for reading comprehension since literary quotations are not always easy to understand. She then demonstrated how to work vocabulary into a whole week's lesson, beginning with a field trip to a place such as the local fire station. She chooses words they are familiar with, plus target vocabulary, then writes a story and accompanying exercises to practice the words. The field trip gives them something they know, experience, before they work on the specific vocabulary in exercises such as yes/no questions, choral reading, readers' theatre, mine or drawing, cloze exercises, vocabulary cards, student dictations, student letters to each other, matching, and progressive vocabulary pockets. The latter uses a series of pockets for vocabulary cards; when students feel they know one word, it is put in the next pocket, etc. They keep testing themselves until they feel they have mastered the word. Desa's enthusiasm for her teaching made her workshop a delightful experience.

Workshop: "Preparing Students for the Next Generation TOEFL" by Nancy Gallagher, author of Delta's Key to the Next Generation TOEFL Test.

I had hoped to learn more about the iBT TOEFL than is available on the ETS website, but little of Nancy's information

was new. She gave a few teaching ideas, such as the importance of teaching good note-taking skills. She pointed out that a student should study TOEFL for only 3 months prior to taking the test and that regular English classes are more useful for students, especially with the new test. For the speaking component, she suggested students speak a little slowly, but with no pauses. Students should focus on word stress, content and communication. They should practice speaking for 60 seconds. The whole speaking test, which has 5 parts, takes about 20 minutes altogether. Keyboard practice is also essential since the two essays must be typed.

Workshop: "Fluency: The Missing Component in the Communicative Classroom" by Marian Rossiter, Tracey Derwing and Linda Manimtim of University of Alberta.

This was an interesting, well prepared, well coordinated workshop. Fluency is the flow of language in communication and can be achieved at any level. Fluent speakers have fewer false starts, fewer ums and ahs, fewer pauses. Fluency is a faster flow of words, not necessarily grammatical or accurate. The speakers studied the English of 20 Mandarin L1 speakers and 20 Russian L1 speakers, analyzing their communication techniques and how well native English non-teacher speakers could understand them. Recordings were done at two stages in their speaking development, and changes were analyzed. They discovered that the Russians, who spent much more time with native English speakers than did the Chinese, improved much more in their fluency. Fluency involves a willingness to keep going despite errors and to talk in chunks. Activities for fluency-building include gambits, circumlocution, fillers, discourse markers, pre-speaking planning, rehearsal,

consciousness-raising, self-assessment, free production. In teaching fluency, usually accuracy is not addressed. Fluency would seem to come first, accuracy last.

Workshop: "Advanced Academic Speaking for ESL Students" by Marijke Wertheim of University of Toronto.

This was definitely the best and most exciting workshop of the whole conference, yet it was omitted from the program and I bumped into it by pure good fortune! Marijka teaches the speaking part of the University Preparation course at U of T; the program she has prepared is very interesting. She stresses natural language use and negotiation for meaning, with minimal overt correction. "What academic ESL students need most is extensive authentic practice in class participation." They have to learn how to do speaking presentations; otherwise they are going to fail. To practice and prepare, she uses taped monologues and pronunciation, paired interviews, panel discussions (not debates), poster sessions and impromptu speeches. Activities are recorded so that she can provide feedback after the speaking. Also, students need to evaluate themselves. Students should have a checklist to help self-evaluation.

Marijka's taped monologues seem to be an excellent method for student self-assessment. At home students tape themselves, giving a short speech of maybe 3 minutes on an assigned subject. They transcribe a short part of it (maybe one minute), including all the ums, and check it for accuracy. Then they evaluate how the speech could have been improved. The teacher collects the tape, transcription and evaluation and provides feedback. Another technique involves students reading a text and being recorded after they first prepare the text. Yet another way

is to have students pair with 3 others and give their speech three times. The third time they are taped. For seminar presentations she gets students to prepare in pairs from her list of topics with a list of useful websites, then divides the class, one student presenting to half, the other student presenting to the other half. Both presenters are taped. Yet another is a poster presentation.

Her different methods work to develop student confidence, fluency and accuracy. Giving feedback gives them a record which they refer to when they do self-evaluations. Students are set up to succeed in a safe atmosphere.

