TESL NS Newsletter

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Editorial
Ms. Fe Baculi (Editor)
TESL Center / SMU

June 21 at about 8:00 p.m.,I had the lights on, in my hall and in my "office." You must wonder why this should be worth mentioning in an editorial. The 21st day of June is the longest day of the year and, if the sky were not thick with cloud, our world would be bathed in sunshine and there'd be no need to illuminate my living space with electric light. I feel cheated. After an unusually long and cold winter, spring wasn't much kinder. Much of it was cold and wet. Not long ago, I heard the weather people talk about the risk of night frost in some parts of Nova Scotia. So much for global warming. I wonder what the rest of the summer, which started a couple of weeks ago offi[ce] has in store for us.
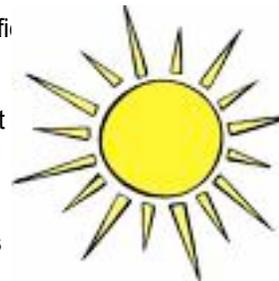
There is more than a bit of method in the madness of my introductory jingle. Why do we get flu epidemics only in winter? Why do more people die in winter than in summer? The difference is Vitamin D, the summer vitamin. In summer, most of us get sufficient sun exposure for our skin to produce enough Vitamin D. In winter, we get no sun exposure to speak of. Ergo, most of the denizens of mid-latitudes go through winter deficient in Vitamin D and so are sitting ducks for all sorts of ills -- the flu, heart problems, cancer, osteoporosis and more. If you google <Vitamin D>, you'll get a mountain of evidence that Vitamin D, the summer vitamin, can make all the difference. Vitamin D is the "cheerful vitamin" that we all need specially for teaching.:)

The theme of our issue is writing. It includes all kinds of writing -- creative writing, academic writing, scientific, journalistic, research, etc. What are the challenges of teaching writing? It starts from us -- the teachers. We can't give what we don't have. So we need to share and learn from each other's training and experience specially in methodology. Part of our teacher training tells us that we speak and write the way we think. I sometimes feel guilty when I attempt to realign the way my ESL students think so they can write like "westerners". I have been in this profession for more than 20 years and I can also speak and write in many languages, but I still can't say I know it all when it comes to teaching writing. Things (even teaching and learning styles) change quickly. It therefore helps to go to PDs -- trainings, seminars and conferences.

The bigger challenges are of course our writing students but I am not going to talk about them because we have several contributions regarding this theme. We hope you'll find them very helpful. Thank you to those who organized the mini conference at Acadia University last May 23, to those who gave their ESL/Writing workshops, and to the contributors to this edition.

TESL ⚓ NS Newsletter

In parting, I'd say it's not easy to write, even for some of us who think we can "write". What do we do if there is something we want to or should write about and then we sit biting our truant pens, but the words just won't come? Here is the trick I have in mind. We forget about writing the formal assignment and pretend we are writing to a sympathetic friend. We write what we are supposed to write and we will be surprised how easily the words will come and flow. Since we are just writing to a friend, our internal watchdogs relax their vigilance and, in no time at all, we will have finished our piece. Now all we have to do is go over it again, uninhibited by the writer's block, proofread it, and edit where necessary. Easy as pie,eh? Hmmmmm... sometimes!:)

On a happier note, the instructors and staff at the TESL Center/SMU are happy to have a new director after not having one for 6 months. TESL Nova Scotia also welcomes you aboard Mr. Michael Armour.

A Happy Summer to everyone! Please read the TESLNS News/Newsletter for updates. See you in September.

President's Message
Ellen Pilon

The TESL NS Board has had a busy winter and spring. We have accepted TESL Canada's invitation to host the 2011 TESL Canada Conference. This will be April 28-30, 2011 at the World Trade & Convention Centre in Halifax. We are excited to announce that Michael Swan and Dr Roy Lyster have agreed to be our keynote speakers. Michael Swan will give two sessions on the Friday, one related to our theme of accuracy vs. fluency, and one related to grammar. I'm sure we all know and love *Practical English Usage,* not to mention his other grammar publications. The Board is delighted to begin the conference planning and is looking forward to the work involved.

We are also busy preparing for the TESL NS Conference for this fall. It is November 7 at the Citadel Halifax Hotel, previously known to some of us as Citadel Inn. This will be a full day of professional and social fun and learning. The event will be open to members and non-members, and the fee will be reasonable. Our theme is "assessment and evaluation". Janna Fox, Director of Language Assessment and Testing Research at Carleton University, has agreed to be our keynote speaker. If anyone is interested in giving a workshop at the fall conference, we would be delighted to hear from you. Please just email us at conference@teslns.ca .

On May 23 members enjoyed a wonderful spring conference at Acadia, co-hosted by the Acadia Centre for International Languages and TESL NS. There were workshops by Fiona Inglis, Patricia Buchanan and Srini Pillay, Sally Benevides Hopkins, and Andy de Champlain. Roundtable discussions were led by Susanne Campbell and Haydn Lawrence, Chris van den Broek, and Andrea Purchase. After lunch we enjoyed a wine tour and tasting at Domaine Grand Pre. Best of all the entire event was free for members! Acadia contributed the cost of the bus and the facility, while TESL NS used some funds raised through the TESL Canada 2008 Conference. What better way to use this money than to provide members with low-cost or free professional development events!

We are supporting the TESL Canada 2009 Conference at Banff by offering conference fee support to any TESL NS member who is presenting at that conference and who wishes to apply. The application is on the website www.teslns.ca . Two of us are active on the TESL Canada Board. Alicia Daley is the provincial representative and serves on several committees. I am currently the TESL Canada Treasurer and Chair of the Governance Committee, and serve on several other committees as well. You can find information about this conference at www.tesl.ca .

This year there is no Learners' Conference, as you will notice from the conference information for Banff. Thus we will not be seeking learner delegates. For many reasons the Learners' Conference seems to have finished with the 2008 Conference at Moncton. The TESL NB committee organizing that Learners Conference 2008 did an exceptional job, as you can see

from reports written by our own learner delegates (see the June 2008 newsletter).

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank everyone on the TESL Nova Scotia Board. It is a wonderful group of compatible dedicated volunteers who have committed to carrying on as we plan the 2011 national conference. Thank you Julian, Fe, Haiyan, Caroline, Alicia, Sandy, Andy, Kent, Christine, Olga and Denise.

Thoughts on the Spring Conference
Ellen Pilon

At the spring conference at Acadia, I attended Fiona Inglis' workshop on ethics in assisting students with their writing. To what degree should we help students with their writing? Should we edit and rewrite their work, or guide them to identify their own errors so that they can improve their writing skills? Fiona favours the second option, and I fully concur. The idea is to produce better writers, not better writing.

We learned that in a Writing Centre the focus needs to be on Higher Order Concerns such as organization and coherence, then on Lower Order Concerns such as grammar and mechanics. The purpose of a writing centre is to be facilitative. The question that arises in an academic setting is whether this technique actually helps NNES (non-native English speakers) to the same degree as it helps NES.

Some of the issues for NNES that Fiona identified include student misunderstanding about proofreading, student uncertainty about editing, and the disadvantages of elicitation when it devolves into a guessing game, power struggles, and faculty expectations. Students want a perfect result to submit to a professor. In my experience it's the same with international students not yet in university and with immigrants. They want to be perfect on important communications such as application letters and resumes, so they want you to fix the writing. Is it ethical to do so? Well, I think producing better writers is more important than producing better writing.

In one of the workshops, we watched an interesting video clip of a tutor helping a student, commented on how she could have better organized the tutorial, then assessed the writing ourselves to decide how we could have done this better ourselves. It was a very useful experience that reinforced my current methods of helping graduate NNES with their writing.