A Student's Perspective: Learner's Conference, Ottawa, May 2005-06-17

*An Unforgettable Experience
in Attending the TESL Canada Learners'
Conference 2005 ~ Jinrui Wang*

TESL Canada Learners' Conference 2005 was held on May 27- 28, 2005 in Ottawa. There were more than forty learner attendees. Among them, ten were out-of-town delegates, six from Toronto and twenty from Ottawa. I was chosen to represent TESL NS at the conference. Before attending the conference I was wondering why they bother to spend so much money on organizing the conference for immigrant learners. From my amazing experience of this conference I got the answer.

Purposeful conference proposed outcomes:

- Adult ESL Learner Delegates from across Canada would have an opportunity to gain knowledge and network with other Learners,

- thereby participating in a meaningful “Canadian” experience.
- Adult ESL Learner Delegates would have the opportunity to participate in round-table and/or small group discussions and make recommendations regarding employment related issues for Newcomers and Immigrants, barriers to success of Newcomers and Immigrants, the recognition of international work-related experiences and credentials of Newcomers and Immigrants, language training for Newcomers and Immigrants, living and working in a new culture, and the benefits of Canadian Language Benchmarks and implications for Adult ESL Learners.

Excellent presentations and information from speakers:

TESL Canada and some other organizations have been making great efforts and working very hard to help newcomers, not only by teaching them English, but also by helping them with many needs.

The Chair of TESL Canada Learners’ Conference and other speakers have given us some instructive and vivid presentations and a lot of information, which are very helpful for our life in a brand new country. Following is a list of some of the topics covered.

- TESL Canadian Educational Foundation
- Integration Net
- Learners and Teachers Negotiating Meaning
- Passages to Canada
- An Introduction to the Canadian Language Benchmarks: Why are the Benchmarks so Important?

The Chair of TESL Canada Learners’ Conference also spoke about networking. She talked about both understanding the basic concept of networking and specific networking strategies.

Exciting and intense round-table discussions:

We had a group activity “Getting to Know You” and some other topics to discuss around the table. These topics included “Living and Working in a New Country”, “Finding Employment: Obstacles and Challenges and discuss ways to find employment”. While we were discussing about these topics, most of the learners think Canada is a beautiful and peaceful country. It has a very good environment.

Another issue is about making networking. It is normal, that usually newcomers feel lonely. In addition, we have to face many difficult situations to start a new life in a new country. For example, some newcomers have difficulties in finding employment opportunities; some are either underemployed or unemployed. It is difficult to learn English as an Adult ESL Learner. We need friends, especially close friends. Networking can help us to make friends, and to search for job opportunities in Canada.

A good thing is that Canada is an immigrant country. People who work for newcomers and immigrants know us very well. Furthermore, they have many experiences about how to help us, which is unique in the world. As an immigrant, I do enjoy living in Canada.

Nova Scotia has its own program for newcomers:

I shared my experience with some other learners from different areas of Canada, and found most provinces have fewer programs than Nova Scotia does. Nova

Scotia has its own program for newcomers. For example, we can apply for English tutors or mentors. MISA offers New Beginnings Program Workshops, which helps newcomers to learn the skills required to be competitive in today's labour market. HILC has an English for Work and Business course, which teaches immigrants about networking; therefore, we are more successful in our jobs, etc.

What have I learned from the conference?

Strengthened Confidence:

Before I went to Ottawa for the conference I was always saying that my English was not good and always worried about it. During the conference, there was a learner who had a similar background as I did and her English was good. I saw myself through her. I have been learning English for two and half years in Canada and made great progress. I have much more self-confidence now. I was well educated and have obtained working experience here in Canada; also I have learned Canadian culture. Now, I have confidence to face everything. Actually I am enjoying living and working in Canada, and looking forward to becoming a Canadian soon.

Unforgettable learning experience:

Before I came for the conference, I had tried very hard to prepare materials for it. I visited the TESL CANADA website and download materials to read, because I knew I was obliged to do something for TESL NS after the conference. Also I talked with some people about participating at a conference. Now I have finished the conference and am wrapping up my conference experience. I think through this unique experience I have gotten unforgettable learning experience, and am confident that I can do it much better in the future.

Tour of capital city of Canada n Ottawa:

This was the first time I went to and visited Ottawa, the capital city of Canada. In May it was great and the weather was excellent. The tulips were everywhere and beautiful, a real flower ocean. In addition to that I even got a chance to visit the Parliament Hill. In particular, I went to China Town as well. It gave me very good impressions about the city and the conference!