I also attended Sally Benevides' workshop entitled "Pre-writing: using filter systems for critical analysis of media, visual and written texts". Sally presented the many different ways of viewing a work of art (or anything else), using a Michelangelo painting in the Sistine Chapel as an example. I knew there were many ways of interpreting art, but I didn't think there were SO many ways. For example, with the Sistine Chapel painting we need to consider ownership of the medium, funding sources of the media, sourcing of the information, and resistance to and influence on the information (which she called flak).

She suggested that an art form thus can help us understand the culture of the time. Her workshop stimulated critical thinking in a way I haven't enjoyed since graduate studies in English literature where we dissected every choice of word and image, every comment by a critic.

Andrea Purchase facilitated a roundtable on students personalizing their writing, or taking ownership of their writing (I've forgotten the exact title). There was a lively discussion on when it's acceptable for writers to express themselves in their own voice. Consider some of the beautiful colourful turns of phrases that we read in our students' work: are these OK, or should we recommend they conform to standard rules? How important is collocation of a different pairing of words if they still communicate the idea?

Someone in the group suggested showing students how to expand sentences with adjectives and phrases: begin with a bare sentence such as "the girl ran to the park" then add words and phrases to make it more descriptive. We talked about tone, genre, rhetorical style, then about email and tone. We

also talked about becoming familiar with our students' writing even when they don't put their names on their work. How do we know whose writing it is? Often it's because their personality is in their writing.

All these sessions were stimulating and enjoyable; I only wish I could have attended all the other ones as well. Afterwards we enjoyed an interesting tour of Domaine Grand Pre where we saw and heard about the grape growing industry. Then we sampled 5 or 6 different Grand Pre wines, and learned how to tap and swirl and smell to truly appreciate the wine.

Sunshine, interesting ideas, fun socializing – what a wonderful way to spend a Saturday in May. I hope we have the opportunity to continue this idea in future spring conferences.

sample of student writing and told to role-play the tutorial session with one person as the tutor, one as the student, and one as the observer. I love doing workshops with ESL teachers because everyone is always willing to participate in all the activities (and some people got very deeply into character!). There was so much involvement and discussion that we almost ran out of time. Before the conference, I had been concerned that this topic would not seem relevant to many people (given the small number of TESL NS members who work in writing centres), but the reactions and comments from the participants made it clear that finding ways to ethically correct errors and give constructive feedback to our learners is something that we all struggle with in whatever context we are currently teaching. Thank you to everyone who took part in this workshop.

**Workshop: "Just correct my grammar":
NNES students in the Writing Centre**
Fiona Inglis
Acadia University

After many years of classroom teaching, I recently began working as a tutor in a university writing centre. My focus is on supporting the international students who visit the writing centre. This workshop was designed to give participants the chance to explore some of the issues involved. The Writing Centre guidelines were originally designed with native speaking English students in mind, and as a result they strongly advocate a focus on features such as organisation and are strongly opposed to sentence-level error correction. This makes sense when you consider that writing centres are always fighting against the assumption that they are simply a proofreading service. It becomes problematic when you are working with students who are still acquiring a language and need to spend some time focusing on form.

During the workshop, we watched a video showing an example of a writing centre tutorial with an international student, and discussed the approach used. Participants then had the chance to experience a writing centre tutorial for themselves. Groups of three were given a

Writing as a Component of Integrated Skills Teaching
Srinivasen Pillay and Patricia Buchanan;
Apex Language and Career College

Srini and I were pleased to co-host the workshop at the mini-conference held on May 23. About 18 attended the workshop, which concluded with a lively group discussion.

Some reasons offered in support of teaching writing as an integrated skill:

- The opportunity to use multiple expressions of language increases language learning ability: writing can reinforce speaking, reading and listening skills.
- Writing can be a means of developing ideas: finding ways for learners to write informally and throughout their learning experiences can help then to express themselves effectively in the target language.
- Writing makes words more 'tangible', gives more permanence to thought: actively involving students in the writing process helps teachers more clearly see in which areas the learner needs more instruction, and also helps students to

remember and reflect on their own thoughts and reactions.
- Writing is valuable as an assessment tool: collecting a range of examples of written work over time allows for a valid assessment of a writer's abilities.

Our group discussion yielded various suggestions for incorporating writing in the integrated skills class.

- Use a 'Dictogloss' activity: this involves a combination of dictation, note-taking, and reconstruction of text in a variety of ways (there are a number of examples on the internet).
- Start with a reading, followed by discussion, and finally a written report.
- Take a relevant text (e.g. a medical text for nurses working on upgrading their English skills) and prepare a cloze exercise by deleting every ninth word, for example.
- Read a text, paraphrase it orally (e.g. as a class, in groups, or pairs), then have students rewrite the text in their own words.

In conclusion, it was generally agreed that writing is a very valuable and necessary component of integrated skills teaching in the ESL classroom, although the nature and intensity of writing instruction should of course be tailored to fit the needs of the learners.

The "Worst" Mistakes: What to Address in EAP Writing
Andy de Champlain,
TESL Centre, Saint Mary's University

In my recent workshop I tried to address the question of what are the worst mistakes in EAP students' writing. Plagiarism is left out because it is as much a 'writing error' as streaking is a 'fashion error'.

The first is *basic formatting* because (a) it's the first thing a teacher sees, and (b), it's the easiest

thing to address. These are the simplest irritants to address:
- no name
- not double spaced
- not written (right-side-up) on appropriate paper
- no margins
- written with a (runny) pen
- typed without regard for the spell check
- typed in an aggravating font size or shape
- not indented

After the student has had a fair chance to learn the basics of getting words on paper, there is no reason to encourage continued sloppiness a month into the course by accepting it. Once the student is in university, no prof will take the writing seriously if it's hideous at first glance. First impressions count, in writing too.

The second major concern is that students too often attempt an 'answer' to a question that they do not understand. Students should be encouraged to ask for clarity on what is expected from the task before they invest an hour (or a month) in answering it. Likewise, the teacher should endeavour to make the questions as clear as possible.

The next five points I made are related to the writing process itself, summed up in the term 'time management'. During a one-hour writing task, students should invest adequate time at the beginning in "pre-thinking" (Brainstorm + Outline), and adequate time at the end for revision. I recommend roughly 10 minutes for each of these steps, which leaves 40 minutes in the middle for the actual writing. In a five-paragraph essay, that leaves 10 minutes for each of the body paragraphs, five minutes for the intro and five to wrap it up.

In the pre-writing stage, students should try to cut their answer into three distinct-but-related arguments or topics. They should also try to imagine what support – specific details and examples from their experience or imagination – they will be able to inject. Many if not most students under the pressure of a time limit fail to think enough about what they can say and how they might organize the essay. The brainstorm

and outline stage is not a time for grammar, but for organization and maybe some vocabulary.

After a solid 10 minutes of pre-thinking, students should have a good idea of what they will say, and only then can they write a decent introduction that will reflect what they actually will talk about. Since little more is needed in an intro than a thesis statement, I tell my students not to spend as much time on Paragraph 1 as they do in the next three chunks. There certainly shouldn't be any examples in the intro.

The next half hour is for the meat of the essay sandwich. Each general topic sentence should be followed by specific examples and details in which a student may tell mini anecdotes, including the 'when', the 'where', the 'who' and the 'what' of the point being illustrated. This can be followed by the 'why/how' it supports the thesis statement. The most prominent mid-essay problem is the tendency toward generalization and the utter lack of detailed support. Generalizations are repeated or paraphrased to make up the excruciating 'fill' for the essay. Time and level of detail will dictate how many of these examples can be injected, but these three body paragraphs should each get about 10 minutes of attention.