The conference was well organized.

However, I felt it was too short. When I got home I found it was hard to match people's face with their names. I wish it had been longer, so we could have had more time to be together and learn from each other.

The next "TESL Canada 2006 Learners' Conference "Landmarks & Landscapes" will be held in Winnipeg, Manitoba in 2006. I truly encourage every one of our newcomers to try to compete for the chance to attend the conference.

In memorial

At the end of the conference we observed a moment's silence for Joshua Hahlund. We were very grateful for his working for newcomers and he is still living in people's hearts.

Thank TESL NS

I would like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank TESL NS for sending me to the TESL Canada Learners' Conference 2005, and thank TESL Canada for organizing the conference for newcomers. It was really a great opportunity to participate, to learn and experience Canadian life. It is truly an unforgettable experience.

A Teacher's Perspective: TESL Canada Conference – Ottawa- May 2005

I was delighted to attend the TESL Canada/TESL Ontario Conference held in Ottawa in May of 2005. The theme of the conference was "Building a Profession: Building a Nation." It was by far, the busiest conference I have ever attended with every minute filled with workshops, visits to the book displays and networking with colleagues from across Canada.

The Learners' Conference, attended by over 50 learners, took place concurrently and it was exciting to see the smiles on their faces and their obvious enjoyment at the Friday night dinner. This is such a wonderful opportunity for them to travel, meet other learners and take ownership for their learning.

The Friday night dinner was very enjoyable with Latin American music and food. It was fun to sit at a table with colleagues from the Maritime Provinces. The silent auction kept several people at our table hopping up and down to check their bids. The Affiliate Auction raises money for the TESL Canada Foundation, which provides funding for worthwhile projects in our field.

The three Life membership awards were presented to specific colleagues who had worked to build our profession. I had the privilege of serving on the TESL Canada Board of Directors with Allison Norman and David Melanson, as many of you know has contributed immensely to the E.S.L. Community. Carol May has worked tirelessly on behalf of TESL Canada and it was wonderful to see her honoured for her outstanding service.

I will highlight several of the workshops that I attended that might be useful to others in

the field of ESL.

One of the workshops introduced "Canadian Snapshots". Written by five ESL teachers, it is an integrated multimedia educational package for Stage 1, Canadian Language Benchmarks level 3 (High beginner). Based on the CLB, each unit provides multi-skill, communicative language tasks that link adult ESL learners with the Canadian community. Special features include culture notes, learning strategies, communicative grammar and pronunciation pointers.

"The Resourceful Literacy Classroom", given by four instructors from the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board, was excellent. It identified the challenges faced by instructors and learners in multi-ability classes. They profiled the five stages of the literacy learner and explored quality literacy resources. The new assessment sheets were particularly interesting. One of the presenters, Marguerite Humm, has incorporated her experience into carefully developed materials in literacy activity workbooks. There are three workbooks, which are for Canadian Language Benchmark 0. I am using them in my classroom and would recommend them.

Another workshop was entitled "Multilevel Madness – Sane practical Tips for the Multilevel Teacher". This was a hands-on workshop in which we used a variety of hand-outs such as picture stories to learn how they could be used as co-operative learning materials to teach writing and grammar. We also practiced using graphs as teaching tools. It was interesting to see how much language these methods generated.

Saturday I attended a workshop entitled "Add a Little Joy to Your Day" given by journalist and ESL instructor, Pat

July 2005

12

McLaughlin. The session was highly interactive and included juggling and lots of laughs. As well, we developed a "Joy Kit" for the ESL classroom and learned to make mind maps. Pat's idea was that as teachers we sometimes forget to add joy to our classes.

"The Art of Conversation" workshop presented discourse chains as a teaching tool. We constructed various types of chains that covered a range of functions and put them to use. This seems like a simple concept but it can be effective when different registers are incorporated.

"Learning Games for the Classrooms" included Concentration, Jeopardy, Password, and Wheel of Fortune with variations at various levels of difficulty. If any of you attended my workshop at the TESL Nova Scotia Conference last October you know that I think games are a highly effective way to review material and vocabulary

I would be happy to share any information and materials from the TESL Canada Conference. My e-mail is glenvye@ns.sympatico.ca.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank TESL Nova Scotia for providing me the opportunity to attend the TESL Canada Conference 2005. It was an informative and exciting event!

Beth K. Vye
TESL Nova Scotia