The conclusion is essentially a reiteration of the intro, plus perhaps a statement of wisdom on the topic that the reader can take away. The conclusion step doesn't deserve as much time as the revision stage, but good time management should still reserve five minutes for it.

The last three points, on grammar and mechanics, are probably most applicable during the revision stage. Students often *know* the grammar but may have a better chance of (re)applying it during revision, when, instead of focusing on content, they can focus on mechanics.

    (1) 4 Rules: Students should be able to check that every sentence has a capital letter at the beginning, a subject noun, a verb, and a period at the end.

    (2) DNA: Many students can also check to see if the determiner agrees with its noun based on rules they know

about count nouns, plurals, etc. E.g., singular determiners (*a*, *this*, *one*) cannot go with plural nouns; plural determiners (*two*, *those*, *many*) cannot go with singular nouns (they forget plural -s); singular count nouns usually need a determiner (often *the* or *a*); and determiners like *much* are used with non-count nouns, but others (*many*) are used with plural count nouns.

    (3) SVA: The third-person-singular -s can be added to present-tense verbs in need. Or, the nouns that need pluralisation can be given the -s to bring peace between subject and verb.

To wrap up, I think there are some serious concerns common to all EAP writing teachers. First we must nail sloppy formatting. Next, students must understand the question that they're trying to answer. Finally, they must give adequate attention to each step of the writing process itself, the most neglected of which are the pre- and post-writing stages: An essay's organization and coherence suffer miserably when the outline is overlooked while, without final revision, fixable mechanical errors linger for years after the grammar has been learned. At the lower levels, students should be going back to check for periods, capitals, etc, and at even the highest levels SVA and DNA problems can be addressed.

I hope I conveyed this to the participants of my workshop this month. Feedback and questions are always welcome!
(andy_de_champlain@yahoo.ca).

Prewriting - Using Filter Systems for Critical Analysis of Media, Visual and Written Texts"
Sally Benevides
Acadia Centre for International Languages

In this presentation at the May, 2009 TESL NS conference we explored several **models for the analysis** of texts, toward better understanding them, the motivation behind them and the context which surrounds them. These models

can provide instructors and students with forms of discourse to speak and write about media, literary, visual art, music and historical texts. They are particularly useful as a means for language learners to begin an analysis and an understanding of a new topic.

The first model that we looked at was *the Propaganda Model* by Noam Chomsky and Edward S. Herman. *The Propaganda Model* is an excellent contextual tool for use in a high school or post-secondary curriculum such as history, politics, (is used extensively in) media literacy, literature, and for analysis of the arts. A model such as this can enable the class to **develop a common language, or discourse with which to speak and write.** Critical analysis is extremely important in education, and a crucial research tool for students at all levels.

In the presentation, we analyzed the creation of Michelangelo's painting, "The Last Judgement", on the wall of the Sistine Chapel in the Vatican. We used each set of filters and looked at such aspects of the work as who commissioned it, how it was paid for, controversies surrounding it, and the cultural, religious and personal ideas Michelangelo was trying to communicate through his work.

The second set of filters we explored was *The Key Concepts of Media Literacy* from the Ontario Association for Media Literacy (www.aml.ca), which provides the basis for the media literacy curriculum in Ontario schools. The *Key Concepts* "define the critical premises behind media education… They provide a theoretical base for all media literacy programs and give teachers [and students] a common language and framework for discussion". This common language can be incredibly useful for new language learners in an academic situation such as high school, EAP, or university, and may be applied to any form of media.

Finally we looked at a form of analysis that builds a consistent evaluation process for any text by building a context around it. Exploring the areas of politics, economics, religion, social issues, and intellectual, technological, artistic and geographic factors that surround each example is useful for historical investigation, for

a basic or "survey" curriculum in music history, art history, architecture, archaeology, scientific history, philosophy… When analyzing several examples of music for instance, along a chronological continuum, and using a consistent method of analysis, an observer might see subtle changes or development in style or influence through this progression. For a student who is less familiar with a specific culture, this is a methodical and efficient means toward better understanding.

Resources

The Association for Media Literacy - http://www.aml.ca/

Chomsky, Noam. Necessary Illusions – Thought Control in Democratic Societies. Toronto: CBC Enterprises, 1989.

Chomsky, Noam and Herman, Edward S. Manufacturing Consent – The Political Economy of the Mass Media. New York: Pantheon Books, 1988.

Ontario Ministry of Education. Media Literacy Resource Guide – Intermediate and Senior Divisions, 1989. Toronto: Queen's Printer for Ontario, 1989.

Roundtable Discussion Summary – Correcting Errors in Writing
Haydn Lawrence & Susanne Campbell
Acadia Centre for International Languages

Haydn Lawrence and I led a roundtable discussion regarding the topic of correcting grammar errors in writing. We started by asking everyone to quickly introduce themselves, and give us an idea of the type of ESL/EAP teaching they are involved in. Next we discussed the meaning of EAP (English for Academic Purposes) and introduced everyone to Acadia's EAP program. This way we were able to provide some background into the type of academic writing that we assess in our program.

In the next phase of the discussion, we put the members into two groups. Everyone was given

a writing sample from each language level – 500 (beginner), 1000 (elementary), 2000 (intermediate) and 3000 (advanced). So, each group had samples from 4 different language levels. We asked the members to look at their samples and discuss the following questions:

- Which error types did you focus on in each sample?
- Among all 4 levels, which error types were similar / different?
- Which errors do you think *should* be focused on according to the level of your sample?

Next, we paired the members so that each pair had the same writing sample (from the same language level). We asked each pair to look at their samples and discuss the following questions:

- Which error types did you focus on?
- Did you focus on the same ones or different ones?
- Do you feel that the errors you focused on were appropriate for the level?

Everyone shared opinions and ideas around these discussion questions. At the end of our roundtable, we came back together as a whole group to identify the grammar errors we felt should be focused on at each language level. *

Roundtable Discussion Summary – Writing Authentically: Finding Your Voice in L2
Andrea Purchase
Halifax Immigrant Learning Centre

Authentically expressing yourself in another language….is this important? One round table discussion at the 2009 TESL NS Mini-Conference at Acadia University focused on this question. Participants were invested and interested in the topic and enjoyed a lively and non-stop chat which focused on the following questions and topics.

1. Language expresses emotion, and through voice, our students can practice tones and sounds which help them feel confident that they are expressing their intentions properly. How do students do this in writing?

2. How do we teach our students to accurately and authentically, with personality and character, express themselves in L2?

3. Writing is very personal. How do we illustrate "style" to students when so much of the writing process comes from within them?

4. How do we help our students to take ownership of the written work they do? Is this important in the age of the Internet?

5. What are the benefits of students finding their voice and feeling ownership of L2?

6. What writing style habits cause you as a marker/evaluator to become familiar with students' work?

7. Direct word-for-word translating does not work. How can we help students *think* and *then* write in L2?

8. Should we encourage students to transfer speaking into writing? Is formality a concern here? What might some pitfalls of this be?

In discussing these questions, the general feeling of the group was that there is legitimacy to helping students find their voice in L2 and that the benefits of this can affect everything from confidence to word choice to social habits , all of which could be improved through feeling ownership of the L2.

Dictionary and thesaurus activities, creation of an urban dictionary/thesaurus and structured translation exercises were all ideas raised by the first question. Authentic examples and free-writing activities were encouraged as well. In the age of the Internet, so to speak, participants at the discussion were enthusiastic about how to get students away from simply cutting and pasting what they find online, and getting them to speak for themselves, using online sources

for affirmation of an original thought rather than a key source or reference.

The general feeling seemed to be that although this is an important element to students functioning in their L2, the instructor is a guide in this process, not a final authority. Finding one's voice is a highly personal process, and so we are there to assist, encourage and guide.

Roundtable Discussion Summary – Subjectivity vs. Standardisation in Marking Writing
Christopher Van den Broeck
Acadia Centre for International Languages

The topic of the roundtable was Subjectivity vs. Standardisation in Marking Writing. The roundtable had approximately 12 participants. The roundtable started with a relatively straightforward questions. Should subjectivity be completely eliminated in the marking of writing, especially in an academic context? Can it be? Initial group responses to these questions were not completely unexpected: yes and no.

This illustrated that there is no definitive answer to the problem of finding a balance between objectivity and subjectivity in the marking of writing, and this idea was explored further in smaller groups. Various arguments in favour of each approach to marking writing were put forward. On the side of objectivity, a common argument was that standardised marking practises ensure fairness, whilst on the side of subjectivity, the most common arguments were ones describing the impossibility of removing a marker's own personal constructs of what constitutes 'good' writing in various contexts.

After some lively discussion in small groups, the roundtable ended discussing together what consensus, if any, could be reached. Perhaps the most notable suggestion of the day was to strive to "be objectively subjective." Clearly, the question of subjectivity versus standardisation in marking writing is something that can not be considered lightly, as well as requiring careful consideration of task and teaching context when ultimately deciding how students are to be assessed in writing.

Report on the mini-conference from the ESL Volunteer Tutor Program, MISA
Olga Sarycheva,
ESL Volunteer Tutor Coordinator, MISA

On May 23, 2009, four MISA volunteer tutors were given an excellent opportunity to attend the Spring Mini-Conference at Acadia University with no TESL Nova Scotia membership fee (courtesy of the TESL NS Board). It was an important step in their career as ESL tutors who work with the ESL Volunteer Tutor Program at MISA. The program provides language tutor services to adult newcomers in Canada.

As the language needs of our learners vary greatly – literacy and low-level language support, preparation for a taxicab driver's test, or Canadian citizenship exams, TOEFL and university exam preparation – MISA volunteer tutors express considerable interest in being involved into the life of the NS ESL community and in the process, learn some of the most useful and efficient teaching techniques from experienced ESL professionals.

In this respect, the mini-conference " Challenges in Teaching Writing" was a good source of inspiration for the MISA participants. According to the evaluation surveys, the tutors found that the conference objectives had been met and it had served its purpose to put a light on the problematic zones in teaching writing skills to ESL learners. Our tutors appreciated the chance to meet and talk to ESL instructors in NS as sharing ideas is always a great source of learning.

Most workshops and round table discussions were a success from our tutors' point of view. They generated some practical ideas which could be easily applied to their tutoring sessions with the learners. Here is what our tutors have to say.

> *"I found the Workshop on "Prewriting-Using Filter Systems for Critical Analysis of Media, Visual and Written Texts" most useful. It was presented in an organized manner; it had depth and I gained valuable insights from it. " – a MISA tutor*

"The session about objectivity and subjectivity when correcting writing papers was the most useful because this is an area I struggle with. It was good to hear other teachers with the same concerns." – a MISA tutor

The MISA participants reported to have enjoyed their trip to Acadia University and the Grand Pre winery tour. The time on the bus and at the winery provided them with a unique chance to learn more about each other and discuss the conference issues in a more informal environment. The refreshments offered at the University boosted up the participants' ability to acquire complex information at an early hour.

MISA tutors have also noted that they would have liked to see more workshops presented at the mini-conference and would have liked the issuance of certificates of participation. In addition, they suggested having more learning opportunities similar to this one organized, as they promote the idea of volunteerism in Nova Scotia to a great extent.

Check the website for upcoming conferences
www.teslns.ca/conference.html

November 7, 2009: Assessment and Evaluation.
Keynote speaker: Dr Janna Fox

April 28-29-30, 2011: TESL Canada conference in Halifax
Standing Corrected: Accuracy, Fluency & Reality
Keynote Speakers: Michael Swan, Dr Roy Lyster